

Contribution of Research

Building Capacity of Faculty in Online Principal Preparation through Self-Study

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Abstract

This study presents the engagement of faculty from a South Texas university's fully online principal preparation program in conducting a comprehensive self-study using the Quality Measures™ Principal Preparation Program Self-Study Toolkit (12th Edition), developed by the Education Development Center (EDC) with support from The Wallace Foundation and the Quality Measures (QM) Center. The self-study prioritized an in-depth review of coursework, program alignment, and content using the toolkit's evidence-based rubrics. Using a collaborative, cohort-based approach, faculty engaged in systematic self-assessment, reflective dialogue, and strategic planning to enhance program quality and coherence. QM's goal focuses on identifying principal preparation programs that benefit from working together, learning about their mutual programmatic challenges, and collaboratively finding solutions via a cohort model. The cohort model was composed of selected educational administration (EDAM) programs from various institutions during a specific academic year. Each cohort engages in critical discussions of their respective self-studies, offering feedback, recommendations, and guidance to support program improvement and alignment with best practices. This process aims to not only strengthen faculty instructional capacity but also contribute to program improvements aimed at supporting the success of current and future principal candidates in becoming certified.

In response to evolving educational policy mandates and increasing demands for accessible and high-quality leadership preparation, principal preparation programs are reevaluating their delivery models, curricular coherence, and faculty capacity. This study presents a self-study conducted by one fully online principal preparation program that engaged in the use of the *Quality Measures™ Principal Preparation Program Self-Study Toolkit* (12th Edition), developed by the Education Development Center (EDC), and supported by *The Wallace Foundation* and the QM Center. The purpose of this study is to document how the program used the toolkit to assess and improve course content, alignment, and instructional practices congruent with current leadership standards and the needs of today's school principals. The toolkit, grounded in research-based best practices (King, 2022), was used to find curriculum gaps, inform faculty

development, and enhance program quality through collaborative inquiry and evidence-based decision-making.

This self-study initiative occurred during a critical period of faculty expansion, allowing for intentional onboarding, team building, and collective review of the program's fully online course shells. The newly expanded faculty team, consisting of four full-time members, along with a district partner and a program graduate, engaged in a collaborative and reflective process that strengthened program coherence, clarified expectations, and fostered a shared commitment to instructional leadership. The study addresses a significant gap in the literature by focusing on the internal quality review of a fully online principal preparation program—a model increasingly necessary to meet the needs of diverse, post-pandemic candidates (Perrone et al., 2020; Snodgrass Rangel & Butcher, 2023). In doing so, it responds to national imperatives such as those outlined in NCLB and ESSA, which emphasize the

importance of research-based leadership preparation and the principal's role in delivering professional development that drives student achievement.

Historical Background of Principal Preparation Programs

Glasman et al. (2002) proposed that educational administration programs face increased market competition and long-term negative impacts on enrollment. Recent studies concluded that educational policy-related mandates have intensified the pressure for programs to look beyond face-to-face models and offer online options to meet post-pandemic principal candidates' needs (Perrone et al., 2020; Snodgrass Rangel & Butcher, 2023). Meanwhile, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act mandated school districts increase research-based classroom practices and teacher professional development in all content areas (Carraway & Young, 2015; Gurley et al., 2015). Moreover, ESSA, or the Every Child Succeeds Act (December 10, 2015, formerly NCLB), included a requirement that school principals receive content-based professional development (Viloria et al., 2016). Therefore, today's principals must provide leadership for the instructional needs of both novice and experienced teachers who effectively impact student academic growth and sustainability in highly demanding environments (Gallardo et al., 2025; Katterfield, 2013). Thus, school principals need content-based knowledge to deliver professional development and support rigorous instructional delivery to campus teachers (Klar & Brewer, 2013).

