

The Principal Residency: Preparing Principals for Culturally and Linguistically Inclusive Schools

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Introduction

Preparing principals to lead culturally and linguistically inclusive schools is a priority of Project *Accelerated Preparation of Leaders for Underserved Schools* (APLUS) (Irby, et al., 2017). APLUS offers as one of its five components the APLUS principal preparation program. This program is supported by a \$15.6 million, five-year grant from the Supporting Effective Educator Development Program (SEED), U.S. Department of Education, Project A-PLUS (2017-2022; Accelerated Preparation of Leaders for Underserved Schools: Building Instructional Capacity to Impact Diverse Learners, U423A170053). As a component of APLUS, the residency program is an immersive experience in which principal candidates engage in school activities and processes, learning to apply various aspects of school leadership including action, reflection, research and accountability (AIR, 2016; North Carolina State University, 2019; Wallace, 2012). The residency model is expected to offer opportunities for defined leadership and supervisory experience over adults (Pierson, 2014).

Principal Residency Models

A principal residency is defined as an immersive experience in which a principal candidate engages in ongoing school activities, applying aspects of school leadership, such as action, reflection, research, and accountability (AIR, 2016; North Carolina State University, 2019; Wallace, 2012). Such a residency should offer a supervisory experience or an explicit leadership role over adults, such as group projects (Pierson, 2014). Residency programs are an investment in leadership capacity, enhancing student outcomes and developing a pipeline of principals prepared to lead schools (Mullenholz, 2015; Palmer et al., 2019). Khalifa et al. (2016) and Brooks and Brooks (2018) argued that principal preparation programs should prioritize culturally responsive school leadership to support students of color and underserved communities. In turn, students are empowered intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically through a culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

The lack of residency experiences in principal preparation programs can act as a barrier in this pipeline, denying principal candidates the opportunity to apply leadership skills in a practice setting before assuming a principal role (New Leaders, 2014). Researchers have agreed that traditional approaches to principal preparation programs do not effectively prepare principal residents for today's work environment (Bacon, 2016; Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001; Perilla, 2014; Zepeda et al., 2014). High quality principal preparation and development programs should focus on instruction, organization, and using data for change and invest in applied learning, cohorts and networks for collegial learning, as well as partnerships between districts and programs (Sutcher et al., 2017).

Scholars Define a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Principal Residency

In June 2021, The Education Leadership Research Center (ELRC) at Texas A&M University conducted a two-hour, virtual think tank via ZOOM with ten national scholars to discuss a culturally and linguistically responsive principal residency model. The scholars for this think tank were chosen based upon their specific strengths and expertise on the topic of principal residencies. Discussions revolved around the definition of a principal residency as well as characteristics the participants identified as essential for a high quality, effective residency program. The ELRC's research team conducted a qualitative content analysis after the meeting to identify the dominant concepts that emerged from the session (Neuendorf, 2017). Researchers analyzed the meeting transcript, including the chat transcript, for conceptual content. Message frequencies were calculated across each dominant concept for the explicit and implicit ideas revealed in the transcripts. The messages were then organized under the dominant concepts.

Scholars Define a Principal Residency

The first question presented to think tank scholars was *“How would you define a principal residency?”* The definitions revolved around the notion of immersive and practical experience in leadership. Words used to define the characteristics of an effective principal residency included “intensive,” “simulation,” “real settings,” “embedded practices with real schools,” and “real-life settings.” Providing such immersive experiences affords principal candidates the opportunity to engage in robust training by “div[ing] into the issues and having critical conversations” to develop the perspectives needed to be culturally responsive and inclusive leaders (Brooks). Table 1 highlights definitions given by the scholars in the think tanks.

