

Authentic Planning for Leadership Preparation and Development

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ABSTRACT

There has been a call for change in leadership preparation programs. The current revisioning of the landscape of leadership preparation is due in part to the rising accountability demands and the focus on the quality and purpose of preparation programs. One manifestation of this recognition is the funding of the School Leadership Program (SLP) beginning in 2002 by the United States Department of Education (USDE). The SLP grants are partnership efforts between school districts and other preparation organizations, which include institutes of higher education and not-for-profit providers. This paper presents a framework for partnership development from a planning perspective that looks at collaborative planning, the use of evidence-based decision making, and sense-making in developing future grants around the School Leadership Program effort. A brief overview of leadership preparation is presented followed by a review of salient planning literature that provides the framework for planning an effective leadership preparation program involving a variety of partners.

School leadership preparation programs have undergone numerous changes over the past 10-15 years, resulting in part from criticisms of universities who are out of touch with their PK-12 counterparts (Levine, 2005; Murphy, 2005; Walker & Qian, 2006; Young, Petersen, & Short, 2002). While historically only universities prepared aspiring leaders (McCarthy & Forsyth, 2009), new approaches to training paradigms include alternative leadership preparation programs by districts and not-for-profit agencies, as well as partnerships between universities and school districts (Sanzo, Myran, & Clayton, 2011). The call for change in leadership preparation programs and the current revisioning of the landscape of leadership preparation are due in part to the “rising demands for accountability at all academic levels” and “has brought the immediacy of the situation to the forefront of discussions surrounding the quality, purpose, intent, focus, and outcomes of educational leadership preparation programs” (Myran, Sanzo, & Clayton, 2011).

Undoubtedly the educational accountability movement, including No Child Left Behind (NCLB), has been a driving force in shifting leadership training. Principals are an integral component in the success of students and impacting their achievement in schools. Policy makers are recognizing the need to focus on “educational leadership preparation and development as a strategy for improving schools and student achievement” (Orr and Orphanos, 2011, p. 19). One manifestation of this recognition is the funding of the School Leadership Program (SLP) beginning in 2002 by the United States Department of Education (USDE). The SLP is a competitive grant designed “to support the development, enhancement, or expansion of innovative programs to recruit, train, and mentor principals (including assistant principals) for high-need LEAs” (United States Department of Education, n.d.). To date, \$158,836,360 has been appropriated for 90 funded programs since 2002.

The SLP grants are partnership efforts between school districts and other preparation organizations, which include institutes of higher education and not-for-profit providers. Effective leadership grants demand a high level of planning to ensure a competitive proposal is developed and one in which can be implemented with fidelity. The innovative preparation programs are expected to influence school leaders in a way that enables them to positively impact student achievement and the schools they serve.

This paper presents a framework for partnership development from a planning perspective that looks at collaborative planning, the use of evidence-based decision making, and sense-making in developing future grants around the School Leadership Program effort. A brief overview of leadership preparation is presented followed by a review of salient planning literature that provides the framework for planning an effective leadership preparation program involving a variety of partners.

LEADERSHIP PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Contemporary innovative leadership preparation programs have emerged, in part, as the outcome of an on-going debate criticizing university-based educational leadership preparation programs (Levine, 2005; Murphy, 2005; Walker & Qian, 2006). “The lack of a clear understanding about what educational leadership preparation programs should be and what content, instructional methods, and structures should frame them is at the heart of this tension” (LaMagdeleine, Maxcy, Pounder, & Reed, 2009, p. 130). The debate has been long-lived (Hackmann & Wanat, 2007; Preis, Grogan, Sherman, & Beaty, 2007) and one of the major arguments of critics has been the claim that university programs are unable to bridge theory and practice (LaMagdeleine, Maxcy, Pounder, & Reed, 2009; Levine, 2005; Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003).

Critics assert that on-the-job training is required to connect the theory to practice and many of the university-based leadership preparation programs do not have an authentic version of this component (Clayton, Sanzo, and Myran, 2012) and that graduates, at times, feel “short-changed” by their programs (Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003). Changes in leadership preparation programs have resulted, in some cases, in complete program metamorphosis. Examples of this can be seen at a state-wide level in Kentucky and Alabama where programs have sunset and have required a complete overhaul and redesign of their aspiring leadership preparation program. A major overarching component of these changes to leadership preparation programs is the incorporation of the district voice in program redesign and participant selection program requiring a focused, concerted planning effort.

