



SCHOOL LEADER PROGRAM ENDORSEMENT

DEFINITION OF AN ENDORSEMENT CERTIFICATE

Following approval by the Department, baccalaureate, or graduate degree-granting institutions, alone or in cooperation with other institutions, community colleges or school entities, may offer short programs (12 credits) that lead to the Program Endorsement. The Program Endorsement documents knowledge in new and emerging areas where formal certification does not exist. The Program Endorsement is intended to improve a teacher's skills in dealing with complex classroom settings. These endorsements are added to existing Level I or Level II Certificates but are not required to perform service in these areas.

INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL LEADER ENDORSEMENT GUIDELINES

This document describes the professional knowledge, skills, and competencies that candidates will learn by completing a prescribed sequence of courses (including field experiences). In addition to specific requirements and competencies, these guidelines discuss the School Leader Endorsement program design, candidate competencies, field experiences, and any prerequisite certificates needed by the candidate.

Prerequisite for School Leader Endorsement Program

Level I and Level II certificates (including but not limited to regular and special education, school psychologist, principal, guidance counselor, speech and language clinician, occupational and physical therapist, reading specialist, and home and school visitor) are a prerequisite for the School Leader Endorsement Program.

Consistent with Chapter 354, all endorsement programs must include some components of field experiences (see 22 PA Code §354.25(d)). Field experiences are defined as a range of formal, required school and community activities participated in by candidates who are enrolled in educator preparation programs. These activities generally include supervision and mentorship of a teacher with expertise in the endorsement area. Effective field experiences provide candidates with increasing exposure to learning situations and school settings under the guidance of program faculty and trained mentors throughout the preparation program.

Institutions must demonstrate:

- 1) how they implement field experiences.
- 2) the duration of candidate field experiences.
- 3) how these experiences are closely integrated with coursework, assessment practices, and program goals.

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL LEADER ENDORSEMENT

The School Leader Endorsement is driven by the goal of ensuring effective leaders in classrooms, schools, and districts. A system for ensuring high quality teachers and leaders includes:

- 1) recruitment of high-quality educator candidates,
- 2) rigorous and adaptive educator preparation programs,
- 3) purposeful induction experiences for newly hired educators led by effective practitioners, and
- 4) the continuous growth of educators in the context of a career ladder that recognizes competence as the basis for advancement and leverages talent to develop the capacity of others.

Leaders in education at all levels (classroom, school, district) are responsible for developing and sustaining a learning-centered school culture targeting excellence, equity, and efficiency. Effective school leaders are system thinkers, change agents, relationship builders, and lead learners. By designing a system of leadership development that promotes and supports effective leadership at the school level, Pennsylvania can improve student outcomes, attract, and retain teachers into the profession, and move the commonwealth toward becoming one of the highest-performing educational jurisdictions in the world.

Strong career ladders for professional educators are a system feature in the highest-performing jurisdictions in the world. In the United States, K-12 educators typically move on a salary schedule based on time served and credits accumulated, in contrast to robust career progression systems found in high-performing countries that rely on competency, capacity-building of colleagues, and fidelity to standards reserved for advanced credentials. This endorsement enhances those practices through the assessment of:

- 1) a candidate's classroom and/or school level leadership experiences prior to embarking on the program of study,
- 2) formative assessment throughout the program, and
- 3) final assessment based on portfolio evidence.

The PA Department of Education traditionally authorizes certificate endorsements earned by completing four 3-credit courses. The School Leader Endorsement adheres to the established practice of 12 credits, distributed over a recommended two-year period as described in the sample course offering calendar below. Candidates for the School Leader Endorsement will be able to accumulate credit in their coursework based on satisfactory participation and completion of assignments. Institutions of higher education offering this program endorsement coursework are encouraged to engage current principals who have earned the equivalent of the School Leader Endorsement to support higher education faculty in determining whether or not the portfolio submitted by the candidate at the conclusion of the coursework demonstrates the level and quality of competency expected of principals who are leaders of their peers. Such a practice

preserves the integrity of the credential. A current listing of PDE-recognized principals who meet such criteria is available from the PA Principals Association.

