



Transcript of Conference Call Presentation

Professional Development: Standards for School Leaders Which Promote Success for ALL Students

presented by

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Mary Mack: I want to thank everyone for participating in this month's National Transition Alliance conference call entitled *Professional Development: Standards for School Leaders which Promote Success for ALL Students*. We are really privileged to have a couple of wonderful speakers with good experience.

Neil Shipman is the Director of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), which is part of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). In addition, he is an Associate Professor at the University of Memphis in the Department of Leadership. Carole Veir is also an Associate Professor at the University of Memphis in the Department of Leadership, and she is going to address special leadership issues by focusing on special education leaders.

I'm going to turn it over to Neil and Carole, and they will do their presentation. When they are finished, we will have time for questions and responses.

Neil Shipman: This is Neil Shipman and I am pleased to be involved with this.

I am going to assume that almost everyone involved in this conference call does not know much about ISLLC. My intent is to give you a very brief overview of the kinds of activities that we have been involved with and then Dr. Veir will hone in

specifically on special needs youth and leadership.

The ISLLC was formed as a consortium about five to six years ago by state departments of education and standards boards throughout the country who recognized the need for a national set of standards for principals. They hired me as the Director of the project. Shortly after I came on board, through discussions with the twenty-three states that were involved at that time, we decided that we would go with a set of standards for all school leaders because we felt that all school leaders needed to be involved in reform efforts. We really are a systemic reform group.

Through a long, drawn-out, and very thorough process of small and large group discussions, lots of meetings with lots of different stakeholder groups, and a national survey of thousands of stakeholders, we finally developed six general standards for school leadership. With those standards, we identified approximately two-hundred indicators to define the standards focusing on knowledge base, performances, and dispositions.

At this point in time, we have indications that thirty-one states have either adopted or adapted the standards. We did not specifically separate special education or vocational education out for leadership issues. We focused the standards very much on teaching and learning. Our belief was that all school

leadership activities really ought to be focused on teaching and learning activities.

We also think that all school leaders need to have a common set of standards, whether they are regular educators, quote, unquote, or special educators, quote, unquote. We don't differentiate between the two. For example, the stem for each of the six standards reads as follows: "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students," and then we proceed from there.

The consortium really has two purposes: to reshape the concepts of school leadership and to raise the level of expertise among school leadership. We believe that the standards can be used in a variety of ways. Those areas in which we are focusing are: development of standards themselves, of course, which have been out now since 1996; relicensure issues linked to the standards for school leaders; and certification. We differentiate between licensure and certification. Certification we look at as an honor, so to speak, given by the profession to people that have demonstrated skills above and beyond the minimal expectations. Licensure we look at as the official permission granted by an official agency to those wanting to practice their craft.

We have not done anything with certification at this point in time, although the leading leadership associations like AASA and NASSP have just formed a group to begin to look at that issue and they have assured me that they will use the ISLLC standards as a basis and broaden them somewhat for certification purposes.

Professional development, the topic of this particular conference, has been a big thrust of ours, and I can talk about that a little more later, along

with preparation program design. We have used the standards a great deal to encourage and in some states actually mandate that they be used in the preparation program design. The institutions that offer preparation programs for school leaders redesign their programs and base them on ISLLC standards. That is happening a great deal.

We have not done anything with administrator selection at this point in time. Our licensure standards are being used for licensure of school leaders throughout the country now. We have also developed a licensure exam with the Educational Testing Service for the initial licensing of beginning school principals. That exam has been nationally administered since early in 1998. There are presently seven states using it for licensure purposes. Our data indicates that by the year 2001 there will be as many as sixteen states using it for licensure purposes.

We are not doing anything with administrator evaluation as a consortium; however, I am getting anecdotal kinds of information from independent school districts in particular that are looking at the standards and how to link them to principal evaluation.

Preparation program approval is linked somewhat to the preparation program design. Most state departments of education and some standards boards have the authority by state mandates to approve — not accredit necessarily, and that's a fine line — preparation programs, and lots of the states that have adopted the standards are using them for that purpose.

