

**Submission date: February 11, 2019**

**Program/s in this review: Master of Educational Leadership, & Graduate Certificate - Principal**

**Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): National Policy Board for Educational Leadership (NPBEL), National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)**

**Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage**

**Members of the program review committee:**

- Dr. Ginger Lee Blackmon, Assistant Professor, Anchorage campus
- Dr. Agatha John-Shields, Term Assistant Professor, Anchorage campus

**1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role (700 words or less)**

Relevancy of the program/s;

The Educational Leadership (EDL) program has been committed to meeting the leadership needs of school districts in Alaska since the 1970s. The State of Alaska hires a large number of principals each year, and UAA has played a significant role in meeting that need. Our program is distance delivered, providing access to all candidates across the State. The program meets UAA's core value of reducing barriers and offering services and resources to all students. The program meets the most current national standards for principal preparation and is nationally recognized by the National Policy Board of Educational Administration.

Role the program plays in supporting other academic programs;

EDL course offerings are approved as elective credits in the Master's in Teaching and Learning and various master's programs at UAS and UAF. Two EDL courses are on the approved list of courses that meet the multicultural requirement and recency credit requirements for Alaska teachers and administrators. As demonstrated by the Internal Demand data found in Section 2, SCH/Out of Major (2,282) is equivalent to 49% of the SCH-In Major (4,619). This high percentage of SCH/Out of Major is playing a significant role in supporting other academic programs.

Partnerships with outside agencies, businesses, or organizations;

The EDL faculty partner with school districts during the internship year. Student cohorts during the internship experience foster collaboration with practicing principals and district office leaders in the Anchorage School District, Mat-Su Borough School District, Fairbanks Northstar Borough School District, and several rural districts.

EDL faculty engage in service work within the UAA community and the broader community outside of UAA. Several Alaska school districts provide in-services on Indigenous epistemology. Faculty work in collaboration with these districts and provide professional and personal expertise. Recently EDL faculty have been asked to present at UAA and at the community campuses of Kenai, Kodiak, and Valdez with a focus on integrating Native ways of knowing into teaching and learning.

Participation on K-12 school accreditation teams provides a service to our K-12 community and enhances connections between UAA and the K-12 system. EDL students are sometimes included on the review team, and this provides opportunities for EDL students to gain more profound insights, to make connections to coursework and practice, and to spend extended time engaged in classroom observations using a valid and reliable observation tool. Three of four EDL faculty serve on advisory committees with the Cognia, Inc. Network, including the Global Commission for Accreditation and Certification. This service work enhances UAA's reputation and visibility. Our visible presence in K-12 schools builds the reputation of our program completers and serves as a recruitment strategy as well.

As part of the ongoing effort to decrease the teacher turnover rate, EDL faculty partner with Alaska Humanities Forum, Calista Corporation, and five school districts to teach at the cultural camps to create culturally competent teachers in rural communities. The positive impact of the cultural camps has developed into invitations for EDL faculty

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who provide in-service for principals in the Lower Kuskokwim School District to learn in-depth indigenous epistemologies. This knowledge will help educators better engage with the Yup'ik communities they serve.

The Alaska Learning Network ECHO Project and the EDL program are partnering in support of the EDL Internship. The ECHO Project hosts free, open access, online professional development. EDL Interns are encouraged to submit problems of practice from their experiences and to attend these sessions to supplement internship activities.

High demand job designation for the program.

Between 2012 and 2018, an average of 26% of principals in Alaska turn over every year. The recent REL Northwest Report on teacher and principal turnover in Alaska noted that principals, specifically in rural communities, have a higher turnover rate of 36% compared to 19% in urban schools.

Specific workforce development and employment opportunities relevant to the program;

The National Conference of state legislators (2017, *Tackling Teachers and Principal Shortages in Rural Areas*) discusses the costs of turnover concluding, "High turnover rates for principals are costly..." In March of 2019, the Alaska State legislature invited the Alaska Council of School Administrators to address the high need for principals in the state. These events speak to the workforce need for recruitment and retention of Alaska's school leaders.