Supported by the Education Development Center's (EDC) Quality Measures™ self-study with support from *The Wallace Foundation* and the QM Center, both whom champion and support excellence in the preparation of school principals, the *Quality Measures: Principal Preparation Program Self-Study Toolkit (12th Edition)* was used to conduct a programmatic self-study to decide if the current educational administration course work, alignment, and content were meeting the needs of present-day principal candidates (Darling Hammond et al., 2009). When the original team of 1.5 faculty were notified, they had been accepted to the program's Cohort 5, a request to postpone participation was submitted, as there was a potential to add three new faculty members. In time, the faculty at this South Texas principal preparation program grew from one full-time and one 0.5-time associate professor team to a four-person full-time faculty team consisting of one tenured associate professor, one tenure-track associate professor, and two tenure-track assistant professors. In total, the self-study team came to include program faculty, a school district representative, and a recent graduate. During the self-study, new faculty

were onboarded while the team participated in team-building activities as a group and then as part of the larger cohort. The atmosphere was positive, engaging, and contributory; everyone contributed ideas and provided input towards making the program review stronger through increased team cohesion and capacity.

What is the Quality Measures Toolkit?

Quality Measures (QM) is a self-study toolkit, founded by Dr. Cheryl King, which synthesizes current research on best practices for preparing school leaders. Its goal is to find curriculum gaps and alignment while onboarding and building new faculty capacity. The QM toolkit has six program domains: candidate admissions, coursework, pedagogy-andragogy, clinical practice, performance assessment, and graduate performance outcomes. Each of the six domains identifies specific indicators of high-quality program practice, drawn from current research, where each is described in the toolkit with clear and specific criteria to support team discussions and self-ratings. In examining these indicators, or "evidence," all the Cohort 5 self-study teams considered a series of questions to determine a preliminary rating for each indicator. For the South Texas team, the vision was to leverage the self-study process and toolkit to pinpoint gaps in curriculum and alignment while simultaneously supporting the onboarding and professional growth of newly appointed program faculty. To support this process, the program coordinator met with the new faculty and granted them access to all ten course shells within the educational administration program housed in the university's learning management system. This access allowed faculty to explore the program's course offerings, assess strengths, and find areas in need of improvement via an informative and instructive process (Wallace Foundation, 2016).

Methods

This self-study employed the *Quality Measures™ Principal Preparation Program Self-Study Toolkit (12th Edition)* developed by the Education Development Center (EDC), utilizing its progress continuum and six research-based domains: candidate admissions, coursework, pedagogy-andragogy, clinical practice, performance assessment, and graduate outcomes. These domains, along with the associated indicators and rubrics, guided the faculty through a structured, evidence-based review of the program's curriculum, alignment, and outcomes.

Candidate Admissions

For this particular domain, the team looked at the program’s mission, vision, and goals, especially as the university was undergoing a revision of its strategic plan, where three of the six goals spoke to the program: Visionary Academic Programs & Faculty, Empowered Student Success & Wellness, and Excellence in Advancement & Stewardship. In striving to create a visionary program, the team discussed how it was being marketed to potential principal candidates, where discussion of recruitment practices and applicant screenings arose. Since a third-party company conducts recruitment, where those recruited often recommended the program to others, it was found that more input from faculty for potential candidates was needed. In fact, while an application process is in place and is followed, there is currently only one screening, instead of the required two, in place. Here, faculty discussed including a candidate interview.

Coursework

For this domain, the faculty reviewed its fully online program designed to develop effective school administrators. The curriculum includes courses such as EDAM 5301 School Administration, EDAM 5305 Organization and Evaluation of Curriculum, EDGR 5323 Data-Driven Decision Making, EDAM 5319 Administration of School Facilities and Finance, EDAM 5320 Principalship, EDAM 5322 Public School Law, EDAM 5327 Advanced Problems in Supervision, EDAM 5335 Practicum in School Administration I, EDAM 5336 Practicum in School Administration II, and EDAM 5338 Administration of Special Programs. In preparation for continuous improvement and accreditation, program faculty assessed alignment with Texas Principal Standards to ensure program quality. This self-study informed program faculty of improvements needed to better address content and knowledge necessary to Texas’ principal certification exams, PAIL 268 and PASL, especially as Quality Matters (re)certification of these courses became a focal point during this program. Moreover, it was determined that more certification-focused guidance needed to be embedded in the program, ushering in the addition of the ETS PASL Preparation Guide (LCM Consulting, 2024) into several of the 10 EDAM courses to better support program learning goals along with course content and consistency.