Organizations preparing school leaders range from universities, to alternative preparation provider such as the New York City Leadership Academy and New Leaders for New Schools, to school districts themselves. According to Crow (2006) “evidence regarding the quality of university preparation programs is scant, and most arguments resort to anecdotal evidence or have questionable methodologies” (p. 312). Thus, alternate preparation programs have flourished (Grogan, Bredeson, Sherman, Preis, & Beaty, 2009).

The increase in alternative leadership programs has also seen an increase in district partnerships with universities and other leadership preparation providers. These partnerships require a high level of planning and decision making to ensure programs are developed to meet district need, the requirements of the state and leadership provider, along with the students. One of the concerns with partnerships around leadership preparation is about “flawed planning, implementation, and evaluation processes” (Miller and Hafner, 2008, p. 69), as well as unequal distributions of power between the stakeholders that can impact partnership relations. According to Munoz, Winter, and Ricciardi (2006) there are “relatively few examples of successful partnerships” to serve as models (p.13).

At the federal level, funding for leadership preparation partnership programs began in 2002. The United States Department of Education (USDE), under authorization by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [as amended, Title II, Part A, Subpart 5 – National Activities; 20 U.S.C. 2151(b) and 6651(b)], started the School Leadership Preparation Program in 2002. This partnership program between school districts and leadership preparation programs require in-depth planning to develop and sustain programs focused on preparing assistant principals and principals to meet the needs of students in diverse learning environments.

The SLP grant began, in part, as a result of the call for change in leadership preparation. Initially \$10,000,000 in grants was awarded to 20 three-year projects to support the development and implementation of leadership preparation and development programs. “This program provides grants to support the development, enhancement, or expansion of innovative programs to recruit, train, and mentor principals (including assistant principals) for high-need LEAs” (United States Department of Education, n.d.). Since the inception of the grant program in 2002, a total of 90 grant awards have been provided, representing \$145,020,528 in appropriated federal funds. This study explores the planning efforts that are evident in the proposals using a theoretical framework on planning as outlined in the following section. Effective planning using a rational decision making process is critical to the success of educational efforts.

PLANNING

Planning as a discipline is often thought of as a rational, step-by-step process using protocols and relevant information to lead planners to logical products. In the same way, the concept of decision making conceives of evidence as a pointer in the correct direction. Collaborative planning models and research in evidence-based decision making illuminate much messier processes and murkier decision making rules that may or may not link solidly to evidence. Each area is governed by highly social, cultural, and political realities situated in unique and fluctuating contexts. To make sense of the place and use of evidence within these frameworks is also complex.

Collaborative Planning

In this manuscript two bodies of literature inform the concept of planning: urban planning and educational planning. The conceptual portion from educational planning used for this study is described within the context of adult and continuing education.

Classical planning theories espouse planning as a rational process, or what Sork (1996) called a technical-rational lens for planning. Tyler's (1949) principles of curriculum and instructional planning were a prescriptive, linear set of guidelines. These approaches ignore the influences of context, politics, and power in planning. Collaborative planning utilizes inclusive dialogue that gives shape to the social arena (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007). Collaborative planning, also called communicative planning, is a theory for planning that seeks to have representation from all viewpoints within decision making while negotiating the power relationships and political landscape within. Brand and Gaffikin (2007) used the lenses of ontology, epistemology, ideology, and methodology to set the stage for case study research conducted in Northern Ireland. Those lenses will be used to describe collaborative planning and highlight connections to inclusive planning models in education.

Ontology of Collaborative Planning

Collaborative planning operates from a view of reality that is relational and constructed. Space and time are situated within contexts that create alternative experiences for seemingly similar or equal physical and other phenomena. A mile in one direction yields a different experiential length as a mile in another direction (Graham & Healey, 1999). Ten minutes of experience in a park setting is different than ten minutes of experience at a landfill. "Accordingly, the object of any planning endeavor must not be treated as a blank slate but as a unique component of an incredibly complex larger system" (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007, p. 285). Recognizing the contextual factors and the influence of experiences brought by individuals to the planning process situates the process and product of planning within a greater narrative.