The School Leadership Licensure Assessment (SLLA), just briefly, is an assessment of the knowledge base that a beginning principal should have. The focus again is on teaching and learning, cause

and effects, foreground, and background. It is a performance-based authentic assessment. It consists of open-ended, constructed response, paper-and-pencil situations. All twenty-five items were designed and validated by and through actual principals. There are real world scenarios in it. It is practical. There are no multiple choice or true/false questions. As I indicated, we have them interpret data, interpret realistic school documents, and do a lot of analysis. It's really built into three, two-hour modules. We have also designed a relicensure portfolio that is linked to standards that is presently undergoing two years of field studies by five different states. The portfolio itself is completed and ready for use for what I would call soft licensure. In other words, a state department could say to principals, "In order to get your license on a permanent basis or to renew your license, we want you to complete the ISLLC portfolio. When you send us evidence that you have completed it, we will renew your license."

The field studies will enable states to do what we are calling hard licensure, for lack of a better term, where not only will they need to complete it, but cutoff scores will be established by expert panels and passed by boards of education and then they will have to meet a specific score. That will be a little more complex.

We also see the SLLA, frankly, as a professional development tool, especially the portfolio. There is no way in the world that anybody can complete the portfolio the way it's been designed by ETS without having some professional growth, unless they die during the process.

Another major thrust of ISLLC has been what we have referred to as the Standards-based Professional Development Project which we just com-

pleted this spring. We have five products that resulted from the project which will be available in print, we hope, by January 1 of 2000.

There are five components of the Standards-based Professional Development Products. We develop what we call Propositions of Quality Professional Development for School Leaders based very freely on National Staff Development Council work with their permission and blessing. We have, as part of that document, a process and have identified several models of quality professional development for school leaders that we think will work. We are not endorsing these models. We are simply putting them out there for people to look at and say, "Yeah, these are the kinds of things we ought to be looking for."

We have also developed a process that we call The Collaborative Professional Development Process for School Leaders as part of this activity that is exactly what it says. It's a collaborative group process for people to end up with the product of a portfolio, but our emphasis is on the process. This was designed and developed by twelve to fifteen practitioners throughout the country that we met with about once every three months for over two years.

I have been in this business for thirty-seven years now in a variety of school leadership settings, and I think it is the most powerful professional development product I have ever seen. I am looking forward to seeing what real people out there say about it.

We will have a set of policy recommendations for state departments to look at regarding portability of licenses across state lines, which was the most difficult issue that we undertook. Another set of policy discussion recommendations are on how to

move professional development activities across state lines.

We have just begun development of a school superintendent's licensure assessment which will require people that want to be superintendents to complete the School Leaders Licensure Assessment for principals, and then we are designing two additional modules focused on specific activities for superintendents.

I mentioned the portfolio field studies. Our next thrust is technical assistance to states and others that want that technical assistance. We have about five projects that we want to begin. Frankly, we are looking for funding sources. If anybody out there has a few million dollars and wants to get rid of it, we will be happy to talk to you.

We are also looking for additional ideas that practitioners in particular may have about how standards-based activities, using ISLLC standards, of course, could be helpful to the practical experiences.

Mary Mack: Thank you. Dr. Veir, why don't you give us an overview of the special considerations of school leaders that ensure that youth with disabilities are served?

Carole Veir: Okay. I'm going to proceed in a different direction than Neil's presentation. I would like to first address the teaching and learning leadership issues for districts and building professional development. I know that most of you are at the Department of Education or other leadership positions, but I believe that district and building issues are important because district and state level personnel are there to facilitate and support the efforts of the building personnel. I am going to start at that level.