PROGRAM DESIGN

This endorsement is designed to support educators in achieving, as well as building the capacity of others to achieve more equitable access and outcomes for students. The endorsement program coursework engages participants in:

- 1) contextual analysis based on a thorough understanding of qualitative and quantitative data;
- 2) skill development in team behaviors that advance action learning team effectiveness;
- 3) coaching one's peers in developing and implementing team-based action learning; and
- 4) writing a case study on the effects of the team-based action learning process on achieving equitable student outcomes.

The underlying design principles for this program endorsement are:

- a) demonstration of competence in an authentic setting; and
- b) demonstration of the ability to develop the capacity of others (including one's own staff, as well as more novice school leaders within other schools).

The School Leader Endorsement program coursework is intended to be taken in a cohort model with a minimum of ten candidates per cohort to accommodate collaborative small group projects and to facilitate coaching simulations. To maximize the cohort experience, it is recommended that coursework be delivered in person or in a hybrid model that provides for in-person collaboration at intervals throughout the course.

The successful candidate for this endorsement will be an experienced teacher leader, program leader, or school leader who has been involved in cycles of action learning to improve student outcomes. Teachers who have already earned PDE's Instructional Coach and/or Skills for Teacher Leaders program endorsements are outstanding candidates, as are school leaders who have completed the National Institute for School Leadership program provided by PDE to Act 45 administrators. Institutions of higher education may want to ascertain the extent to which a prospective candidate has engaged in individual and/or team-based action learning or other disciplined cycles of continuous improvement to better assess the depth to which concepts and strategies associated with leading change will need to be explored within the coursework they develop as providers.

The professional core courses, competencies, and experiences for the School Leader Endorsement program must be designed to enhance the standards articulated in Pennsylvania's Framework for Leadership as well as develop the capacity of others to

achieve them. The program must prepare educators who will be able to support equitable access and outcomes for students to achieve excellence as efficiently as possible. The program consists of required competencies and includes field experiences. The program design must describe clearly how the relevant set of knowledge, skills, and competencies inform the program design, and the application must also indicate how the institution will assess whether candidates have acquired the required knowledge, skills, and competencies. All courses (12 credits) must be grounded in theories of cognitive, emotional, and social development and demonstrate research-based practices which enable candidates to gain the knowledge and experience needed to coach others in the use of qualitative and quantitative data to improve student outcomes. The School Leader Endorsement establishes that eligible individuals will demonstrate competency related to the following key domains:

- Collaborative Data Discourse: Analysis, Interpretation, and Action Learning
- Coaching Behaviors to Support Action Learning (skill development)
- Coaching to Support Action Learning (practical application in an authentic setting)
- Case Study Writing through Peer Collaboration

Field Experiences

Applying what is learned to authentic school settings and engaging other educators within and beyond the endorsement candidates' cohort is a keystone to earning the School Leader Endorsement. It is imperative that candidates seeking the School Leader Endorsement demonstrate their learning in an authentic setting. The field experiences associated with the coursework includes:

- 1) Developing the capacity of their own building-level/program-level staff in analyzing, interpreting, and acting upon qualitative and quantitative data to inform decisions and improve student outcomes;
- 2) Developing their own and the capacity of their cohort peers and building-level/program-level teams in utilizing coaching skills and strategies, including listening, observing, questioning, giving and receiving feedback, and reflecting in relationship to action learning/disciplined cycles of continuous improvement;
- 3) Developing the capacity of newer school leaders (beyond one's own building/program) through a year-long coaching relationship designed to improve that newer leader's use of qualitative and quantitative data in service to action learning/disciplined cycles of continuous improvement; and
- 4) Developing the capacity of principal preparation program candidates through the use of a case study written by the School Leader Endorsement candidate who then shares that case study with higher education professionals in relation to its use in preparing principal candidates.

Field experiences will be integrated into course content and will include direct interactions with professionals at the classroom, school, and higher education levels.