The ontological view underlying collaborative planning models with regard to humans and human interactions is also contextual. Human beings are the products of social interactions (Barber, 1984) and political beings (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007). Collaborative planning adheres to the idea of complex adaptive systems, characterized by "fragmentation, uncertainty, and complexity" (Innes & Booher, 2003, p. 10). Instead the rational view of a predictable, robotic system, collaborative planning sees the nature of the world as more like an organism (Brand & Gaffikin ; Innes & Booher, 1999; Jacobs, 1961).

Epistemology of Collaborative Planning

The epistemological view supporting collaborative planning is that knowledge is socially constructed. Healey (2004) urged an awareness of not only what is seemingly obvious, but to "step back and think more about the underlying strategic patterns that derive from the system in which the more immediate patterns are defined" (p. 6). Brand and Gaffikin (2007) bring together the work of many authors on collaborative planning: "In a similar context, Sandercock (1998) reminds us that we need to 'make the invisible visible' and Innes and Booher (1999) encourage us to generate 'emancipatory knowledge [which] transcends the blinders created by our conditions and institutions' (p. 418). Only then will we appreciate how 'power is exercised through taken-for-granted norms and practices' (Coaffee & Healey, 2003)" (p.287). Power as a concept of planning models and decision making will be discussed through-

out the remainder of this literature review.

Knowledge creation, as understood through collaborative planning, is a co-construction among many. This implies a negotiated knowledge that can “arbitrate among diverse claims and priorities” (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007, p. 287). In the same way, Cervero and Wilson (1994) used a “planning-as-negotiation-of-interests” (Sork, 1996, p.83) metaphor for program planning in adult education. Bringing stakeholders to the table, paying attention to the planning actors, and keeping power interests in the foreground, planning can be more transparent and inclusive, generating a more representative outcome (Sork).

Brand and Gaffikin (2007) pointed to another part of the epistemological claim behind collaborative planning. All types of knowledge must be taken into account, “implying an acknowledgement of tacit knowledge as a major factor driving human decisions and actions, even if it cannot be articulated, let alone measured” (p. 287). The inclusion of tacit knowledge and the co-constructed nature of knowledge is consistent with Coburn & Talbert’s (2006) discussion of sense making and Kennedy’s (1982) definition of working knowledge, which will be discussed in later sections.

Ideology of Collaborative Planning

Collaborative planning models reject traditionalist value-free planning processes, instead encouraging open discussion about values during planning. Value-driven planning seeks to expose the power relationships present with the intention “not to dissolve relations of power in a utopia of transparent communication but to play games with a minimum of domination” (Flyvberg, 1996, p. 391; Brand & Gaffikin, 2007, p. 289). This stance gives focus to a democratic process that gives “voice to the voiceless” (Sarkissian, 2005).

Methodology of Collaborative Planning

In practice, collaborative planning seeks to discourage compartmentalization. Following from the epistemological view, the model calls to “harness the heterogeneity of knowledge” (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007, p. 290). Forester (1999) encouraged broadening the knowledge base for planning. By bringing many viewpoints to the table, pulling back the veil on power relationships, and engaging in inclusive, open dialogue, planning decisions emerge from the co-construction of knowledge among the voices included. This demands a shift away from representational toward participatory forms of decision making with real-time, face-to-face deliberation (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007; Friedmann, 1993; Graham & Healey, 1999).

These democratic ideals drive practice in collaborative planning toward consensus decision rules and away from less participatory models like top-down expertise and majority-rule (Graham & Healey, 1999). The theory allows for planners to be facilitators instead of regulatory, managerial, or controlling actors in the process (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007; Forester, 1996; Healey, 1997; Wissink, 1995). Cervero and Wilson (1994; 2006) focused on the concepts of power, interests, negotiation, and an ethical commitment to democratic principles. Consensus decision making rules are important, but it is just as important to be attentive to who is included at the table and the power relationships among those involved in the process.

Collaborative planning models do not seek to equalize the power inequities among planning groups, but merely to expose them and provide awareness from which to work. Critics have argued collaborative models may be over-ambitious (Hillier, 2003) in that “antagonism and conflict are intrinsic to human relations, and this ‘us’ and ‘them’ are particularly manifest in the diversities of contemporary society (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007, p. 292). Innes (2003) responded with the value of the complexity of collaborative relationships. The second order consequences of the messiness of the planning process - new partnerships, seeing situations in a new context, and new institutional forms - have value even within antagonism. The political realities both creating and inherent in power disparities can bring about productive conflict (Brand & Gaffikin). Mouffe (2000) noted:

an important difference with the model of “deliberative democracy”, is that for “agonistic pluralism”, the prime task of democratic politics is not to eliminate passions from the sphere of the public, in order to render a rational consensus possible, but to mobilize those passions

towards democratic designs (p. 15).

