

## Educational Leadership Preparation Program Review of Employer Satisfaction

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**Abstract :** There is a need to address the improvement of university educational leadership preparation programs through the processes of accreditation and continuous improvement. The program faculty in a university in the eastern part of the United States has incorporated an employer satisfaction focus group to address their national accreditation standard so that employers are satisfied with completers' preparation for the position of principal or assistant principal. Using the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) required proficiencies, the following research questions are investigated: 1) what proficiencies do completers perform the strongest? 2) what proficiencies need to be strengthened? 3) what other strengths beyond the required proficiencies do completers demonstrate? 4) what other areas of responsibility beyond the required proficiencies do completers demonstrate? and 5) how can the program improve in preparing candidates for their positions? This study focuses on employers of one public school district that has a large number of educational leadership completers employed as principals and assistant principals. Central office directors who evaluate principals and principals who evaluate assistant principals are focus group participants. Construction of the focus group questions is a result of recommendations from an accreditation regulatory specialist, reviewed by an expert panel, and piloted by an experienced focus group leader. The focus group session was audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using the NVivo Version 14 software. After constructing folders in NVivo, the focus group transcript was loaded and skimmed by diagnosing significant statements and assessing core ideas for developing primary themes. These themes were aligned to address the research questions. From the transcript, codes were assigned to the themes and NVivo provided a coding hierarchy chart or graphical illustration for framing the coding. A final report of the coding process was designed using the primary themes and pertinent codes that were supported in excerpts from the transcript. The outcome of this study is to identify themes that can provide evidence that the educational leadership program is meeting its mission to improve PreK-12 student achievement through well-prepared completers who have achieved the position of principal or assistant principal. The considerations will be used to derive a composite profile of employers' satisfaction with program completers with the capacity to serve, influence, and thrive as educational leaders. Analysis of the idealized themes will result in identifying issues that may challenge university educational leadership programs to improve. Results, conclusions, and recommendations are used for continuous improvement, which is another national accreditation standard required for the program.

**Keywords :** educational leadership preparation, CAEP accreditation, principal & assistant principal evaluations, continuous improvement

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