Pedagogy-Andragogy

In this domain, EDAM program faculty focused on how instructional strategies within the program fostered and reflected best practices, especially amongst adult learners

preparing for school administration roles. Faculty closely examined courses to evaluate the degree to which active learning strategies and reflective teaching practices fostered autonomy, critical thinking, reflection, and real-world applications. For example, leadership assignments, case studies, educational leadership or educational administration scholarly articles, interactive videos, VoiceThreads, scenario-based discussions, course projects, formative and summative assessments, and job-embedded tasks were strategically integrated into the course to fully immerse students in authentic and problem-solving experiences supported with formative feedback. Moreover, faculty in this program ensured that each course aligned with current Texas Principal Standards and supported the learning by integrating practical and leadership-oriented practices in the field of educational administration.

Clinical Practice

Focusing on clinical design, the program faculty further reviewed EDAM 5535 Practicum in School Administration I and EDAM 5336 Practicum in School Administration II, to ensure alignment with Texas Principal Standards and principal certification expectations and reify clinical quality. In both courses, students must complete 160 internship hours that include observation, campus problem solving with school administrators, and selection of a problem of practice tied to a campus improvement goal. These courses offer clinical coaching and supervision from the university professor and school site supervisor. Here, these courses also ensure compliance with state-mandated training in accordance with Texas Administrative Code 228.30: Educator Preparation Curriculum. Through course revision, program faculty were able to confirm and improve the strength of field-based experiences. Additionally, faculty were able to further clarify site supervisor expectations and align assignments more directly with the Texas PAIL 268 and PASL principal certification exams.

Performance Assessment

All courses in the EDAM program curriculum are geared to support candidate performance goals, not only in the courses themselves, but also as they complete the practicum or clinical experiences. As students go through the 10-course sequence, the overarching goal is to make candidates well versed in the Texas Principal Standards as they complete course assessments and several signature assignments to determine what they are learning and how they would apply it in their current and future educational settings as principals. Therefore, in reviewing this part of the EDAM program, recognition that students appreciated the curriculum audit, supervisor interview, TAPR, and

classroom observation assignments, further allowed faculty to infuse more assessment methods and checkpoints like Certify Teacher Exam Mode 0 and an online portfolio component. While using Certify Teacher may prompt domains in need of review or practice, the online portfolio makes finding assignments, listing additional certifications, and adding any other required documentation easily accessible. However, what this domain also assisted faculty in doing was to acknowledge that the current practice of an oral comprehensive exam is not a true indicator of principal preparation program readiness, prompting use of the Representative Exam as a better indicator of candidate readiness and competency beginning fall 2025.

Graduate Outcomes

This domain included collaborative team meetings, reflective dialogue, and the use of illustrative descriptors to assess current practices and find areas for improvement. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the entire self-assessment not only provided insight into program strengths and growth areas but also aligned with the Texas Education Agency's five principal certification requirements. Moreover, the team engaged with other Texas-based preparation programs through QM's "critical friends" model, which promoted cross-institutional learning and professional networking. These interactions allowed the faculty to reflect on their practices, compare approaches, and strengthen their shared vision for high-quality, equity-centered leadership preparation especially as it looks to improve program graduates who are eligible for state certification. While some candidates' tracking in this principal preparation program is supported by Certify Teacher, TEA's Insight to Impact dashboard, and Pearson's Results Analyzer software, there was an acknowledgement that candidate performance indicators needed to be better used.