Viewing planning within the realm of planning theory and the context of adult education program planning, specifically with an emphasis on collaborative or communicative planning models shed light on decision making processes consistent with the ontological, epistemological, ideological, and methodological underpinnings of collaborative planning. This view of planning theory sets the stage for looking at how decisions are made in participatory structures. The use of evidence and the ways decision actors make sense of evidence will be examined in the next section.

Evidence-Based Decision Making

Kennedy (1982) offered a combined definition for decision and evidence: “In its simplest form, a decision is a choice among two or more options and evidence is the stuff that informs the choice” (p. 59). Taken at face value, this definition implies decision making as a linear, rational process where evidence is used to instruct the decision makers to the right answer. Kennedy (1984) calls this approach the instrumental model for evidence. Decision making rarely, if ever happens in this way and an alternative model, though much less clean and neat, characterizes evidence not as an instruction to a decision, but as an influence on the user as a human information processor. Evidence causes an individual or a group to think and use working knowledge to help make sense of the information on the path to decisions. This is called the conceptual model and is more consistent with collaborative planning models and consensus decision rules.

The concept of decision making can be viewed as its own entity, but for the purposes of this study the definition put forth by Kennedy (1982), tying evidence and decision, will be used to identify evidence-based decision making its own concept. The definition, however, will not be used to base conceptual understanding of evidence-based decision making. In contrast to the rational implications of the instrumental model, the conceptual model for evidence-based decision making is more consistent with the participatory processes described in collaborative planning theories.

Evidence and Policy

Over the course of the last thirty years, education in the United States has seen a movement toward standards-based reform initiatives. Standards-based education identifies a set of standards for student learning. Learning is measured, usually through standardized tests, to determine whether students are achieving the standards or not. Federal and state policies and mandates, most notably, the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), require schools and school districts to use evidence, or data, to drive decisions on school improvement initiatives. Policy on using evidence in decision making is written in a way that implies “evidence shines a clear unambiguous light on how to strengthen school performance or at least where districts should direct their efforts” (Honig & Coburn, 2007, p. 582). Proponents of this view argue the use of evidence takes politics and ideology out of the decision making process. This rational conception of decision making does not hold in practice (Honig & Coburn; Kennedy, 1982, 1984; Marsh 2006; Spillane 1998, 2000). This view ignores the complexities of schools and school districts, resorting instead to a simplistic set of expectations with no real instructions or explanations for implementation (Coburn & Talbert, 2006; Honig & Coburn).

Language and expectations in federal policy rarely differentiates between the words “evidence”, “data”, and “research”, often using them indiscriminately, interchangeably, and without definition. Additionally, policy gives little to no guidance in the processes of evidence use. “The Reading First and Early Reading First programs (Title I, Part B, Subparts 1 and 2 of NCLB), for example, require that school districts use funds for ‘selecting and implementing a learning system or program of reading instruction based on scientifically based research’ (NCLB, Title I, Part B, Subpart 1, SEC 1202, d, 4, A)” (Honig & Coburn, 2007, p.580). Similar examples of ambiguous language and less than helpful process guidance can be found in mandates on using social science research, formative and summative program evaluation data, student and school performance data, and school improvement plans (Honig & Coburn, 2007).

Evidence Use

Beyond the formal types identified in federal and state mandates are the informal kinds of evidence informing decision making. Information gained by experience is one of the most widely used forms (Honig & Coburn, 2007). This type of evidence influences a range of decisions, including decisions on curriculum and school reform models (Datnow, Hubbard, & Mehan, 2002). Another form of informal evidence is input from parents and community members. Marsh (2003, 2006) conducted a study of two mid-sized school districts in California that used community-wide planning groups to look at student achievement data and suggest improvement designs. The central office members used this feedback to help form decisions, and the findings showed the process helped build community and support for the schools through improvement initiatives. Knowledge of other local issues and the opinions of those within schools and the community contribute to decision making as well (Honig & Coburn).