**2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity (7-year trend; 1400 words or less)**

Seven-year degree and/or certificate awards trend

During the seven years under review

- 22% of graduate-level degrees from CAS are in the principal preparation program
  - 21% of master's degrees
  - 23% of graduate certificates
    - Of note: in 2019, half of lic/post-graduate certificates awarded from CAS were from the Educational Leadership program.
- 11% of master's degree and Lic/Post Graduate Certificates from UAA are in Educational Leadership [school principal preparation]
  - 9% of master's degrees
  - 18% of lic/post cert
  - The percentage of master's degrees awarded in the principal preparation program compared to the total number of equivalent degree awards across the UAA system stayed the same between 2018 and 2019, while the percentage of lic/post-graduate certificates climbed from 13% in 2018 to 37% in 2019.
- The decline in degree awards in educational leadership can be attributed to the completion of the Rural Alaska Principal Preparation and Support Project (RAPPS) in 2013. During the project (2008-2013), RAPPS provided scholarships to 73 promising practicing teacher-leaders in 16 high-need rural districts so that they could obtain their Type B credential to move into school leadership positions. All teachers who participated in the program completed and graduated by 2015.

The Department of Education and Early Development criteria for a Type B - Administrator credential are a master's degree, three years of teaching experience, and successful completion of an accredited principal preparation program. The number of master's degrees and lic/post-graduate certificates in education fluctuates based on applicants. Applicants who have previously earned a master's degree apply to the lic/post-graduate certificate. The core preparation program for both types of students is the same. Students seeking master's degrees are required to take additional courses in research and Alaska Native leadership and social justice.

Credits Per Degree (Average Credits Earned)

- CAS Master and Lic/Post Cert programs Credits to Degree average is 32.3 (Master = 35.3, Lic/Post Cert = 26.8)

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- CAS/SOE Master and Lic/Post Cert Educational Leadership Credits to Degree average is 30.3 (Master = 32.7, Lic/Post Cert - 24.0)

Educational Leadership students seeking a master's degree or lic/post-graduate certificates, in general, complete their respective programs with the number of credits specified in their catalog year. Revision in the program implemented in 2014, increased the number of credits for the MEd and Lic/Post Cert.

The 2017 & 2018 increase in credits to a degree for Lic/Post Cert students can be attributed to the number of applicants admitted to the program with conditions. These applicants did not enter the program with documented master's level coursework in educational research; therefore, they were required to also complete a research course (EDRS A661 Data-Informed Instruction and Decision-Making).

The move to a cohort model in 2016 with a specific course scope and sequence has aided graduation efficiency measures by providing clear communication about program expectations. Data demonstrate that EDL is an efficient program.

**Seven-year majors or program enrollment trend**

The 24% drop in overall enrollment between 2014 and 2015 is a result of the discontinuation of the RAPPS grant. RAPPS was state-funded and established to prepare principals for rural Alaska. While the grant-funded program ceased in 2013, all students (who received scholarships) participating in the principal preparation program through UAA's Educational Leadership program completed the program in 2015. In 2016, the EDL Program moved to a cohort model to facilitate a higher level of efficiency. As new cohorts begin only in the summer, this contributed a small drop in enrollment but led to more students completing the program. EDL faculty continue to work with districts and superintendents across the state to promote the program and recruit promising, aspiring school leaders.

**Course pass rates**

The data presented by the CAS Dean includes 600 level courses specific to the discontinued superintendent preparation program. The teach-out for this program was completed in Spring 2016. Course numbers EDL A671, A672, A673, A675, A676, A677, and A697, should be excluded as they do not apply to the principal preparation programs. With the exclusion of these courses, the remaining courses in the data set are correct. This also applies to all data analyzed under Internal Demand and Instructional Productivity.

The average course passing rate of 95.5% exceeds that of all 600-699 courses across the UAA system (88.0%). On average, the EDL grade passing rates are 7.9% higher than the UAA system's graduate courses (range 4.5% [2018] to 10.1% [2013]). These data demonstrate the serious intent of the students as well as the excellence of the instructors.

**Internal demand: *See Course Pass Rates regarding data set***

There is a high demand for EDL courses as indicated by the SCH-Out of Major of 2,282, which is 49% of the SCH-In Major of 4,619. This data demonstrates that the EDL program is serving a significant number of students outside the major. Other programs served include UAA Master in Teaching and Learning and students seeking recency credits. Graduate students and faculty across the UA system also enroll in EDL courses.

**Instructional Productivity: *See Course Pass Rates regarding data set***

**Seven-year Student Credit Hour (SCH) production trend**

Student Credit Hour (SCH) production closely follows the seven-year enrollment trend. The discontinuation of the RAPPs program in 2013 and subsequent completion of RAPP students in 2015 initiated a downward trend in SCH. Since 2016 and until 2019, EDL has experienced a 32% decrease in SCH. In part, this is due to a reduction in the number of credits required to complete the program. The program has also experienced an increase in the number of students who are transferring from other

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institutions, e.g., military spouses. The establishment of the cohort model in 2016 has also impacted SCH in that students have needed to adjust to the new calendar.