Table 1

Defining a Principal Residency

Scholar	Definition
Dr. Jeffrey S. Brooks	It's a chance for aspiring principals to have an immersive experience. That gives them enough time to be able to build at least a bit of trust with one another. And dive deeper into the issues and critical conversations that they need if they're going to develop the kinds of perspectives and habits that we want to see cultivated in our leaders these days.
Dr. Mark A. Gooden	It is an intensive opportunity to work in the field while completing coursework.
Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings	It's an important simulation of the principalship.
Dr. Beverly J. Irby	It is the principals' training in real settings so that they can practice and learn. They learn, in a sense, on the job, and sometimes that may be a simulated training model.
Dr. Geovanny Ponce	Residency has become a pathway to teach our peer leaders to become principals; one word would be pathway.
Dr. Martha Salazar-Zamora	To me, it's an opportunity where principal candidates come together and receive robust professional learning and development opportunities to better prepare them to serve as campus or as district leaders.

Dr. Sally J. Zepeda	It provides multiple opportunities for embedded practices within a real school so that they can understand how different variables, such as culture, climate, etc., interact with the work and decisions they have to make.
Dr. Elsa Villarreal	It is an intensive, real-life experience to prepare a principal candidate for the principal job.

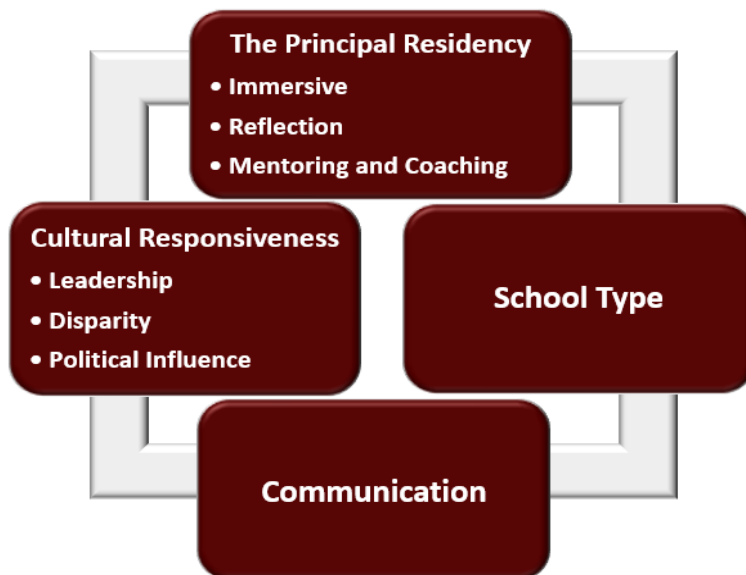
When considering the definitions presented in the discussion about the principal residency model, we can see that the think tank scholars collectively agreed that principal residencies are immersive and involve practical hands-on experiences in school leadership.

The Principal Residency Model: Think Tank Themes

Further discussion regarding key considerations of a principal residency allowed the scholars to dive more deeply into the topic. Four main themes emerged regarding successful principal residency experiences. The themes included *The Principal Residency Experience*, *Cultural Responsiveness*, *Communication*, and *School Type*. The themes with the sub-themes are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Think Tank Themes: Principal Residency Model



The content analysis message frequencies were calculated and are presented in Table 2. The frequencies of the main themes and the sub-themes for both explicit and implicit messages are included.

Table 2

The Principal Residency: Think Tank Concepts and Message Frequencies

Major Concept	Sub-category	Explicit	Implicit	Quote
The Principal Residency Experience		14	3	Activate and energize the networks in which they live and work. They encourage you to think about the possibility of developing alumni networks, Program networks, where ideas can flow, and people can know in that intensive experience. (Dr. Brooks)
	Immersive	7	2	Principal residency programs provide multiple opportunities for embedded practices within a real school (Dr. Zepeda)
	Reflection	3	1	Understanding of what it means to build inclusive schools wherever you are, whatever the school type is. A lot of leaders are not dealing with that adequately because they have not reflected on it. (Dr. Gooden)
	Mentoring and Coaching	4	1	I think in terms of who's going to be helping to supervise those residencies and help to support and coach our students, our candidates out there, we really need to think about the match as well as programs (Dr. Irby)
Cultural Responsiveness		3	12	Understanding the cultural, political dynamics, issues around gender and sexuality, ableism... being able to understand the different communities in