CANDIDATE COMPETENCIES

Course competencies for this endorsement were developed by and for Pennsylvania

educators with support from the following stakeholders: institutions of higher education, the PA Principals Association, intermediate unit personnel, the National Center on Education and the Economy, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Institutions of higher education are encouraged to contact the PA Principals Association or the National Center on Education and the Economy to access research and resources that may be useful in developing the coursework for this endorsement program. Institutions of higher education that offer this endorsement should anticipate developing a strong collaborative relationship with K-12 school leaders who have earned this endorsement as they will serve as outstanding resources in supporting IHE providers of the coursework associated with this endorsement.

When a candidate’s coursework has met the provider institution’s requirements associated with post-baccalaureate or graduate credit, the candidate should receive the credit and the associated Act 45/Act 48 hours and be recommended to the PA Department of Education as qualifying for the School Leader Program Endorsement. Providers should plan for all case studies written during the final course to be made available to the PA Department of Education so they can be shared across the commonwealth with educator preparation programs as well as in-service educators. Case studies are intended to serve as learning assets to provide an authentic and relevant understanding of the complexities associated with classroom and school system design that leaders need to understand to achieve excellence and equity efficiently.

Successful candidates for the School Leader Endorsement will be able to demonstrate the following competencies as evidenced by corresponding portfolio artifacts:

TOPIC: Collaborative Data Discourse: Analysis, Interpretation, & Action Learning		
	Competencies	Sample Assessment/Portfolio Artifact
	<i>Professional Educators:</i>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Utilize data to inform decision-making that targets improved student outcomes. b. Collect, analyze, and interpret multiple types of quantitative and qualitative data to achieve equitable access and outcomes to improve student learning. c. Recognize the affordances and constraints of various data types. d. Demonstrate a thorough analysis and interpretation of building data in collaboration with staff to determine appropriate action to improve student learning. 	A thorough analysis, interpretation, and report on action taken regarding the building level data (achievement, discipline, equitable access to learning and supports, perception, process, demographic, etc.); inclusive of trajectories showing the relationship between higher and lower performing student populations that indicate improved outcomes and closing of opportunity and achievement gaps.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Assess actions taken in response to data relative to impact on conditions associated with both equitable access and outcomes for students. 	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct root cause analyses of conditions within one's system (classroom, school and/or district level), demonstrating the ability to recognize interdependent system components, including when and how those components are working in support of or in conflict with each other. b. Articulate the impact of system conditions on the classroom and school experience for minoritized and marginalized student groups. 	A root cause analysis of how school district policies and practices may limit access and opportunity for minoritized student groups.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Demonstrate the behaviors associated with highly effective teams. b. Develop the behaviors associated with highly effective teams with one's own team. c. Assess and staff capacity to utilize data to improve student learning. d. Build the capacity of staff to analyze, interpret and act upon data through collaborative processes. 	A description with documentation of how the candidate improved the capacity of peers to analyze, interpret, and act upon data to improve student outcomes at the classroom level for all students.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Demonstrate the ability to engage students in the analysis of their own data. b. Create opportunities for choice, reflection, and self-actualization to develop student agency. 	A description with documentation of how the candidate improved the students' capacity to analyze, interpret, and act upon data (student work, behavior, etc.) to improve individual outcomes.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assess the larger community environment to determine the most effective means of engaging families and community members in understanding and acting upon relevant data. b. Develop strategies to engage diverse stakeholders within the larger school community 	Evidence of including the larger school community (parents/families) in understanding and acting upon relevant data.

	<p>(parents/families) in understanding and interacting with relevant data.</p> <p>c. Establish an environment of authentic inquiry that increases family and community involvement in supporting improved student outcomes.</p>	
--	---	--