For leadership issues that need professional

development at the building level, I believe that principals and special education personnel have a need to not only understand but be able to implement the five key Federal laws that are affecting accessibility, equity, and process of the school-to-work system for students in special education, and especially those dealing with transitional issues, which should be all of our students, not just special education students. For those of you who may not be familiar with the five key Federal laws that are affecting our issues in school-to-work and transition, we have the School-To-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, the Carl Perkins Vocational and Technical Educational Act of 1998 (those are specifically work oriented acts), and three basic civil rights acts that fold into and are concomitant to those acts: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Individuals With Disabilities Educational Act as it was amended in 1997, which put forth new areas in which we need to pay attention to transition issues. With those five acts, you have some very strong Federal support that is important for understanding and forwarding the cause of students with disabilities to equitable participation, not only in the school system, but in their school-to-work efforts.

In order to implement appropriate quality programs, there are some basic tenants that they need to understand.

- 1) What is really required for special education students? What is really required? You must read and understand those five acts in addition to any state requirements and/or local district requirements.
- 2) There is a need for building level personnel to have professional development in the area of what is real versus ideal for their

special students and their families. We often try to write transition plans that are ideal when what we really need to look at is the reality and get out of denial with a lot of our students.

- 3) We need to look at what comprises a quality curriculum, and that is from every standpoint. We need to look at the word "quality." I want to address the general curriculum issues in just a little while.
- 4) We need to define program equity and access versus just enrollment in a program. We have a lot of districts that are enrolling our special students in school-to-work programs. On paper, they look like they are providing equitable access to all students, but in reality the students are only enrolled in the program and have no equity or access whatsoever to the content of the program or the curriculum.
- 5) We need to take a look at school-based versus work-based programming and learning. There does not seem to yet be an understanding that school-based issues are very different than work-based programming and learning issues for students. Until we understand that, we cannot provide any kind of leadership to help these students get into the mainstream of society. That is a critical leadership issue which the state and district can play a large part in addressing.
- 6) We need to look at the needs of the students per parents and personnel who are involved in decision-making for these students. What are their needs? We cannot just superimpose programs that we may have that are comfortable for us and that we think students will fit into. We are there to serve the students and they need to be involved.
- 7) We need to look at the needs of the school and how to balance these students' needs with the needs of other students in the school. We are not talking about turning over programs for special needs students,

and we are not talking about programs being only for regular students, as they are called. We are talking about balancing the needs as well as the finances of both of those sets of students.

- 8) The next issue that needs to be dealt with at the building level is how to find the time, personnel, and financial resources to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate the students and programs. That is a serious district and state level issue that those folks can provide leadership for and should be developing professional development issues around.
- 9) Next, we need to look at what follow-up needs to be done to determine success as well as necessary modifications and changes in programs we may be trying to implement. As you know, under the Work Opportunities Act, massive money was provided for the states and to local districts to provide programs for students in school-to-work transition. Under your Carl Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, you have significant amounts of money flowing through to local states and school districts that are specifically targeted for your special populations, special education being one of those in particular. Those monies should be looked at in the prospective of school-to-work. The finances are there and we have to determine how we are going to use them and what are we going to need to do to change what we already have.
- 10) The last issue is certainly not of least importance. Principals need to know what to do about the teacher. How do you provide support for students with special needs within a classroom in the regular curriculum? Providing what they call the general curriculum education to special education students under IDEA Amendments of '97 does not mean all children get everything. That is not what equity is all about. But we need to be able to support our teachers. I

think that, again, is a leadership issue that can come from both the district and the state level.

Each of these issues have to be approached with an open, flexible attitude towards change. At the most basic levels, it will lead to students' success in preparation for post-secondary careers regardless of the laws that may or may not cover the three issues of equity, civil rights, or entrance requirements. We have to address the student's success and the student's needs. Each of these is going to require more preparation and training on the part of building leaders and specifically the principal.

At the district level, issues of leadership involve money and personnel to be dedicated to developing coordinated programs and liaisons between schools, work sites, agencies, and other players in the bigger picture. This is a huge job for a district. Depending upon the size of your district and the location, the necessary components will change. We are talking about doing this for all students, not just special education students. Focusing on transition for your special students becomes a particular issue when you are dealing with trying to provide work sites because many folks don't want our students and they subsequently need to be eliminated from our pool.