				which principals simultaneously work. (Dr. Brooks)
	Leadership		3	It takes principals and superintendents to help build a place where our principal candidates can go and feel that they can make a contribution and can learn about how to do this In a socially responsible and inclusive school (Dr. Irby)
	Disparity	2	5	When they come to those gaps, when they come to those disparities, understanding how that's going to be interpreted. I really have encouraged programs to think about that. (Dr. Gooden)
	Political Influence	1	4	It's actually more emblematic of a totalitarian regime. This is about the 2022 and 2024 elections. (Dr. Ladson-Billings)
Communication		3	3	One of the things that they could focus on is the importance of proper communication. You may not fully understand, but at least have that empathetic listening ear. (Dr. Salazar-Zamora)
School Type		2	3	My other important item is school type..if they actually match. We didn't see very prepared and effective leaders who are going to be able to go to those schools in high need if they are not being exposed to that. (Dr. Ponce)

Important Considerations of A Principal Residency

The scholars identified four key areas that must receive focused attention when designing a principal residency. First, principal residency programs must be evaluated to ensure the practices used are in line with recruiting quality candidates. This includes implementing inclusive recruiting practices of diverse candidates. Brooks emphasized

the importance of paying attention to the “selection criteria and who we are identifying as potential leaders. Secondly, principal candidates must be trained to be culturally responsive and inclusive while also learning about the importance of effective communication. Finally, residency programs must consider the school type in which candidates desire to lead or find employment. Each of these topics will be explored in more detail below.

Immersive Principal Residencies

The think tank definitions provided a foundation for exploring the nature of effective principal residencies. While a principal residency is a simulation of a real principalship designed to obtain practical experiences under real-life settings, those experiences should incorporate certain features. Residency programs must broadly consider how best to create immersive experiences. Shaping a principal residency program is dependent “to quite a large degree, [on] what happens before the program, after the program, [and] how people are selected into the program” (Dr. Brooks). This involves how candidates are being supported in their development while in the program. Principal residencies must incorporate relevant training into the residency and consider the “different skill sets” needed to lead effectively (Dr. Salazar-Zamora). For instance, Dr. Martha noted that “the robust professional learning and development” from the principal residency program must help prepare candidates as “district leaders.” Dr. Ponce specifically indicated that candidates should “have a hand in what we see on a daily basis.” Such training must further develop the key competencies required of principals. Some of these competencies are further discussed in the other themes found in this research, such as developing cultural competence and having critical conversations as needed.

Programs must also ensure they are recruiting a diverse pool of applicants. Dr. Brooks emphasized, “If we don't pay attention to those selection criteria and who we are identifying as potential leaders, then we're not going to serve our community as well.” The recruitment process is an especially important factor for consideration because it is clear that candidates will go into various school contexts with diverse school cultures. This may even involve “revis[ing] the admission” requirements by creating a “rubric for who will qualify based on these traits” (Ponce).

Scholars expressed their own specific ideas under the umbrella of a principal residency characteristic of a real-life simulation. One notable aspect of effective principal residencies is the importance of building solid cohorts within the program. Dr. Gooden articulated that being a principal “is a very lonely job” and that the use of cohorts provide residents a source of support as they “lean on each other so much during the program.” Cohorts provide the opportunity to support each other. Gooden continued, stating, “They

lean on each other so much during the program.” Dr. Brooks further explained how this benefits principal candidates.

Give candidates enough time to be able to build trust with one another, and dive deeper into the issues and critical conversations that they need if they're going to develop the kinds of perspectives and habits that we want to see cultivated in our leaders.

