



Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008

A Foundation for Helping States and Districts Improve Education Leadership

Washington, DC, June 3, 2008 – The Council of the Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is pleased to offer a set of new print and online resources to help policymakers and education officials recruit, develop, support, and retain education leaders who can bring out the best in each and every student. These materials will provide state education agency leaders and others the tools necessary to help create a common vision and goals for improving student achievement through better educational leadership.

Education leadership is more important than ever. States recognize that schools and districts will not meet demanding requirements for improving achievement without effective leaders. The recently released education leadership standards, known to most of you as the “ISLLC¹ Standards,” represent the latest set of high-level policy standards for education leadership. The standards provide guidance to state policymakers as they work to improve education leadership preparation, licensure, evaluation, and professional development.

With support from The Wallace Foundation, the revised ISLLC Standards were developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), a steering committee of 10 membership organizations that represent state policymakers, school leaders, professors of education, and other scholars.

This set of materials includes:

- A publication that presents the new ISLLC policy standards: [*Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 as adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration \(NPBEA\)*](#). The publication also explains how the new standards were developed, what has been learned over the past decade about school leaders, and ideas for how to use the policy standards to improve practice.
- A comprehensive online database rich with empirical research reports, policy analyses, leadership texts, and other authoritative resources. The research in the database, as identified by the NPBEA/ISLLC research panel, is a representative sample of 83 empirical and 47 sources of knowledge references which support the six 2008 ISLLC standards. It is available at www.ccsso/ISLLC2008Research.
- A [*Frequently Asked Questions*](#) section on our website, which can be used in efforts to explain and promote the new leadership policy standards to other members of the policy and education communities.
- The [*Performance Expectations and Indicators for Education Leaders, an ISLLC-Based Guide to Implementing Leader Standards and a Companion Guide to the Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008*](#). This resource was created by the Council's State Consortium on Education Leadership in response to requests for performance specifications to implement professional standards in leadership policies, programs, and practices.

“Our goal is to help you and everyone else who wants to promote a solid foundation for developing consistent and effective leadership policies and practices,” said Gene Wilhoit, CCSSO

¹ Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium

executive director. “We believe that these new materials will help our members in making this goal a reality.”

Improving Leadership Standards

The ISLLC Standards have helped guide leadership policy and practice in 43 states since they were first released in 1996 by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)². The new policy standards were informed by extensive input from the field and reflect the wealth of findings from the past decade of education leadership research. The new standards are designed to guide high-level policy development and meet the needs of today’s schools and students.

“We hope you will use the new leadership policy standards and the additional material as you develop, align, and update policies and other school leadership activities,” said Joe Simpson, the co-chair of the NPBEA/ISLLC Steering Committee. “Share this material with your colleagues, the public, as well as policymakers.”

Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 organizes the functions that help define strong school leadership under six standards. These standards represent the broad, high-priority themes that education leaders must address in order to promote the success of every student. These six standards call for:

- Setting a widely shared vision for learning;
- Developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
- Ensuring effective management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
- Collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
- Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and
- Understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, legal, and cultural context.

Reflecting a Decade of Learning

One of the most important changes over the past decade has been the intense scrutiny that education leadership has received. When the original ISLLC Standards were adopted in 1996, there was little consensus or research on the role and importance of education leaders in raising student achievement.

Today, it is widely accepted that education leadership is crucial to improving student performance. Research consistently indicates that education leadership is second only to classroom instruction among school-related factors in determining student achievement. It’s also clear that good teachers are drawn to strong leadership. The bottom line is that schools are more likely to attract and retain good teachers if they have strong leaders.

“The question is no longer whether principals and other education leaders matter, but how can we best help develop and support them throughout their careers,” said Joseph Murphy, the co-chair of NPBEA/ISLLC Research Panel.

To help educators, policymakers, and others in the field access this research and other related material, we created an online database (www.ccsso.org/ISLLC2008Research). The database

² Toye, C.; Blank, R.; Sanders, N.M.; & Williams, A. (2007). Key State Education Policies on PK-12 Education, 2006. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers. P. 29. Available: <http://www.ccsso.org/publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=348>

contains a representative sample of 83 empirical and 47 sources of knowledge references which support the six 2008 ISLLC standards. This new resource includes all of the research and other authoritative sources of information that was gathered and reviewed by an NPBEA/ISLLC-appointed research panel as part of the process of updating the ISLLC standards.

“This database is one of the most comprehensive resources for research and other authoritative sources on education leadership supporting the ISLLC Standards,” added research panel co-chair Rosemary Papa. “We hope it is widely used and we encourage contributions to the database in the future.”

A Long-Term Mission

The job of educating policymakers and the public about the role of policy standards is one that will be ongoing for years to come. But it is a task worth taking on. When carefully designed and implemented, standards increase the likelihood that states and school districts are in the best position possible to raise student achievement. For example, the policy standards can influence and drive many levers in the system. For example, they can influence and contribute to

- what is appropriate to expect leaders to know when they are licensed;
- how improvements in school leadership education programs at colleges and universities should be planned, implemented, and evaluated;
- the development of assessment instruments and professional development used in helping define principal growth toward expert practice; and
- improving and determining appropriate working conditions (aligning roles, authority, accountability, and incentives to support leader performance).

“Now that there is consensus on the important role education leadership plays in raising student achievement, we must promote policies and activities that build strong leaders at all stages of their careers,” Wilhoit added. “Implementing and following a set of guiding policy standards is the best way to make this happen.”

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Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

CCSSO is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA)

Members of NPBEA include: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE); American Association of School Administrators (AASA); Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD); Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO); National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP); National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP); National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE); National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA); National School Boards Association (NSBA); and University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA).

For the past two years, the NPBEA/ISLLC Steering Committee has been revising the ISLLC Standards. This steering committee asked each NPBEA organization to obtain input from its respective constituencies regarding the revision of the ISLLC Standards. The NPBEA/ISLLC

Steering Committee also created a national Research Panel that identified the research base for updating these ISLLC Standards.

The Wallace Foundation

The Wallace Foundation supported the development of Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 as part of its long-term commitment to develop and share knowledge, ideas, and insights aimed at increasing understanding of how education leadership can contribute to improved student learning. Many of the resources cited in this publication and other materials on education leadership can be downloaded for free at www.wallacefoundation.org.