**SCH/FTEF**

The SCH/FTEF ranged from 320.0 in 2013 to 262.0 in 2019. The SCH/FTEF for the EDL program consistently exceeds that of all other CAS graduate programs.

**Enrollment/Full-Time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF)**

The Enrollment/FTEF ranged from 106.0 in 2013 to 91.0 in 2019. During the same period, CAS Enrollment/FTEF w/o EDL numbers range from 73.9 to 64.9. Enrollment/FTEF for the EDL program consistently exceeds that of other CAS graduate programs. EDL is a highly efficient program.

**FTES/FTEF**

The FTES/FTEF ranges, in the seven years under review, from 13.3 to 11.0. During the same period, the CAS FTES/FTEF w/o EDL numbers range from 8.7 to 8.2. FTES/FTEF for the EDL program consistently exceeds other CAS graduate programs. This data is another indicator of the efficiency of the EDL program.

**Class Size (Average Class Size)**

The class size average for the EDL program is dependent on the number of applicants each year. The class size for the EDL program consistently exceeds other CAS graduate programs. During the seven years under review, the EDL program ranges from 13.3 to 11.2 students per class. Other CAS graduate programs range from 8.2 to 7.5 per class.

**Cost/SCH**

From 2013-2019 there was an 11% increase in cost/SCH for EDL programs. In terms of the cost/SCH, however, EDL is well below the average of other CAS graduate programs during the same period. The average cost/SCH in 2019 for CAS graduate programs (920.1) is approximately three times higher than the average cost/SCH for EDL graduate programs (318.8).

**Tuition Revenue/SCH**

The Tuition Revenue/SCH for the EDL program is consistent with the trends and amounts for CAS graduate programs (without EDL programs). Full tuition revenue for EDL programs has consistently exceeded the instructional costs during the seven years under review. The 80% tuition revenue has exceeded the instructional costs every year except in 2016. In 2016 the program added two adjuncts to teach additional sections in core courses due to the cohort size (EDL A638, EDL A639), which contributed to 2.38 FTEF. Excluding the EDL program, the instructional costs of CAS graduate programs substantially exceed the tuition generated. EDL is one of the most cost-effective programs in the CAS.

**External demand**

*IR-Reports* Tab: Post UAA Award NSC Data;  
Note: There is no "Post UAA Award NSC Data" for this program.

The Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Northwest report\* released in September 2019, *Educator retention and turnover under the midnight sun: Examining trends and relationships in teacher, principal, and superintendent movement in Alaska* presents data that indicate a turnover rate in school leaders from 2012/13 to 2017/18 as between 23 to 33 percent. Turnover rates are highest in rural areas. Additionally, turnover rates for principals are higher for those who were prepared by programs outside of Alaska.

**3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success (1500 words or less)**

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Specialized accreditation process and status;

The Educational Leadership program is Nationally Recognized by the National Policy Board for Educational Leadership and accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). If, as a result of the current program review process, the Educational Leadership Programs are recommended for discontinuation, the program will lose its national accreditation and be unable to recommend program completers for licensure. The only option for students would be to transfer another principal preparation program. Such transfers would be unexpected by students and an abrupt disruption to their established pathway for program completion. After the CAEP site visit scheduled for Spring 2021 and with CAEP accreditation secured, UAA, in keeping with its commitment to students, would then be positioned to provide a UAA teach-out (not a teach-out by transfer) if this program was recommended for discontinuation. The disconnect between spring 2020 expedited review cycle and the spring 2021 accreditation cycle should be recognized and adjusted to avoid possible negative consequences for our students.

Currency of the curriculum;

On January 12, 2019, the UAA and the UAS Principal Preparation Programs participated in a web-based conference organized by Dr. Stephen Atwater, (Executive Dean UAS). Each program prepared a written report detailing their respective programs and presented key information from the report to a stakeholder group. Among the participants was, Bruce M. Whitehead, Ed.D., a consultant brought in by Dr. Atwater to review the programs and to provide recommendations. In his report, Dr. Whitehead stated that "the reference to the Council [for the Accreditation of] Educator Preparation (CAEP) and National Educational [Leadership] Preparation (NELP) reveal this program is up to date as per current national standards." He further noted that the "Student Learning Outcomes are well delineated, and the requirement for a comprehensive portfolio documenting attainment of the ELCC/NELP standards reveals the strength of this unique principal preparation program."

Students earning a Master of Educational Leadership or a Graduate Certificate - Principal have completed a rigorous program of academics and applied practice. They have demonstrated mastery in foundational leadership skills to support K-12 public schools. Graduates can lead school reform initiatives with attention to data-informed decision-making practices to support 21<sup>st</sup>-century instructional practices in all communities throughout Alaska.