It is also important to “encourage [institutes of higher education] to think about the possibility of developing alumni networks” (Dr. Brooks). Dr. Brooks adds that this may include “program networks, where ideas can flow and people can share in that intensive experience.” Such networks may “sort of activate and energize the networks in which they live and work,” alleviating the loneliness that can exist among school leaders (Dr. Brooks). One specific way to do this is by encouraging programs to stay engaged with the cohorts after they leave” (Brooks). One way they could contribute to new principal candidates’ learning is to invite them to “come back as speakers, serving as mentors, etc.” (Brooks). By using their fresh novice experiences, they “can help the ideas come alive for students.” (Brooks). Stressing the importance of staying connected with the cohorts, Dr. Zepeda observed, “We certify candidates; we provide mentoring; and then, what do we do next? It's not on the list, but I think it's a natural progression” in the development process.

Participants acknowledged that, despite the benefits principal residencies bring, they are not without limitations. As Dr. Salazar-Zamora noted, “There is not a program now that can fully prepare our leaders for the tasks that are at hand.” The many reasons for this require deeper future exploration. Dr. Irby articulated her concerns, stating, “Part of our mission of education is to teach people to think for themselves and not to just take in everything and not be critical about it.” Incorporating opportunities for principal residents to make real-time decisions and practice critical thinking in the moment will better prepare future leaders for the jobs that await them.

Reflection

Another key aspect of a principal residency is providing opportunity for reflection, which is important for principal residents in developing their capacity to think like leaders. Many times, candidates in a residency program exclusively depend on the professional development given by coaches; reflecting on what they learned and how it fits into their own living and working environment is often a forgotten component. However, it is critical that residents are provided training in the reflection cycle (Brown & Irby, 1997), a necessity in the principal residency program.

While self-reflection was deemed important, residents must reflect deeply and critically. Without critical self-reflection, Dr Gooden believed that candidates “failed to understand what it means to build inclusive schools wherever you are, whatever the school type is,” affecting the depth and effectiveness of their own professional development. Gooden continued, “they have not reflected deep enough around their cultural identity and how that’s going to map into the context,” addressing how necessary it is to “have leaders who need to be aware of who they are, regardless of their race and cultural background.” Dr. Brooks added, “such reflection, especially guided by a critical perspective in the residency, is crucial.” Participants agreed these were important items upon which to reflect.

Lack of deep reflection during any type of principal residency may lend itself to candidates accepting jobs in districts that are not a good fit. Dr. Irby indicated, I tell our principal candidates,

“It is best not to apply for every principal's job that comes along. There are many students who do that, and they just apply in what we call a shotgun effect for everything. It's about looking at and studying that district or that school campus and determining whether it's a good fit.”

Principal residencies must include not only opportunities to critically reflect, but also diverse experiences upon which to reflect. Such opportunities improve residents’ capabilities to make critical decisions, a required quality of effective leadership. All participants agreed that reflection is a key component in developing culturally responsive principal residency programs.

Mentoring and Coaching

Mentoring and coaching is one of the most important components of a residency program. Dr. Ladson-Billings emphasized that “having that person there to guide you is crucial” to a successful residency. Dr. Ponce indicated the importance of “who is the coach,” which should be the number one question to ask when forming the partnership. Dr. Ladson-Billings also agreed that “coaches and mentors are going to be crucial in the retention of teachers and staff.” Coaches’ influence through modeling and allowing candidates to participate in varied experiences is vital to candidate development. Identifying and selecting knowledgeable and capable coaches is a key part to a successful principal residency. With the emphasis on mentoring and coaching in residency programs, the coaching selection process is crucial. As Dr. Zepeda asked, “what are the criteria universities use when they assign professors to teach or lead those cohorts through the residency?” In answering the question, Dr. Irby provided a general direction “in terms of who's going to be helping to supervise those residencies

and help to support and coach our students, our candidates out there; we really need to think about the match as well as programs.” Residency programs must secure solid coaches and mentors, ensuring residents are receiving the proper guidance as they navigate various leadership roles and experiences.