Literature Review

Origins of Online Programs

The origins of online education trace back to Caleb Phillips in 1728, who provided shorthand training through the postal service primarily to female students. This was followed by the establishment of the first correspondence school, the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, in 1873, which also attracted female participants from various socio-economic backgrounds. During this period, the first distance degree program began at Illinois Wesleyan College, where the popularity of such programs led to the founding of Chautauqua University and the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle between 1883 and 1887,

alongside the flourishing Chautauqua Movement in the mid-1920s, which focused on adult education in New York (Pregowska et al., 2021).

The evolution of distance learning continued with the University of Chicago's introduction of the first college-level program in 1892 and the University of Iowa's televised courses. Despite initial reluctance from educators, the development of specialized channels for instruction began in the 1950s, leading to the formation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in 1967. Then, the 1970s saw the introduction of personal computers, starting with the Altair, followed by more accessible models like the Apple II and IBM PC. The internet's public access in the 1990s revolutionized education, with the University of Phoenix launching online programs in 1989, and New York University becoming the first significant institution to offer online courses in 1998 (Pregowska et al., 2021). Since then, the number of universities and corporations offering online education options has burgeoned, as of 2019, to include 42 percent of all undergraduate students taking at least one online course pre-pandemic (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023).

The Impact of COVID-19 on Online Education

Prior to COVID-19, the primary reasons for online/distance education can be characterized by remoteness of students, busy schedules, and needed professional development associated with employment. However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to halt face-to-face teaching and move coursework fully online. Some institutions were not prepared for this rapid change, and some had to react quickly and begin without necessary infrastructure. Furthermore, other factors that challenged institutions were lack of personal connection and socialization during online education. In turn, online student engagement models were developed to increase student participation in online education.

Consequently, the Community of Inquiry Framework (CoI) (Garrison et al., 2000) became the most cited framework related to research studies on online learning (Honig & Salmon, 2021). Researchers have established that online course designers incorporate three lines of inquiry: social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence (Garrison et al., 2000). *Teaching presence* is the design and organization of the course, instructor facilitation like guiding behaviors, and direct instruction behaviors such as feedback. *Social presence* is associated with course-related dynamics that relate to affective expression, open communication, and group cohesion. Meanwhile, *cognitive presence* incorporates a four-phase process of practical inquiry (e.g., Garrison, 2009) and encompasses triggering events such as

motivating class activity, exploration, integration, and resolution. In essence, the three presences are interrelated, where CoI researchers propose it is no longer enough for teachers to ask what types of presence are needed to develop in their teaching, but rather, how teachers must match their teaching model and behavior with the learning abilities of the learners.

Furthermore, Honig and Salmon (2021) concluded that a revised CoI model is the ideal since “learning presence” mediates relationships among teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence. The authors built upon these findings in a later study of 2,010 college students. Moreover, Shea and Bidjerano (2012) showed that when teaching or social presence is low, learner self-regulation acts as a compensating factor in the development of learners’ cognitive presence. Since online learning requires a higher degree of self-regulation than face-to-face learning, self-regulated learning (SLR) fosters significantly higher academic outcomes, as it involves students’ intentional efforts to manage and direct complex learning activities toward the successful completion of academic goals (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). Thus, students’ self-regulation in e-learning environments is critical (Bandura, 1991).

Likewise, faculty development plays a critical role in enhancing the quality of educational administration master’s programs (Bilal et al., 2019). Building faculty capacity ensures that educators are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to guide future administrators effectively. This literature review examines three key areas of faculty development that include experiential learning, tailored support, and peer learning, thereby emphasizing the need for continuous, reflective, and collaborative practices supported and reified by the *Quality Measures™ Principal Preparation Program Self-Study Toolkit* (12th Edition).