This tenant will have to deal with special education issues and needs, not just in money, court cases, and problematic perceptions. He or she needs to understand that there has to be a team effort and special education must be part of that team. It's taking massive amounts of district resources and personnel and time, and the superintendent needs to place a special education person as part of that superintendent's cabinet team. The superintendent needs to be supportive of the efforts taken and be

directing some of the resources and information to the special education person.

Also at the district level, we have to look at time and personnel who are available from vocational education and special education to work with each other as a team and to work with, quote, unquote, regular education personnel.

Next, we need to look at teachers again from a district perspective. Teachers are significantly overwhelmed right at this particular point in time with mistaken and unreal notions of what full inclusion means. Most districts have gone to a full inclusion model, or are working in that direction, and most teachers have a very mistaken notion of what full inclusion means. They need help in understanding these issues. They need help in understanding what general education curriculum means for disabled students. They need assistance with modification, development of IEPs, transition plans, testing, developing progress reports, and determining grades. That all must come from leadership, not just at the building level, but more specifically at the district and, I believe, from the state level. I know I keep saying the state level, but having been a state director of civil rights and special needs for five years, I have significant experience in this area.

We need to just educate. From the district and state level, teachers are in need of inservice training that must be done on a team basis. We can no longer pull special education teachers out and train them in one area and then pull vocational teachers out and train them in another area and then pull special education and regular education teachers out. This must be done on a team basis and information must be developed and implemented on an ongoing basis, not a one-shot deal. Teams should be

composed of vocational education, special education, and regular education teachers, and preferably the principal of the school or the administrator who is in charge.

Parents, if you are lucky enough to be able to involve them, must be involved in this team effort. They are, as you note in the reauthorization, the primary member of this team now. They are listed as number one.

Districts must also become support teams through their buildings. They must assure that the support is there to meet the grassroots needs of the building level personnel. The grassroots needs are the teachers and the students, and that effort must reflect the support that is coming from the district.

The last area I would like to address before we take questions is leadership issues at the state level for policy makers, compliance and monitoring personnel, and state level directors. State level leaders and policy makers must be prepared to make more decisions. They must make policy changes because the arena has been expanded and will continue to expand a state's responsibility. They must assure access to an adequate and equitable education as defined by state content standards and availability. Decisions must be documentable for all students.

The courts are expanding what their definition of adequate and equitable education is for all students and significantly for special needs students. State level personnel and policy makers have to determine and document the scope and cost of programs and services necessary for all students to meet that adequate standard and to meet higher academic and vocational standards that are being placed forth.

State level leaders must also find new and

creative ways to adequately fund programs and services for transitioning students. They must make sure that funds are available to these programs and are not expended on state activities that are not going to reach the students in the classroom. State agencies must also connect with other agencies to develop state-wide and local efforts combining efforts, personnel, and even resource dollars to make transition planning and services happen. I have not seen a great deal of that happening across the states.

State level personnel must also assist in training efforts. They must provide personnel and funds to train, provide leadership to districts and building level personnel, and assure that teachers and parents are receiving information and understanding the process, as well as the product outcome of transition.

State level personnel must also be actively involved with change. They must be out in districts demonstrating team work and collaborative efforts, providing opportunities for exchange of personnel, and be flexible with the progress and resources that are going on in schools. Mostly they must be supportive of field personnel, and field personnel need to know they have that support. Site personnel efforts to develop models of transition for disabled students must go along with models for other students. Support and guidance are the rules of the state level effort.

State level personnel also need to use research. There is significant research out there about transition and transition efforts, decision making, and policy making. They must also consider the diversity of special education students as well as that which lies within the field of education and transition services. States need to look at and provide a

broader range of options for students. Most students, over 80% of our current students labeled disabled, are already in the regular classroom so that there will be little, if any, need for anything but transition plans to work along side of all regular education students. But it is for that other 20% that we are going to struggle and have to make some changes. Although most disabled students can pursue meaningful employment, they don't have the requisite preparation or skills to do so. Those that do are being placed into a restricted range of jobs, lack independent living options, and are receiving less than adequate wages. State level personnel can take a significant role in changing this through their cooperative ventures with agencies. That must be changed for the benefit of all persons in society. This is your greatest challenge from all levels.