Cultural Responsiveness

Another robust finding involved the importance of cultural responsiveness to principal residencies and candidate training. Three sub-categories emerged under cultural responsiveness, including leadership, disparity, and political influence.

Leadership

Preparing principals is especially complicated due to challenges facing them in culturally and linguistically diverse school settings. Principals must adopt an identity that promotes a diverse and inclusive society. In today's environment, leaders are asked and expected to affect change. Therefore, preparing leaders becomes a significant and daunting task. With the multiplicity of expectations, participants urged that “programs should think about moving beyond just having a course” (Gooden). Programs must “challenge them to think about all those other courses.” Dr. Brooks added, “we have to understand what is the core of leadership practice, the underlying foundation, that allows us to navigate the ever-changing dynamics.”

The formidable task is not a responsibility only for principal candidates themselves; it is a duty that requires the higher office to contribute. As Dr. Irby suggested,

“It takes both the principal and superintendent to help build a place where our principal candidates can go and feel that they can make a contribution and can learn about what to do in a socially responsible way at an inclusive school.”

Dr. Brooks stated that “what makes principal preparation so important—people need to develop a critical and culturally relevant perspective on leadership” especially under today's circumstances. Dr. Brooks continued by pointing out the relationship between consciousness and context, stating, the “development of that critical consciousness is the understanding of our local/state/national/global context and developing an understanding of a leader’s agency within those contexts.” Developing this competency must be a priority of principal residency programs.

Disparity

Today, social disparities and inequalities are challenging our society, and people have been fighting for justice. However, Dr. Ladson-Billings noticed that, “every time we have tried to provide equal opportunity, we have systematically been rolled back.” This was echoed by Dr. Gooden, who pointed to the disparities that exist due to hegemonic leadership. For example, schools endure this “inequitable system of finance because the people in power, the legislators, live in a district that have benefited from, so that's why you don't get the resources” needed. These statements point to the necessity of developing leaders who are culturally responsive and able to address the inequalities that exist within schools.

There are steps that can be taken to fight for a just society efficiently. Dr. Brooks suggested “pulling out data and looking at the equity opportunity gaps. There’s no way to deny that the systems are built to perpetuate and protect inequity rather than dismantle it.” By really evaluating the data, you are able to “interrogate deficit thinking,” which happens on all levels (Brooks). As you look at the data and “build out into the community and scale it up to the state and nation, there’s no way to deny that the systems are built to perpetuate and protect inequity rather than dismantle it” (Brooks).

Evaluating school data closely reveals the facts of disparity, illustrating clear discrepancies among various aspects of school progress. For instance, Dr. Brooks stated

Pull out their data, and look at the equity opportunity gaps that are in their data already. You say, OK, you've got these different graduation rates; you've got these different achievement rates; you've got these different kids taking up advanced placement classes. There's inequity all over the discipline referrals.

In essence, the school data are readily available and must be used when making policy and programmatic decisions. It is imperative that principal candidates are trained in these processes.

Dr. Brooks asserted the need to fight against inequity. Dr. Gooden agreed with Dr. Brooks` assertion and also recommended applying critical consciousness to every area with everyone, asking

How did you get folks to start to work with critical consciousness and then apply that in all those other areas of work, finance, law?

Also, Dr. Gooden reassured the rights of minorities in the society, stating “we have some say, as well, and we want our students engaged in this” and by doing this, “we will become more democratic citizens.” It is paramount that principal candidates understand

the “ importance of cultural and contextual relevance” (Zepeda). This involves many aspects, including

understanding the cultural, political dynamics, issues around gender and sexuality, ableism, the agency of leaders in different spots. It's an approach to the work that begins with experience, but builds on challenges and expands their mental models about students, about communities, about education, and all those things (Brooks).