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is an approach that engages faculty members in interactive and iterative learning processes. Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning theory suggests that learning is a continuous cycle where individuals engage in concrete experiences, reflect on those experiences, conceptualize, and experiment with new behaviors. This cyclical process is essential in helping faculty master and apply new concepts in educational administration (Omer et al., 2017). Experiential learning offers a direct approach where faculty can practice applying theoretical knowledge in real-world situations. In the context of an educational administration program, this might involve simulations, role-playing, and problem-based learning scenarios that mimic administrative challenges

(Ballenger & Jiang, 2023). Such interactive steps allow faculty to progressively deepen their understanding and confidence in handling complex topics such as instructional leadership, data-driven decision-making, and school law. According to Dewey (1938), learning by doing not only reinforces content knowledge, but also fosters critical thinking, which is essential in preparing future school leaders.

Similarly, reflection is a key component of experiential learning, allowing faculty to assess their instructional practices and adapt their teaching to better meet students’ needs. Ryan (2013) stated that reflection promotes deeper learning, as individuals analyze their experiences and draw lessons from them. In a master’s program, as supported by the *Quality Measures™ Principal Preparation Program Self-Study Toolkit* (12th Edition), this reflection might take the form of faculty reviewing student feedback, examining administrative case studies, or engaging in collaborative discussions with colleagues. By continuously reflecting on their teaching methods, faculty can adapt their approaches to foster better learning outcomes among students.

Mentorship is also one of the most impactful forms of tailored support. New faculty benefit from structured mentorship programs that pair them with experienced faculty members. These mentorship programs provide guidance on curriculum development, instructional best practices, and administrative responsibilities (McDowell et al., 2014). Moreover, structured mentorship fosters a culture of collaboration, allowing faculty members to share insights, refine teaching methodologies, and receive constructive feedback.

Faculty Learning Communities

Another effective approach is the development of faculty learning communities (FLCs). FLCs serve as collaborative spaces where faculty members discuss challenges, explore new pedagogical strategies, and engage in shared problem-solving. These communities promote interdisciplinary learning and provide faculty with a network of support. Research indicates that faculty learning communities contribute to improved teaching effectiveness and professional growth, particularly in dynamic fields like educational administration (Muammar & Alkathiri, 2022). With the growing demand for online and hybrid learning environments, faculty members often need targeted support in technology integration, especially now with the advent of artificial intelligence. Workshops and direct training sessions can help faculty enhance their digital literacy, learn to effectively use learning management systems (LMS), and integrate interactive tools that foster student engagement (Omer et al., 2017). Institutions that provide

ongoing technical support empower faculty to use technology for more effective instruction.

New faculty, particularly those transitioning from K-12 administration to higher education, benefit from scaffolded professional development. Institutions can design onboarding programs that gradually introduce faculty to university policies, instructional expectations, and assessment frameworks (Gao et al., 2022). This phased approach helps new faculty build confidence and competence, reducing the learning curve associated with entering academia. By implementing tailored support strategies such as structured mentorship, faculty learning communities, technology training, and scaffolded professional development, institutions can strengthen faculty capacity and enhance the overall quality of principal preparation programs. This approach ensures that faculty members are well-equipped to mentor future school leaders while fostering an environment of continuous learning and improvement (Ballenger & Jiang, 2023).

Individual support can be offered through mentoring, coaching, or one-on-one professional development opportunities. Mentoring relationships allows experienced faculty to guide less experienced colleagues in navigating the complexities of teaching in a master's program (McDowell et al., 2014). Coaching gives structured opportunities for faculty to receive feedback and develop specific skills related to curriculum design, instructional delivery, and assessment. The effectiveness of coaching helps educators translate new learning into practice.

Providing Opportunities for Professional Development and Peer Learning

Professional development opportunities, such as workshops, seminars, and conferences, are essential in keeping faculty members current with contemporary trends and best practices. These activities not only enhance faculty knowledge but also allows them to experiment with innovative teaching strategies to integrate them into their programs (Muammar & Alkathiri, 2022). Gao et al. (2022) suggested that effective professional development is sustained over time, allowing educators to build ability incrementally. Moreover, peer learning fosters collaboration among faculty members who face similar challenges, creating opportunities for shared knowledge and capacity building (McDowell et al., 2014). This approach allows faculty to learn from one another's experiences and develop collective ability.