Two questions follow: In what way is evidence used? And, for what purpose(s) is evidence used? To address the first question, the concept of sensemaking will be addressed later. The second question has been addressed in research regarding evidence use in school districts. As has been stated, the temptation to make evidence use prescriptive leads to a linear view of evidence-based decision making, much like the language in policy would imply. The purposes for such evidence use would be to inform a decision through a bounded process yielding a product (decision) for implementation. Actual decision making and evidence use is complex. The steps in decision making--or even describing the decision making process as having steps--differs for each situation.

Political motivations have often been found to motivate the use of evidence. Evidence is used for building political support (Corcoran et al., 2001; Marsh, 2006) and to “stabilize” and promote “buy in” within a school district (Boeckx, 1994, p .24). Corcoran et al. found the use of this type of evidence included a selective use of research in order to provide the strongest case. Experts were even used on occasion to justify an approach, new program, or other type of decision. Some researchers have gone so far as to say evidence is not used to inform decisions directly at all (Kennedy, 1982). Instead, “evidence influences public opinion and public opinion directly impacts decision making” (Honig & Coburn, 2007, p. 589).

In situations where evidence was used for decision making, Kennedy (1982) found in a study looking at central office decision making in 16 school districts that rarely did school district administrators seek research evidence to help make specific decisions or solve problems. Instead, they “looked for and incorporated evidence into their decision making when that evidence promised to address their interests” (Honig & Coburn, 2007, p. 590).

Regardless whether evidence is used directly or indirectly, for political reasons or other, the ways evidence influences decisions is a complex and highly social endeavor (Coburn & Talbot, 2006; Honig & Coburn, 2007; Kennedy 1982). The next section will discuss what research says about this process and describe the concept of sensemaking.

Sensemaking

Situational and organizational contexts influence the conception of evidence by individuals (Coburn & Talbert, 2006). Groups, both as a collection of individuals and as an entity of itself use prior experience and knowledge situated within context to incorporate new evidence into decision making (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007; Coburn & Talbert, 2006; Honig & Coburn, 2007; Kennedy, 1982, 1984). The process of making the decision is a complex interaction among what each individual brings to the table and the social interactions among a group of humans, who are political beings negotiating within existing and ever-changing power structures (Brand & Gaffikin, Cervero & Wilson, 1994, 2006; Coburn & Talber, 2006; Healey, 1997; Honig & Coburn; Innes & Booher, 1999).

Sensemaking theorists look at how individuals or groups make meaning of new information (Coburn & Talbert, 2006; Vaughan, 1996; Weick, 1995). Much of sensemaking is shaped by the complex processes of group dynamics. Researchers have found “over time, individuals who work with one another in subunits, work groups, or task forces develop shared ways of thinking (Coburn & Talbert, p. 471). It follows that social interaction within groups will influence individual beliefs within the mix of

political factors and new and changing information. The bottom line is consistent with what the authors have noted: evidence alone does not make decisions but rather the interaction of all the “stuff” of individual beliefs and knowledge and group processes and political negotiations.

Once evidence has been accessed, it must be used—or not. The process of incorporation or not incorporating is where sensemaking occurs (Honig & Coburn, 2007). Though some argue the value of evidence is or can be known, this rational view is inconsistent with practice. The views of sensemaking theorists and collaborative planning theories are in agreement on the socially constructed nature of knowledge (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007; Cervero & Wilson, 1996; Healey, 1997). “Information becomes meaningful and prompts action when decision makers socially construct it – when they grapple with the meaning of the evidenced and its implications” (Honig & Coburn, p. 592). When new information comes in, it joins preexisting cognitive and cultural frameworks (Honig & Coburn, 2007). Kennedy (1982) referred to these frameworks as working knowledge:

the organized body of knowledge that administrators and policy makers spontaneously and routinely use in the context of their work. It includes the entire array of beliefs assumptions, and experiences that influence the behavior of individuals at work. It also includes social science knowledge (pp. 1-2).

The degree to which new information has an impact is situational, though Kennedy never found an instance in which new evidence directly informed a decision. The evidence was instead incorporated into the working knowledge of the individuals and collective working knowledge of the group. Spillane and others (Spillane, 1998, 2000; Spillane & Callahan, 2000; Spillane & Thompson, 1997) conducted a series of studies over several years to investigate the processes and contextual influences on the implementation of research-based standards in math, reading, and science. They found decision makers gravitated toward approaches matching their prior practice and preexisting conceptions of curriculum and instruction.

