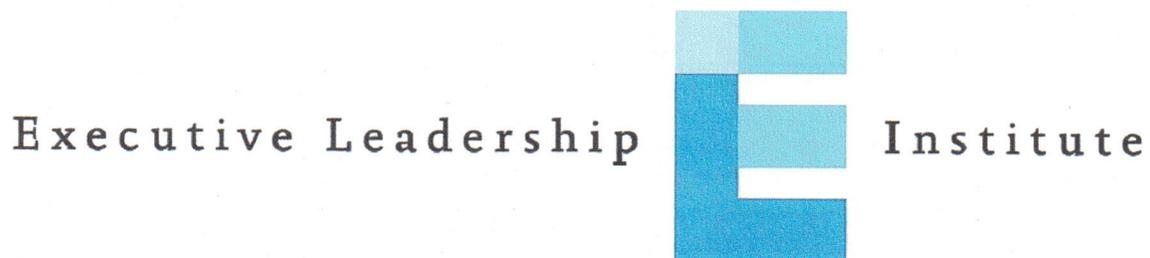


# New York Education Reform Commission

Bank Street College  
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Moving Leaders Forward

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Good afternoon Chairman Parsons, Assemblymember Nolan, Senator Flanagan and other distinguished members of the Commission. My name is Eloise Messineo and I am the Executive Director of the Executive Leadership Institute (ELI), the professional development affiliate of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA).

CSA is the labor union representing the 6,100 active and 9,000 retired New York City public school Principals, Assistant Principals, Education Administrators and Supervisors as well as six charter schools in New York City. CSA is also the collective bargaining unit for Directors and Assistant Directors who work in city-subsidized Early Childhood Education Centers. I want to thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on issues regarding professional development for school leaders that we believe the Commission should consider including in its preliminary recommendations to the Governor in December 2012.

Over the years, school leaders have been in the forefront of the effort to raise education standards and expectations for students, even while school budgets remain flat or in many cases decrease. Trying to balance meeting the actual needs of students while working with shrinking budgets, places a tremendous amount of pressure on school leaders, which hinders their ability to serve adequately in their role as the instructional leader of a school building. We often hear of administrators who are pulled away from their instructional duties to attend to tasks that previously were performed by an employee had to be let go due to budget constraints. The role of instructional leader has become more crucial, as the focus in New York and across the country has turned toward improving student achievement and eliminating college and career readiness gaps.

In order to ensure that school leaders successfully manage and meet ongoing challenges, as well as truly succeed in their role as instructional leader, New York State must provide our Principals and Assistant Principals with access to ongoing professional development. Now more than ever, as we move forward with implementation of the new teacher and Principal evaluation system and Common Core State Standards, there is an urgent need for strong, inspired, and dynamic leadership in our schools. The research-based literature related to effective schools and student achievement has long acknowledged the critical role of Principals in providing school leadership that shapes a highly complex human organization into a cohesive and collaborative community of learners.

New York State Department of Education delegates the responsibility of professional development and training to school districts. While local flexibility provides districts an opportunity to address community

needs, it does not ensure that educators across the state are all trained in a timely manner so that they are prepared to implement impending education forms. A coordinated effort is needed statewide to make certain that our school leaders are equipped to successfully meet the challenges.

### **Executive Leadership Institute (ELI)**

In 2002, CSA recognized that there was a void in professional development, training and support services for school leaders. ELI, was established as a not-for-profit to train school leaders to better manage the day-to-day activities in school as well as in the overarching theories and practices that govern education. The New York City Department of Education does provide professional development and training, but it has been our experience that these programs are too limited and do not fully address the needs of today's school leaders. ELI's programming is designed and organized to address the gaps in service delivery in order to more adequately prepare school leaders. Services provided by ELI are available to all school leaders and districts.

Behind our mission is this premise: ***Each school has a unique culture, a synthesis wrought from the different communities of people who work in and attend the school. A school leader integrates these constituencies into a harmonious, effective school with engaged, achieving students.*** Our programs give school leaders the tools they need to create true learning communities.

### **Educational Leadership Centers**

ELI's work is mostly done through the Educational Leadership Centers (ELCs), which serve as hubs for professional development. There are five centers at schools located in the Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens, Staten Island and Manhattan. Each ELC is located in a school that is easily accessible by public transportation and highways.