By facilitating peer learning environments, faculty members build a collaborative environment and engage in meaningful discussions about their teaching experiences, challenges, and successes. Wenger (1998) referred to this

as a “community of practice,” where members collectively contribute to and benefit from shared knowledge. In an educational administration program, peer learning might involve collaborative curriculum development, joint research projects, or informal study groups. Moreover, collaborative environments encourage faculty members to work together to solve shared challenges, such as designing effective practicum experiences for aspiring administrators. When faculty collaborate, they pool their ability and generate innovative solutions that improve program delivery. Research by Sarid and Levanon (2022) indicated that collaboration among educators leads to improved instructional practices and student outcomes.

Results

The results of the self-study revealed several key findings across the six Quality Measures™ domains. Moreover, the findings provided meaningful answers to the study's central aim: to assess and improve program content, alignment, and instructional practices in a fully online principal preparation program. Through critical reflection and collaborative analysis, the faculty were able to draw connections between the study's outcomes and its guiding questions regarding program quality, coherence, and candidate readiness.

In the Candidate Admissions domain, the faculty recognized the need to strengthen the admissions process by introducing a second screening step, such as candidate interviews, to better assess applicants' leadership readiness and alignment with program goals. Recruitment practices were also reviewed, with a recommendation to include faculty more directly in outreach and admissions decisions, moving beyond sole reliance on third-party services. This finding emulates trends in the literature that denotes the importance of a selective admission process in identifying strong leadership potential (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Within the Coursework domain, faculty confirmed strong alignment between existing courses and the Texas Principal Standards. However, the review highlighted the need to make select adjustments to better prepare students for the PAIL 268 and PASL certification exams. This led to revisions in course assessments and reinforced alignment with Quality Matters (QM) standards, supporting the continued recertification of online courses. This aligns with research based on the importance of targeted coursework in preparing leaders for real-world administrative responsibilities and state licensure requirements (Herman et al., 2022).

In the Pedagogy-Andragogy domain, the program was found to integrate a wide range of instructional methods, such as leadership case studies, scholarly articles,

discussion-based scenarios, and job-embedded tasks, which foster autonomy and practical application across the 10-course degree program. These findings align with Kolb's experiential learning theory (1984) and adult learning theory (Ryan, 2013), which support that this EDAM program's online delivery is both rigorous and responsive to the needs of adult learners, promoting reflective and experiential learning.

Meanwhile, the Clinical Practice domain review affirmed the strength of the practicum experiences provided through EDAM 5335 and EDAM 5336. Still, faculty identified areas for improvement, including clearer expectations for site supervisors and better alignment of practicum assignments with principal certification of performance tasks. Consequently, practicum documentation was revised, expectations were clarified, and mentoring structures were enhanced to ensure candidates received consistent and guided field experiences. These findings mirror the national recommendations of the Wallace Foundation (2016) for enhancing and strengthening field-based experiences in leadership preparation.

In the Performance Assessment and Graduate Outcomes domains, the faculty determined that the integration of continuous assessment strategies, such as rubrics aligned to PASL tasks, was critical. The self-study process led to strengthened use of performance data to inform instructional planning and candidate support. Cross-institutional feedback from peer EDAM programs in the QM cohort further validated the program's direction and provided benchmarking opportunities.

Overall, the self-study process led to a shared understanding among faculty of program strengths and areas for growth. It also supported onboarding of new faculty, built faculty capacity, and initiated meaningful revisions that will enhance candidate preparation, certification outcomes, and long-term program quality.