Incorporation is a “profoundly social process – often highly interactive and involving many people in and across a series of meetings and informal conversations over time” (Honig & Coburn, 2007, p. 593). Kennedy (1982) found these social processes created shared beliefs and understandings within the individuals in a group. Consensus was achieved by the development in a common way of framing problems and how to manage different demands within the context of the situation. These findings are in concert with those of collaborative planning theorist who also found socially constructed knowledge and attitudes influenced a shared way of reaching agreements (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007).

Making sense of the melding of preexisting information and new information with social, political, and structural contexts is the heart of decision making. This complex and often jumbled process defies the conception of a logical and prescriptive use of evidence to inform decisions. Grasping all the pieces making up the puzzle of making of any one decision or plan requires viewing each situation through a lens allowing all the contextual factors to be considered. The unique way all factors are related and influenced form meaning within each case and help in understanding the process of decision making.

Authentic Planning for School Leadership Programs

The presentation of the aforementioned literature on planning highlights the need for any planning effort to focus on collaborative planning, the use of evidence-based decision making, and ultimately sense-making from those efforts (see Figure 1). One of the concerns articulated from multiple grantees, as well as non-funded grant personnel, surrounding the development of competitive grants for the School Leadership Program revolves around the creation of an authentic partnership that weighs the needs of all parties. In order to do this, we suggest that those at the forefront of the program initiative utilize a well-articulated planning process. Keep in mind that well-articulated does not mean linear. The process may be cyclical in nature, involving different stakeholders at different times, acknowledging differences in power, as well as weighing multiple types of evidence that is gathered throughout the program development process.

Figure 1



These planning efforts diverge from the traditional model of planning with only a few stakeholders planning out the initiative. The planning process for the SLP grant initiative needs to bring to the table multiple perspectives representing a diverse group of stakeholders who have a vested interest in the development of high quality school leaders (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). The following chart provides suggestions, based upon the authentic partnership planning framework, to help steer the program planning process. It can also assist grantees in retrospectively evaluating their grant development process looking at their partnerships.

Examples in the Authentic Leadership Program

<i>Collaborative planning</i>	Development Process
Multiple perspectives are brought to the planning table	Stakeholders who are a part of the planning process include the superintendent, central office leadership personnel, building level school leaders, community members, district students, leadership program development personnel, and mentors and/or coaches.
The process is values driven	A value identification process takes place early into the planning of the proposal. All values are taken into account and considered during the process, including those of marginalized voices in the district community, community based personnel, and educational stakeholders.
The planning process for the program development discourages compartmentalization of program efforts	All stakeholders are a part of the collaborative planning process throughout the planning effort, rather than being a part of only certain components of the planning effort. Stakeholders have multiple opportunities to contribute.
There is a focus on consensus making	Rules are developed for the group to come to consensus. Majority-rule decisions are not made in this process.

There is an acknowledgement of the difference(s) in power	Stakeholders acknowledge the amount of time and effort required by the different members of the planning process. This effort is not diminished or emphasized, but an awareness is made to all stakeholders about this. It should be understood that not all participants in the grant and leadership preparation effort can put equal time and energy into the program and that there are some, inherent, differences in effort.
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Examples in the Authentic Leadership Program

Evidence-based decision making

Development Process

There is a focus on how the evidence is used and the purpose of the evidence that is being used	The decision making process takes into account a variety of relevant evidence to inform the program development process. This evidence could be feedback from current program participants, district school leaders and aspiring school leaders, national level research about leadership preparation, and the needs of the community the school leaders are serving. The program developers need to pay careful attention to the language being used in the request for proposals and address the types of evidence required in the request.
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Examples in the Authentic Leadership Program

Sense making

Development Process

Questions are asked about how the evidence used within the context of the group and purpose of the grant	The evidence used to make decisions about the development of the program are used in balance with the needs of the stakeholders and the needs for the development of the program. The situational and organizational contexts is taken into consideration. The facilitator of the planning process can use these contexts to build consensus on the program proposal.
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While it is advantageous for future leadership development and preparation grant applicants to utilize this framework when working to establish their grant teams and subsequent applications, it is not limited only to these groups. Other leadership preparation providers, regardless of interest in grants, should also consider using this framework when creating authentic leadership preparation programs. Throughout the development of any proposal or program the facilitator of the process needs to understand the planning process and utilize best practice principles.

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