All participants agreed that “times are changing fast” (Zepeda). As such, preparing principals in culturally and linguistically responsive ways must translate into practically applied cultural responsiveness and the necessary dispositions successful principals will need to develop.

Political Influence

The political influence of educational policy was also a major component discussed in developing culturally responsive school leaders. Not only do leaders need to equip themselves with critical consciousness, but also to understand our current political climate and its influence on school contexts. The question was posed, “do we have a leader who is aware enough to understand that I need to develop an equity leadership team to understand the changes that are happening right now?” (Gooden).

Leaders need to be able to see the bigger picture and understand the current political climate. Dr. Ladson-Billings described the current political environment as “actually more emblematic of a totalitarian regime” and fighting for justice is also

about the 2022 and 2024 elections. So if you can't see the bigger picture, it's really hard for you to respond to these sorts of darts and arrows that are coming your way. I think it's incumbent upon anyone who is in leadership to be able to know exactly what it is that they are charged with doing.

Dr. Gooden added that democracy is crumbling when you “teach students how to stay in line and not to hurt other people's feelings. All of that really goes against what it means to participate in a democracy and build a more democratic nation.” As leaders, speaking up for equity is an important skill to develop. This skill is honed by having difficult conversations on difficult topics. The challenge of “getting away from the Great (White) Man Theory is hard and requires us to be intentional, and we are preparing people to participate in a democracy” (Gooden). Part of living and working in a democratic society involves ensuring our schools are providing a just education. Therefore, principals must also be activists to ensure equitable practices are employed within schools. This also

means learning about organizations where their voice can be heard on important school matters, as this could have an impact on educational legislation.

Communication

Training principal candidates to communicate effectively is valuable to ensuring their cultural responsiveness. Dr. Salazar-Zamora reiterates that communication can “be as basic as someone speaks, and someone listens;” communication can be technically simple, but “the importance of proper communication is really one of the things that should be focused on. You may not fully understand, but at least have that empathetic listening ear.” Dr. Salazar-Zamora recognized communication as one of top priorities principal candidates need to be aware of. She continued, “in order to lead effectively, you have to be able to have critical conversations.” Dr. Gooden concurred, stating “listening and leading differently in a more inclusive way is very important.” Residents should have experience communicating with a variety of stakeholders and practice the art of listening with diverse populations.

Leadership style impacts how principals communicate. A productive critical conversation requires trusting relationships among leaders and their subordinates; it cannot happen with a bureaucratic communication style of top-down order-giving. However, some leaders fail to realize this. As Dr. Ladson-Billings described

What we don't do a good job in leadership, in general, is helping people get grounded. It is really important that people get that sort of ground level view of what the enterprise is all about, rather than this view up here that says, ‘Oh, I'm a leader now, and I can sort of tell people what to do.’” Dr. Gooden also realized that “sometimes those who claim to be equity leaders have this very top-down structural bureaucratic way of suppressing the voice.

Thus, in order to create an environment that promotes and supports positive communication, leaders need to “listen in a more inclusive way, such as being more collaborative in how to organize meetings, how to include people, and how to listen to folks,” as suggested by Dr. Gooden. Lastly, Dr. Brooks added that leaders not only need to empathize with others, but also be able to properly craft personal and small group conversations.

School Type

Because principal candidates may find employment in urban, rural, or suburban school types, principal residencies must consider how to prepare them best for these specific

contexts. School leaders “have to know your community. In leadership, it transcends urban, rural, and suburban” (Salazar-Zamora). For instance, principal residencies should be situated in high-needs schools in order to deepen the applicant pool. Dr. Giovanni Ponce noted that, to be effective learners, they are not “going to be able to go to those schools in high needs if they are not exposed to that”. Additionally, Dr. Martha Salazar-Zamora noted that candidates need “different skills that they have to be able to do well to be an effective leader” and it is important to “have the tenacity and the tenure that’s needed” when considering rural versus urban settings. Dr. Beverly Irby expanded on this by noting how leaders “might have to think differently about this” as some schools “have the luxury of having [an instructional skills specialist] in a larger district, but in the smaller districts” those specialists do not exist. Residency programs must be versed in how context affects what leaders will experience so they can ensure principal candidates are prepared for those contexts.