Discussion

This self-study affirmed that continuous improvement is essential for principal preparation programs to ensure that future school leaders are equipped to meet the evolving challenges of the ever-changing educational landscape. The results further supported the study's purpose which documented how the EDAM program used the *Quality Measures™ Principal Preparation Program Self-Study Toolkit* (12th Edition) developed by the Education Development Center (EDC), to assess and improve course content, alignment, and instructional practices congruent with current leadership standards and the needs of today's school principals. Each of the six Quality Measures™ domains provided a lens through which faculty could identify program strengths and areas

for refinement, ensuring alignment with Texas Principal Standards and national trends in school leadership preparation.

As schools become increasingly diverse and the demands for accountability grow, preparation programs must continuously update their curricula to reflect new leadership theories, instructional practices, and equity-based approaches (Ryan, 2013). This process of improvement ensures that aspiring principals are prepared, not only in administrative tasks, but also in fostering inclusive school cultures to improve student outcomes. To sustain meaningful growth, principal preparation programs must integrate data-driven decision-making into their evaluation processes. Regular assessments of program effectiveness, including faculty feedback, candidate performance metrics, and post-graduation impact studies, can offer valuable insights into areas needing refinement. Collaborative partnerships between universities and K-12 districts can further enhance the relevance of coursework by aligning leadership training with real-world educational challenges. These partnerships ensure that principal candidates gain firsthand experience addressing critical issues such as instructional leadership, school climate and safety, funding, and equity-driven policies.

Additionally, the integration of real-world experiences, such as internships, problem-based learning, and case studies, contributes to the practical application of theoretical knowledge, making continuous improvement a cornerstone of effective principal preparation. Aspiring school leaders receive help from structured mentorship and immersive fieldwork, where they can apply research-based leadership strategies in authentic settings. Programs that embrace experiential learning not only strengthen leadership competencies but also instill confidence and adaptability in future administrators. Furthermore, a key component of continuous improvement involves fostering reflective practice among faculty and program participants. Encouraging principal candidates to engage in self-assessment and collaborative discussions on leadership challenges fosters a culture of continuous learning and innovation. Digital portfolios, professional learning communities, and faculty-led seminars can serve as mechanisms for ongoing professional development and program enhancement.

Overall, the self-study's findings are directly connected to the study's Quality Measures framework and research questions by providing actionable insights, grounded in current research, to enhance faculty capacity, instructional coherence, and candidate success. By embedding continuous improvement practices into principal preparation, institutions can ensure that their graduates are not only capable administrators, but also transformative leaders who advance educational equity,

foster student achievement, and drive systemic change in their schools and communities. To reinforce the critical role of well-designed and adaptable leadership preparation programs, future research should examine the long-term impact of such continuous improvement models on principal effectiveness and retention, school performance, and student outcomes.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Building faculty capacity within a master’s program in educational administration particularly through engagement with the *Quality Measures*[™] (QM) framework and the direct support of The Wallace Foundation requires a comprehensive approach that integrates experiential learning, individualized support, and peer collaboration. Through active participation in structured learning opportunities and collaborative inquiry, faculty considering this framework can enhance their instructional effectiveness and deepen their ability to prepare aspiring school leaders for the complexities of today’s educational landscape. As educational expectations continue to evolve and grow more complex, ongoing professional development is critical to maintaining program quality and ensuring alignment with the needs of both students and administrators.

To achieve sustainable improvement, institutions must embed faculty development into their organizational

culture, treating it as a continuous process rather than a series of isolated events. Cultivating a reflective and innovative faculty culture not only strengthens individual instructional practices but also reinforces the overall coherence and impact of principal preparation programs. Future research should examine the relationship between structured faculty development models and outcomes such as principal candidate success and leadership readiness. Furthermore, cross-institutional collaboration and policy engagement can serve as catalysts for advancing equity-focused, evidence-informed faculty development. By prioritizing faculty capacity-building, institutions position themselves to create dynamic, high-impact learning environments that empower both faculty and the next generation of school leaders to lead with confidence, equity, and effectiveness.

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