Innovative program design

The UAA EDL program is delivered entirely through distance delivery. The distance delivery methods provide access for all urban and rural educators in the state of Alaska, outside of the state of Alaska, and to professionals who are serving in international schools. Courses are offered in the evening to accommodate students who work fulltime in schools or district office positions.

Social justice and cultural proficiency are the foundational beliefs and practices upon which the UAA EDL program is built. Students develop skills and knowledge to understand how their culture and the culture of the organization affects those whose culture is different. Students learn to recognize their own biases, including the identification and acceptance of the reality of privilege and entitlement and the impact of these on their leadership actions. The diversity of UAA EDL full-time and adjunct faculty provides an essential perspective that further supports the developments of successful school leaders for our state (2-Alaska Native/American Indian, 1-African American, 1-white).

Availability and indications of quality of distance offerings

The EDL program is offered through distance delivery. Attention is placed on Quality Matters standards when developing course materials. EDL faculty have participated in a variety of Quality Matters workshops. EDL faculty participated in early pilot programs through Academic e-Learning for developing and providing learning materials that comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

Program Student Learning Outcomes Assessment:

The EDL program moved to a cohort structure in 2016 with a clearly defined course sequence to facilitate increased student success. The cohort structure provides students with a clear path to program completion in two years. The implementation of course sequencing allows faculty to collaborate more efficiently to build links between concepts in the core course. Major curriculum revisions in 2013 and 2016 were in response to stakeholder feedback and the need

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to better align Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) with the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards. Overall the course grade averages indicate that EDL students are meeting the learning expectations. Courses are currently being reviewed and aligned with the new principal preparation standards (NELP).

Assessment data and program completer feedback resulted in the development of a new course in AY 2016-2017 to address the school leadership skills and knowledge necessary for managing a school building; previously, this content was not discussed until the internship year in a seminar setting. Based on data and feedback from the Spring 2018 completers and mentors, faculty expanded the breadth and depth of field-based experiences in the core courses to support the application of skills and knowledge in the internship year. Recent assessment data indicated a need to examine course offerings and field experiences in the areas of promoting effective and appropriate technologies; and evaluating potential moral and legal consequences of decisions. The implementation of a new assessment with the AY18-19 completers, the Sparrow Case Study Assessment indicated that students are exceeding the expectation for ELCC 1.4: Assessment of School Programs and ELCC 2.1 Promote Positive School Culture (average score for both 2.77 out of 3.0). However, there continues to be a need to support student learning in the use of Human, Fiscal and Technological Resources (ELCC 3.2).

AY18/19 program completers were the last group to be assessed using the ELCC standards. AY19/20 program completers are the first group to be assessed using the NELP standards. There is some similarity between the ELCC and NELP standards. Student scores on major program assessments indicate that all students are meeting or exceeding the expected learning outcomes as specified by the ELCC standards. Additionally, feedback collected from mentor principals, alumni, and employer survey data indicate that program completers have the skills and knowledge to be effective school leaders.

### Student Success and Student Supports

#### High-Impact Teaching Practices.

- **Learning Communities:** The cohort structure creates a learning community that allows faculty to integrate learning across courses and to explore common topics and readings through a different lens.
- **Community-Based Learning:** In meeting the expectations outlined by the National Policy Board for Educational Leaders, the UAA EDL program "provides candidates with intentionally developed school leadership development experiences that connect, embed, and transcend explicit leadership skills within authentic contexts." The application of theory to the realm of leadership practice is accomplished during the internship under the supervision of an on-site mentor and university supervisor.
- **Internship and Capstone Project:** The internship experience provides students, under the mentorship of a current school administrator, direct experience with a variety of aspects of school leadership. During the internship, students integrate and apply what they have learned in content courses through their capstone project. The capstone project demonstrates the candidate's ability to identify, develop, and lead a school improvement process on their campus.

#### Student supports

- The EDL Program Lead handles serves as the student advisor.
- A two-year EDL Scope and Sequence is provided to all students when they enter the program. Students are provided with two specific documents, 1. graphic overview of the program and 2. a list of courses to be taken each semester over the two years.
- Students and mentors are provided an Internship Handbook when accepted into the internship year. In July, each year, interns and mentors participate in an orientation webinar to review the internship policies, procedures, and expectations.
- EDL A610: Orientation to Graduate Studies in Leadership, added to the program of study in Summer 2014, facilitates understanding of the standards as a basis for the leadership program and personal leadership development. Additionally, students are introduced to theories of learning and

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leadership and organizational change. Components of scholarly writing and research relative to education and school leadership are reviewed. Finally, initial gathering and analysis of multiple data sources are conducted to identify a problem of practice for the internship year.