TOPIC: Coaching Behaviors to Support Action Learning (skill development)		
	Competencies	Sample Assessment/Portfolio Artifact
	<i>Professional Educators:</i>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Self-assess one's capacity for listening, questioning, giving, and receiving feedback, observing, and reflecting. b. Accept input from staff/peers regarding one's capacity for listening, questioning, giving, and receiving feedback, observing, and reflecting. 	Analysis of one's strengths and areas for improvement relative to the coaching skills of listening, questioning, giving, and receiving feedback, observing, and reflecting
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Analyze peer interactions for the presence or absence of skills associated with coaching. b. Explain the elements of and strategies associated with team-based action learning. 	A digital video capturing an individual coaching session, annotated to illustrate specific coaching skills (both evident as well as missed opportunities) and alignment to team-based action learning (use of data, cycles of inquiry, etc.).
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Plan an action learning team meeting that includes anticipating challenges and opportunities that may emerge and developing strategies for responding appropriately. b. Assess the effectiveness of an action learning team meeting for both 1) presence or absence of coaching behaviors and 2) adherence to team-based action learning processes. 	A digital video capturing the candidate facilitating an action learning team meeting, annotated to illustrate specific behaviors of both the candidate and the team members and the impact of the presence or absence of coaching behaviors on the team's interaction, as well as evidence of the characteristics of action learning (use of data, cycles of inquiry, etc.)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Articulate the steps necessary to establish and sustain healthy coaching relationships. b. Apply coaching behaviors to a planned relationship focused on designing and implementing a cycle of team-based action learning. 	A coaching plan to utilize in the subsequent practicum that demonstrates a commitment to relationship building and a thorough understanding of processes associated with action learning.
TOPIC: Coaching to Support Action Learning (practicum)		

	Competencies	Sample Assessment/Portfolio Artifact
	<i>Professional Educators:</i>	
1	a. Maintain clear and concise records of coaching related interactions.	A record of coaching sessions conducted with a teacher or school leader who is engaged in action learning.
2	a. Plan, conduct, and reflect upon coaching sessions with action learning leaders/teams.	An example of pre-session planning and post-session reflection notes - examples from early practicum and late practicum sessions to show growth of competency.
3	a. Recognize and mitigate circumstances that may result in inequitable outcomes.	Evidence associated with coaching toward equitable outcomes.
4	a. Accept constructive feedback.	Assessment of the coaching experienced by the teacher/leader being coached.
5	a. Reflect on one's own coaching behaviors and the impact of those behaviors on the outcomes experienced by the person/team being coached.	Reflections on the coaching experience, including challenges, successes, and lessons learned.

TOPIC: Case Study Writing and Portfolio Peer Review

	Competencies	Sample Assessment/Portfolio Artifact
	<i>Professional Educators:</i>	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Design a teaching/heuristic case study based on action research. b. Demonstrate the ability to affect a system change through a formal case study. c. Use coaching competencies in working collaboratively on case studies. d. Illustrate key principles and articulate specific feedback examples for developing principals. 	Written case study that articulates the context, vision, theory of action, strategies, evaluation, and resources utilized by the candidate to affect a systemic improvement to their school.
2	a. Assess one's own leadership strategies and behaviors evident in the case study.	A reflection on the challenges, successes, and failures associated with the case study.

3	a. Develop guiding questions that require learners to engage with complex problems.	Discussion questions (developed by peer 'study group') that guide the use of the case study in principal preparation programs as a means to further develop prospective principals' understanding of the principalship through the lenses of system thinker, change agent, relationship builder, and lead learner.
4	a. Demonstrate the capacity to give and receive actionable feedback on system leadership for continuous improvement.	Cohort members' sample feedback and modifications made in response to that feedback.

FACULTY

Endorsement programs submitted for review to the Department will include the qualifications of faculty assigned to teach each course within the program. Faculty responsible for teaching coursework associated with this program endorsement must have expertise in coaching and team-based action learning in a K-12 setting. They should also hold advanced degrees and/or extensive experience in disciplines associated with behavioral science and systemic change in the context of human-centered design theory. Consequently, including both qualified K-12 practitioners as well as university researchers as co-teachers of School Leader coursework is advised.

Proposals will be expected to include evidence of collaboration with current practicing school leaders who have been recognized for their effectiveness in achieving improved student outcomes, equitably and efficiently.

Faculty should be experienced school leaders who demonstrate outstanding coaching behaviors (listening, observing, questioning, giving, receiving feedback, and reflecting) and who have a deep understanding of team-based action learning to achieve improved student outcomes. Faculty teaching in School Leader Endorsement programs should represent a strong combination of current practical and theoretical knowledge about school leadership, system design, and change processes.