Overall, the think tank provided an opportunity for proven leaders and renowned scholars in the field to share their perspectives on principal residency and, through their discussions, explore the current challenges we face in search of possible solutions for our schools and society.

Implications for Practice

Providing quality principal residencies is necessary for developing culturally responsive leaders. Participants in the think tank agreed that principal residencies must be immersive experiences supported with strong mentoring and coaching. Additionally, residents should also be given opportunities to develop culturally responsive competencies in their leadership practices, recognizing that disparities exist, often due to political influence. Other factors residents need to consider is the school type they hope to serve, finding experiences in those types of schools, as well as learning how to engage effectively when communicating with school members and stakeholders. The findings from the think tank lend themselves to several implications for practice.

1. Mentors of principal residents must ensure candidates are immersed in everyday, practical experiences that deepen the residents' understanding of the rigors at the administrative level. The experiences must be diverse to ensure residents have some experience to draw upon when they are leaders in their own schools. An immersive residency is one where residents are able to engage a variety of stakeholders, from administrators and faculty to district personnel and community leaders. This type of experience provides the opportunity to see how the various forces impact decision making as well as communicate with a variety of groups.

2. Principal residents must develop cultural competence. This involves the ability to attend to the needs of the students they serve as well as their families and communities. According to Khalifa et al. (2016), school leaders must be able to “create school contexts and curriculum that responds effectively to the educational, social, political, and cultural needs of students” (p. 1278). To do this, residents must be able to critically evaluate their own underlying assumptions they hold about people, groups, policies, and curriculum. Additionally, residents must witness what it means to develop an inclusive school environment where students belong and are valued for their differences. Schools must mirror their student population in decor, celebrations, and access to diverse viewpoints through the curriculum. Culturally responsive leaders also actively connect the school with the community so families feel supported by the school and its policies.
3. Leaders must be effective communicators. This is especially important for residents to learn. As future school leaders, they must understand the importance of listening to their stakeholders in an effort to stay abreast of potential issues. By doing so, leaders can approach problem-solving more proactively as they address the school community’s needs. Leaders must also understand how to communicate with different groups within the community, including parents, business owners, and other stakeholders. This involves communication that is inclusive of many voices.
4. Principal residents should be guided by their preparation programs to seek experiences in school settings that mirror their goals or preferences. School contexts vary by location, specifically dependent upon whether they are rural, urban, or suburban. Each school type has its unique needs and challenges. Residents’ immersive experiences should occur in the context that will best prepare them for their future professional plans. Through leadership experiences within those contexts, residents will gain the needed perspective for leading in those specific community and school types.

Becoming an effective communicator takes practice, especially considering how important relationship-building is for school leaders. Effective communication with diverse populations is extremely important, a vital part of being a culturally responsive leader. Residents should be able to witness models of relationships and responsive communication from mentors to glean a clearer understanding of how best to communicate in certain circumstances. Residents must also develop the ability to have critical conversations with faculty and staff and should be groomed by their mentors in effective strategies of interpersonal communication.

Conclusions

Principal residency programs provide valuable experiences for aspiring principals and school leaders. Such programs must be immersive and provide practical experiences that prepare principal candidates to be culturally and linguistically responsive leaders who create inclusive learning environments. These programs should be purposefully designed to address the fast-changing political, economic, and cultural environment. This involves intense and explicit training in the dispositions and practices required to be a culturally and linguistically responsive leader. And, as Dr. Brooks stated, “leadership is not as sexy as it looks once you get into it.” Therefore, residents need as many and varied experiences as they can get.