Each Center provides a collegial place to engage school leaders in cutting edge professional development activities, designed specifically to meet both individual and group needs. These professional development activities are led by exemplary retired Principals and include seminars, workshops, networking opportunities, research and study groups, on and off site individual consultation and opportunities for technical support. In addition to state of the art equipment and a range of technologies, each center has an extensive lending library stocked with a vast array of textbooks, journals and manuals that individuals may borrow for their personal use. The ELCs are facilitated by coordinators, all employees of the Executive Leadership Institute. The ELCs host a variety of single-topic

workshops developed and presented by the coordinators and or consultants with expertise in the specific area.

Over the past ten years, these various offerings have been attended by **13,830** Principals, Assistant Principals, Education Administrators, Early Childhood Education Directors and Assistant Directors.

Instruction is offered utilizing several vehicles:

- School-Based Intermediate Supervisors Institute (SBISI),
- Advanced Leadership Program for Assistant Principals (ALPAP),
- Summer week-long Institutes, Holiday and School-Break Sessions,
- Early Childhood Directors Series,
- Education Administrators Series, and
- Single Topic Workshops offered throughout the year.

#### **The School-Based Intermediate Supervisors Institute (SBISI)**

While the New York City Department of Education provides some mentoring and professional development for first year Principals, it does not make such services available to first year Assistant Principals. In order to address the void in service delivery for novice Assistant Principals, ELI created SBISI, designed to meet the leadership and professional development needs of new, first year and second year Assistant Principals by providing high quality, timely and consistent workshops throughout New York City. Each year ELI mentors 250 New York City Assistant Principals covering over 1,800 individual mentoring sessions.

The School-Based Intermediate Supervisors Institute (SBISI) is designed as a two-year leadership seminar series and the course work is conducted in the ELC. The workshops are presented in a series, using a variety of “nuts and bolts” strategies, engagement in critical thinking scenarios and references to educational leadership related literature. The goal is to expand, enhance and build upon fundamental leadership skills and knowledge through a variety of shared experiences, protocols and materials.

All SBISI seminars are aligned with the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE) School Leadership Competencies and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC), a multi-state framework that provides the foundation and direction for the program.

### **Advanced Leadership Program for Assistant Principals (ALPAP)**

Recognizing the need for a systemic approach to building capacity within the existing pool of experienced school-based Assistant Principals who aspire to become Principals, ELI created ALPAP to focus on the advanced leadership skills needed to serve as an effective Principal. This program provides a venue for Assistant Principals who have effectively met the challenges of their administrative and supervisory roles and demonstrated real readiness, to truly explore the complex nature of decision-making and authentic leadership as Principal. Each year there are 50-60 participants in this program.

A recognized group of active Principals with a distinguished record of service in the New York City school system serve as coaches for these assistant Principals. Using their years of experience and expertise, they guide the participants known as “Principal Candidates”, in an examination of the advanced leadership skills needed to support the Principal’s ability to develop an effective, sustainable school-learning community. The goal is to provide the Assistant Principal with an opportunity to hone existing skills, and to acquire new skills needed for the position of Principal through a unique coaching experience with three components:

1. Advanced Leadership Seminar Series
2. Seminar-Related Field Experiences
3. Partnering with experienced Principals

### **Conclusion**

The services provided by ELI offer some insight into the valuable work we do on a daily basis to support school leaders working in New York City schools. Based on ELI’s experiences and other work and research conducted in this area, we strongly believe that more must be done to ensure that all school leaders across the state are prepared to lead the education reforms as outlined and recommended by the New York State Board of Regents. We urge the Commission to consider recommending that New York State provide funding to support the following initiatives statewide:

- 1) Ongoing professional development opportunities for Principals, Assistant Principals and other Education Administrators, tailored to address current and emerging education trends;
- 2) Mentoring for first- and second-year Assistant Principals and Principals, and;

- 3) Creation of education learning centers, such as our ELCs, strategically located so that Principals, Assistant Principals and other Education Administrators across the state are afforded easy access to resource materials, experts and networking opportunities with other educators in the area.

In the absence of a coordinated statewide effort to provide professional development and other supports for all school leaders in New York State, it is unreasonable to assume that our schools are ready and prepared to implement upcoming education reforms.

I am grateful for the opportunity to speak with you today, and for the Commission members' work in leading the way forward. I would be pleased to provide whatever additional information you might need in this regard.

Respectfully submitted,

Eloise Messineo, Ph.D  
Executive Director