School Leader Endorsement programs should consider the following elements when assigning faculty and/or screening co-teachers from K-12 institutions to teach the core courses:

- Faculty should have expertise in these areas:
 - change theory and practice,
 - system design,
 - assessment and data analysis,
 - executive coaching skills, and
 - team-based action learning
- Expertise may be evidenced through a combination of:

- educational degrees,
- professional learning,
- experience in PK-16 leadership roles and responsibilities, and
- scholarship.
- A doctoral degree is preferred. However, a master's degree may be sufficient if accompanied by other experiences that ensure the relevant expertise.
- Faculty should have experience in teaching, leading, coaching, and engaging in team-based action learning in Pre K-12 schools.
- Evidence of the aforementioned areas of expertise and experience may be documented through:
 - leading successful efforts to improve K-12 student outcomes equitably and efficiently
 - facilitating job-embedded, collaborative professional learning
- Evidence of scholarship includes (but is not limited to):
 - publishing articles or books,
 - presentations at professional conferences,
 - participation in curriculum development, and
 - program accreditation.

Programs may be approved if at least 80% of faculty members for this program are qualified to teach their assigned course(s). If any faculty are found to be unqualified for their assigned course(s), the institution will have two years to ensure that 100% of the faculty are qualified.

RELATED INFORMATION

Application Process

The institution's certification officer will recommend the candidate for the endorsement after successful completion of the School Leader Endorsement program coursework. The candidate must complete the required PDE application for endorsement and pay the appropriate fee to add the endorsement to their certificate. The application process may be found on the PDE Certifications page.

Professional Learning Specifications

- Coursework must include at least 12 graduate level credits.
- Coursework may be face-to-face, on-line, or a blended model of the two. While some on-line courses may be a component of the program, to ensure that field experience and competencies are developed, programs that are delivered completely on-line will not be approved.
- Coursework must demonstrate candidate competencies through coursework assessment.
- Coursework must include a planned practicum with a mentor relationship.
- Coursework may be offered as university coursework and/or approved IU courses or PDE-affiliated programs in conjunction with an institution of higher education, and extensive, well-designed clinical experiences.

REFERENCES

- Bernhardt, Victoria L.; Data Analysis for Continuous School Improvement, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017.
- Cho, Yonjoo; “What Is Action Learning? Components, Types, Processes, Issues, and Research Agendas” *Learning and Performance Quarterly*, 1(4), 2013.
- Duarte, Nancy; Resonate: Present Visual Stories that Transform Learning. John Wiley & Sons, 2010.
- Foster-Fishman, Pennie G. & Erin R. Watson; “The ABLe Change Framework: A Conceptual and Methodological Tool for Promoting Systems Change” *Society for Community Research and Action*, 2011.
- Herman, R., Wang, E.L., & Gates, S. (2022). *Collaborating on University Principal Preparation Program Redesign: A Summary of Findings for University Principal Preparation Program Providers*. Rand Corporation.
- National Center on Education and the Economy; [Building the Nation Builders: How Singapore Supports Its World-Class Teaching Profession](#) (video), 2019.
- Schein, Edgar H.; Humble Consulting: How to Provide Real Help Faster Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. 2016.
- Schwarz, Roger; Smart Leaders, Smarter Teams: How You and Your Team Get Unstuck to Get Results Jossey-Bass, 2013
- Wellman, Bruce & Laura Lipton; Data-Driven Dialogue: A Facilitator’s Guide to Collaborative Inquiry Miravia, 2004.
- World Institute for Action Learning (WIAL); wial.org

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

COURSE	SEMESTER		
YEAR 1			
Course 1: Data <i>3 credits</i>	Spring		
Course 2: Coaching Skills <i>3 credits</i>		Summer	
Course 3A: Coaching Practicum <i>1 credit</i>			Fall
YEAR 2			
Course 3B: Coaching Practicum <i>1 credit</i>	Spring		
Course 3C: Coaching Practicum <i>1 credit</i>		Summer	
Course 4A: Case Study <i>1 credit</i>	Spring		
Course 4B: Case Study <i>2 credits</i>		Summer	
Recognition at annual PSBA/PASA, PA Principals Association, PASCD conferences			Fall