

## **Building-Level Leader Graduate Certificate in Educational Leadership 2024-2025**

### **Program Goals**

To graduate educational leaders with the knowledge, skills, ethics, and motivation to:

1. transform educational organizations;
2. facilitate student success; and
3. respond affirmatively to the increasing expectations of their various communities in a technological society and a global environment.

**Student Learning Outcomes** (based on the new National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards for Building-Level Leaders)

**1. Mission, Vision, & Improvement:** Candidates who successfully complete a building level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to collaboratively lead, design, and implement a school mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.

**2. Ethics & Professional Norms:** Program completers who successfully complete a building level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capability to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to understand and demonstrate the capacity to advocate for ethical decisions and cultivate and enact professional norms.

**3. Equity, Inclusiveness & Cultural Responsiveness:** Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive school culture.

**4. Learning & Instruction:** Candidates who successfully complete a building level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to evaluate, develop, and implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, data systems, supports, and assessments.

**5. Community & External Leadership:** Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to engage families, community, and school personnel in order to strengthen student learning, support school improvement, and advocate for the needs of their school and community.

**6. Operations & Management:** Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to improve management, communication, technology, school-level governance, and operation systems to develop and improve data-informed and equitable school resource plans and to apply laws, policies, and regulations.

**7. Building Professional Capacity:** Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to build the school's professional capacity, engage staff in the development of a collaborative professional culture, and improve systems of staff supervision, evaluation, support, and professional learning.

**8. Internship:** Candidates successfully complete an internship under the supervision of knowledgeable, expert practitioners that engage candidates in multiple and diverse school

settings and provide candidates with coherent, authentic, and sustained opportunities to synthesize and apply the knowledge and skills identified in NELP standards 1-7 in ways that approximate the full range of responsibilities required of building-level leaders and enable them to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult in their school.

### **Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

• **Timeline.** Assessment of learning outcomes occurs via benchmark assignments embedded throughout the Educational Leadership curriculum which is aligned with the 2018 NELP standards, includes Arkansas Competencies for Building Leaders, and approved by CAEP. The timeline for assessment and analysis is not particular to individual learning outcomes, but instead is ongoing through the coursework and a culminating activity (the internship). Each of the 22 NELP components connects to significant activities in at least one course and students frequently use those activities during the internship to document their proficiency in standards.

• **Data from Course Assignments.** Data from course assignments and internship activities are archived in Blackboard for ease of program performance evaluation, which is conducted at the end of each semester and compiled into an annual report in the spring of each academic year. At the beginning of their internship semester, EDLE students complete a self-assessment of their proficiency in the NELP standards and components, which is used to individualize their internship experiences to ensure they have opportunities to develop the skills required by NELP standards 1-7. The desired level of student achievement is all candidates will either meet or exceed the standard

as measured by the following:

1. Faculty assessments of course assignments
2. Mentor assessment of internship performance
3. Assessment scores from the School Leader Licensure Assessment (SLLA)

### **Assessment Report**

Zero students completed the program of study for the building level certificate in Educational Leadership and graduated in 2024 which is an indication of students preferring to pursue the full M.Ed. program leading to the same licensure. 4 building level certificate program students were enrolled in Fall 2024.

### **Areas of Improvement**

The principal preparation program (both the certificate and M.Ed.) is poised to evolve in four primary ways that are intended to

1. increase the number of fellows transitioning to formal leadership roles in their first two years;
2. provide mentoring interventions and career coaching to past fellows who have yet to ascend into formal leadership roles;
3. activate the alumni and school partner network to meet the growing mentoring needs; and
4. leverage the opportunity for knowledge sharing among high-poverty, geographically isolated school systems across the state.

One of our longstanding recruiting goals has been to expand the footprint of the program across the state. Now that the program has successfully engaged with nearly 2/3rds of all high poverty school districts in Arkansas, this is an opportune time to more intentionally recruit fellows from schools that anticipate more immediate leadership needs. Additionally, we will look to recruit fellows who might already be serving in formal or informal leadership roles at their schools but lack appropriate formal preparation. We believe that both adjustments in our recruiting approach will result in more fellows moving into formal leadership roles earlier in their career pathway.

Further, it is critical to engage with graduates who have had their school building license for three years or more and have yet to move into a leadership role so that we may better understand their motivations and barriers to their transition into formal leadership positions.

Anecdotally we have heard that a major obstacle has been the feature of our program that asks them for a commitment to stay in their school which would keep them on the bench until a position opens ahead of them. In those cases, adjusting our recruiting approach as described previously is designed to ameliorate that issue but we need to further investigate this group of fellows to better understand all the factors that are keeping fellows on the bench and design appropriate mentoring interventions and career coaching to support them in their advancement along the leadership pipeline.

Moreover, quality job embedded internships are a critical component of developing future school leaders. However, the highest poverty, most rural schools are less likely to have strong mentors nearby to support exemplary internship experiences. While not a new challenge, we have noticed stark differences among high-poverty schools across different regions of the state. We propose addressing this through a two-step process of gauging the quality of available mentors early in the partnership process and providing a network of mentors and mentor training to bolster the mentoring experience for fellows and partner schools. In addition to engaging directly with school and district partners earlier and being more explicit with the types of commitments we need from them, we will also activate our alumni and ambassador network to ensure a deep and meaningful experience for our fellows.

Finally, the program is poised to leverage a decade of developing partnerships across Arkansas. Systematic research and sharing successful practices among similarly situated schools can inform continuous school improvement and shine a light on approaches that can be scaled across remote geographic contexts. During this next phase, the team will engage in sharing innovations, outcomes, and best practices throughout the state and develop a framework for ongoing, long-term support to assist high-poverty schools in transformational change during and beyond the life of the research-practice partnership. The team together with its fellows, alumni, and district partners will expand communication, systematic dissemination of research, and outreach through reciprocal, improvement-oriented feedback mechanisms and action strategies. We see this emerging research-practice partnership as serving both high-poverty school improvement and the continuous improvement of our program model while being informed by, and informing, ADE's Day One Ready Leadership initiative.