The think tank scholars provided specific suggestions that could enhance the principal residency experience. This included challenging institutes of higher education to adapt their training programs to changing societal needs. More in-depth conversations with think tank members would provide deeper insights into how best to train leaders in the practical aspects of cultural responsiveness and inclusive leadership. Topics for further discussion should include developing inclusive communication skills among principal candidates, options for ensuring candidates are able to experience varied school contexts, and how to practically implement culturally responsive and inclusive leadership practices.

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Think Tank Member Biographies

Dr. Nahed Abdelrahman is the coordinator of *Preparing Academic Leaders* Master's Program, also known as PAL, as well as the Component 1 coordinator for APLUS, which focuses on Principal Residencies. She received her Ph.D. in Educational Administration at Texas A&M University's Department of Educational Administration and Human Resources. Her research interests center on education policy and principal preparation.

Yvonne Costello is an undergraduate at Texas A&M University in Child Professional Services. She has worked at the University for 23 years and is currently working as a Program Coordinator with the Education Leadership Research Center on the Accelerated Preparation of Leaders for Underserved Schools (Project APLUS Grant).

Dr. Jeffrey S. Brooks is a Professor of Education and Associate Dean of Education at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Melbourne, Australia. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia in Educational Leadership. His research focus includes educational leadership, management, and administration, teachers as educational leaders, and education and social justice.

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Dr. Beverly J. Irby is Regents Professor in the Department of Education Administration and Human Resource Development and Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University, College Station. She is the Director of the Education Leadership Research Center (ELRC), the Co-Director of Center for Research in Dual Language and Literacy Acquisition

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Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings is a Hagler Fellow Texas A&M University, a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association and has worked with teacher residencies for over 20 years. Her research interests and areas of expertise include culturally relevant pedagogy and issues in equity. She is the author of *Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* as well as many other publications.

Dr. Rafael Lara-Alecio is a Regents Professor, Texas A&M University System, the Director Center for Research & Development in Dual Language & Literacy Acquisition (CRDLLA), and Division Chair, Bilingual/ESL Programs, Department of Educational Psychology (EPSY) in the College of Education and Human Development, at Texas A&M University. Dr. Lara-Alecio's research is found in high-impact journals. His academic work focuses on assessment, evaluation, academic language acquisition (math and science), Parental Involvement, and international education. He is an experienced early childhood, elementary and secondary school bilingual teachers with multiple books impacting the academic life of English Learners. He co-authored a pedagogical classroom observation theory and model for bilingual and ESL classrooms. His research and training grants are in excess of \$100,000,000 from federal/state agencies.

Karen McIntush has a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture at Texas A&M University. She is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Houston in the *teachHouston* program.

Dr. Geovanny Ponce served most recently as the Assistant Superintendent of High Schools in Houston ISD. Ponce, an immigrant from Honduras, instills collaborative leadership to ensure students from all social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds have equal access to high-quality learning opportunities.

Dr. Fuhui Tong is a Professor of Bilingual/ESL Education and Head in the Department of Educational Psychology (EPSY) at Texas A&M University. She is also the Co-Director of the Center for Research & Development in Dual Language & Literacy Acquisition (CRDLLA). Her primary expertise is research design and quantitative methodology in bilingual/ESL education, second language acquisition, language assessment, and program evaluation. She has authored and/or co-authored 74 peer-reviewed journal publications, 15+ book chapters, 20+ technical reports, and over 100 refereed and invited presentations with research findings related to English learners' language acquisition and academic achievement. Dr. Tong has served as a Co-PI on multiple

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Dr. Martha Salazar-Zamora is the Superintendent of Schools for Tomball Independent School District, Tomball, Texas. She received her doctoral degree from Texas A&M University in Educational Administration.

Dr. Elsa Villarreal is an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Texas A&M-Commerce. Her research interests include principal preparation programs, Latina principals, and leading campuses with English Learners (ELs).

Dr. Sally J. Zepeda is a professor in the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy at the University of Georgia in Athens. She received her Ph.D. at Loyola University.

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