Okay. I would like to open up the lines for any questions or comments you may have for Neil and/or myself. When you speak, please tell us your name.

Mary Mack: I have a question for Neil. What specifically are the six standards that have been developed?

Neil Shipman: As I stated before, each standard begins with the stem, "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students . . ."

- 1) Standard One continues: ". . . by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community." You will hear a theme throughout all the standards of collaboration with school, community, teachers and principals, other school leaders, etc. We call Standard One our vision standard.
- 2) Standard Two continues: ". . . by advocat-

ing, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth." We call this one our teaching and learning standard.

- 3) Standard Three is the only standard that deals specifically with management issues for school leaders. This standard continues: ". . . by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment."
- 4) Standard Four is the family involvement standard: ". . . by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources."
- 5) Standard Five is one we had lots of discussions about, but those of us that wanted it included finally won out. This is our ethics standard: ". . . by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner."
- 6) We had similar heated discussions about Standard Six, which really deals with political issues. The standard itself is: ". . . by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context."

Again, each of these six standards have sets of indicators that define them in more detail.

Mary Mack: Are there other questions?

Nancy Lauria (New York): This is Nancy Lauria from New York. Could you tell me which states have adopted the School Leaders Licensure Assessment?

Neil Shipman: They are Maryland, North Carolina, Mississippi, Missouri, Alaska, Arkansas, and Kentucky.

Nancy Lauria (New York): Thank you.

Mary Mack: Is it possible, Neil, that people that are on the phone can get some of the informa-

tion?

Neil Shipman: Yes. Our main office is in Washington D. C. at the Council of Chief State School Officers and the number is 202.408.5505. We recently enlisted the help of a Senior Project Associate whose name is Amy Mast. Simply ask for her, mention this conference call, and request an information packet. She will send you the basic information.

You can also get some of it off the council web site (<http://www.ccsso.org/isllc.html>), although I have not been able to keep that up to date. Up until recently, I have been a staff of one. You could download the standards from the site, which would be accurate. The rest of the information is way out of date. I just started working on updating that this week.

Mary Mack: Carole, is there anything that you want to add to close your remarks?

Carole Veir: The only thing I would say is that people need to look at transition school-to-work issues in a more positive light and look at it as a way of moving forward with employability skills for our students, all students. Look at the reality of how many students are not being placed into the work force. If they are, how many are not staying there because they do not have the transitioning skills? They do not have the employability skills to make the transition from high school. It is as if we dropped them off the end of a plank at the end of high school. We must stop doing that because it is costing human and financial resources — millions and millions of dollars every year — for us to lose our students to non-employability skills and unemployment roles. We need to take another look at our ability to provide these opportunities for our students and look at it in a more positive light as

something that is good for the students.

Nancy Lauria (New York): It's not just good for the students; it's good for the economy.

Carole Veir: It is good for the economy, and it's the best thing we can do for students. The requirement that we provide a school-to-work transition plan by the age of fourteen for school-related issues and school-related transition, and by sixteen for work-related transition, is a tall order. We ought to be doing that for all students.

Nancy Lauria (New York): That's right.

Carole Veir: I would encourage you to collaborate with the appropriate personnel. Not only in your building, but elsewhere. There's plenty of money out there to be used. We ought to be tapping into that money rather than returning it to Washington to go into the depths never to be seen again.

Mary Mack: Could you give some suggestions on how we can work towards a more positive relationship with general education and think in a broader way about providing each and every student within a school district the necessary supports to succeed?