- EDL A692A/B Principal Seminar, facilitated by the university supervisor, supports interns during the internship.

**Student accomplishments**

**Recognition Awards**

Graduates from the UAA Educational Leadership program have been recognized as outstanding leaders in schools and districts across Alaska by the following organizations.

- 2019 National Assistant Principal of the Year, National Association of Secondary School Principals.
- 2019 Region 7 Principal of the Year, Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals
- 2019 Class of National Distinguished Principals, National Association of Elementary School Principals
- 2018 Class of National Distinguished Principals, National Association of Elementary School Principals
- 2017 Class of National Distinguished Principals, National Association of Elementary School Principals
- 2014 State Principal of the Year and Finalist for 2014 National Principal of the Year, National Association of Secondary School Principals

Five graduates from the UAA EDL Program have completed the UAS Superintendent Endorsement program between 2013-2019. One additional graduate from the UAA EDL program is currently enrolled and expected to complete the UAS Superintendent Endorsement program in summer 2020

**4. Program Duplication / Distinctiveness (300 words or less)**

While the UA system has two principal preparation programs, UAA and UAS, the programs are distinctly different in structure and philosophy. The UAA EDL program offers a Master's in Educational Leadership [Type B credential preparation] (35 credits) and a Graduate Certificate - Principal [Type B credential preparation] (26 credits). The program is entirely distance delivery and begins with a new cohort each summer. It is designed to be completed in two years. The UAS EDL program offers a master's degree only [Type B credential preparation] (36 credits) and is a blend model of distance delivery (Fall/Spring) and Face-to-Face instruction (Required Summer residency in Juneau). The state has two options for students. Many prefer the UAA distance delivered program as they have summer commitments and financial issues that prevent them from participating in the required Juneau on-campus experience.

**5. Summary Analysis (500 words or less)**

The strengths of the Educational Leadership program include:

- Two pathways: Master of Educational Leadership and Graduate Certificate - Principal
- Program design: Statewide Cohort model development year with a focus on theory to field-based experience preparation. Intern year implements practical application of theory with mentor principals and university supervisors in urban and rural cohorts.
- The School Improvement (Capstone) Project requires students to collection and analysis school-wide data to implement a school improvement project during the internship.
- The use of the best practices in online learning includes presenting, creating, and communicating that employ a variety of large group, small group, and individual work experiences.
- As noted by Dr. Whitehead, (Consultant) in the January 2019 EDL Program Review Report, "UAA's Principal Preparation Program provides an excellent selection of texts and references."

Ideas for moving forward

- Dr. John-Shields' participation in summer cultural camps for teachers has increased teacher retention in rural areas. This participation has generated conversation about the potential impact of cultural camps for retention of school leaders. Similarly, the plan is to provide culturally relevant experiences for aspiring leaders. Culture Camps is one way to address the significant turnover rate identified in the REL Northwest report.
- Tribal Compacting - EDL plans to work with other graduate studies programs to support the Governor's effort to improve Alaska schools through DEED's improvement plan for the Alaska Native population (rural school districts and charter schools). Dr. John-Shields' framework from her dissertation will be part of Indigenizing the educational system and as a way to lessen the achievement gap for Alaska Native and otherized populations.
- We have begun working with the Alaska Learning Network (ALN)- ECHO Project to support the delivery of content and the fostering of network building for students in the UAA EDL program. The ALN ECHO Project is "a statewide initiative focused on uniting Alaska's educational leaders to build a support network to reduce isolation while strengthening the link between leadership and student achievement." The University of Wyoming mentor's the project leaders who are housed within the Anchorage School District. The ECHO project is becoming an integral piece of the UAA EDL Internship experience. Working with the ECHO Project addresses CAEP Advanced Program Standard A.2, which strengthens partnerships with districts within our internship.
- The SOE Graduate Programs partnering with Business Leadership can support and prepare tribal administrators and other partner employees to cohesively learn more about Tribal Compacting. This plan will allow for community stakeholders to learn, grow, and partner together.
- EDL has developed a pathway for teacher leader certification. This idea is growing in popularity as school districts add instructional coaches to their staff. Specifically, districts are seeking educators who can demonstrate competencies and experiences in the areas of assessment, technology, diversity, and community engagement. A pathway to a Teacher Leader Certificate within the Master of Educational Leadership and the Master in Teaching and Learning has the potential to increase overall enrollment in the program and to meet the needs of Alaska's K-12 schools.