Carole Veir: I think the first thing that has to be done is people have to understand each other's fields. We have been way too separate for too long, and we have not taken or even attempted to take a look at what other people's fields are about. Now that they are looking at "full inclusion," everyone is intimidated rather than looking at it as an opportunity to embrace new and exciting knowledge from someone else. We need to start asking questions, observing, and trying to figure out how this is going to work for the student. Every student ought to be on an IEP, not just special education students. Particularly when you are looking at school-to-work

opportunities, there needs to be exploration into what's available. There needs to be exploration into how each person on that team — the special educator, the regular educator, the vocational educator, and the parents — can contribute to the betterment of this child to better prepare them to move on after high school. That's every child. How can we better prepare, as a team, for them to move on? That has to start with team efforts in the building. That has to start with discussion about students and programs, curriculum, and opportunities within each building. Until the principal can make that opportunity available and is willing to forward the cause in the building, it's not going to happen. I have been in many buildings where a special educator or vocational educator cannot name someone in another department.

Neil Shipman: I would like to piggyback onto that, too. I think the key to that is right along the lines Carole is talking about: professional development for principals and other school leaders in the school system as well as regular education teachers. Fortunately or unfortunately, depending upon one's point of view, I've been going all over the country for the last three or four years speaking to different groups, principals and superintendents in particular, and their lack of knowledge and understanding about these five laws that Carole discussed and special needs youth and activities and accommodations is frankly appalling. I had one principal with whom I had a conference who, when I said, "When you call your central office for help on this youth, just say, I.D.E.A. to them," and her response to me was, "Oh, Dr. Shipman, do you have an idea?" That's pretty scary. This was with a twenty-five-year veteran principal, not just somebody fresh out of the woods.

That really is crucial. Carole is right. Regular education people and special education people don't talk to each other.

Carole Veir: It's always been separated. I have worked in both.

Neil Shipman: Yes. You are right. I was Area Director in Montgomery County, Maryland, where we had a large area office of probably close to one-hundred professional support people for the schools. We had the regular education folks on one side of the building and the special education folks on the other side of the building. They never talked to each other, even there. It's very common, but sad, and needs to be changed.

Carole Veir: Look at your training programs and in-service training programs, even for principals. You would be very lucky if you spent more than a three-hour lecture talking about anything in special education, let alone these laws, or any in-depth measures on how to provide leadership in this area at a school building or a district. They simply do not cover it. It is not considered part of principal training in most institutions at this point in time or leadership training at all because special education is an area for which you hire a special education director to keep you out of court and that's it. That's the end of their training; the end of their knowledge. In fact, many superintendents have said to me, "If there is a problem in special education, I have an attorney." That is absolutely the wrong attitude.

Neil Shipman: When a parent says to a principal anything about IDEA or 504, the principals generally do not look at that as an opportunity to help the youth. They look at it as a threat and they immediately put up defense mechanisms to avoid having to deal with it.

Carole Veir: I think in-service training is needed in that area. We are not talking about a one-shot deal or a three-hour lecture; we are talking about ongoing training. I ran a three-year training project on cross-training with a team. Unless the schools' site sent teams, they could not be part of the training project, and for three years we met once a month for two days to talk about just these issues and develop IEPs and talk about transition and bring in speakers. As a result, they had somewhat of an idea of what needed to be done. You can't just put people out there and expect that they are going to work together, because they are not.

I think that needs to be addressed before you can go any further.

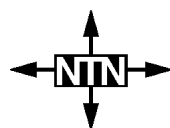
Mary Mack: I think that we can highlight places where it is working because people seem to learn by the example of others, and that's very helpful.

Neil Shipman: I can give you the name of an elementary school and principal that have the best inclusion program of any I've seen anywhere. They are not going to do much with school-to-work issues because of the age of the youth, but if anybody wants to know that I will be happy to share it with you. It's Waters Landing Elementary School, in Germantown, Maryland. The principal's name is Eva Wetten. She is a very unique person because she was a supervisor of special education. They don't talk about regular and special education anymore in that school. It is now totally accepted by all members of the community — teachers, support staff, students, regular parents. It is marvelous.

Mary Mack: Well, I want to thank both Neil and Carole for participating in this call. It has really been a great call and I look forward to continuing to collaborate with both of you.

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