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Statement of
Arthur E. Wise
President, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
on the Release of
Educating School Leaders

By Arthur Levine, President, Teachers College, Columbia University

I agree with the analysis and most of the recommendations in the report, *Educating School Leaders*. I have two concerns; if these issues are not addressed, no changes of consequence will occur.

The dilemma is parallel to that of ‘Horace’s Compromise,’¹ but in this case the spiraling down of expectations has moved to the graduate school level. All parties involved in the education leadership enterprise—the candidates, the universities, and the school districts—are underinvested in the candidates’ preparation for leadership. Why is this so? The individuals enrolled are usually teachers who have families, full-time responsibilities in the classroom, and try to accomplish their graduate program at night and on weekends when they are squeezed for time. School districts thus far are uninterested. They have made no investment through help with tuition, time off from work responsibilities, or offers of internships. Therefore, universities cannot expect too much because students and school districts simply do not factor in time needed for the type of preparation required. To remedy the situation, we must encourage all parties to invest in a common incentive structure which supports candidate learning and growth in the leadership arena.

I must quarrel with the report's conclusion of just how bleak the picture is. Professional associations of school leaders have joined forces and have developed performance-based standards. These standards expect educational leaders to position teaching and learning as the focal point of schools. The standards can be found at www.ncate.org ; click on Standards and Program Standards and scroll to Educational Leadership, or go to <http://www.ncate.org/institutions/programStandards.asp?ch=4> .

Of between 500 and 600 education leadership programs, 168 have been found to meet the standards that the profession has developed through an accreditation review process. The best of these programs are characterized by six features:

- The district and the university are in partnership
- The district and the university select and groom future leaders
- Candidates move in a cohort so that they have support from each other
- A portfolio or similar mechanism is expected as evidence of growth and reflection
- Internship and mentoring is a part of the program
- The program is based on standards. Programs meet standards for education leader preparation, and these standards are linked to standards for P-12 teachers and students.

Meeting the education leadership standards is by and large a voluntary process carried out through a voluntary accreditation system. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the professional associations have the standards available, but institutions must use them.

Neither the education profession nor the states are yet as serious about quality assurance for education leader or teacher preparation programs as they should be. We do not follow the same quality control procedures, including accreditation and strong licensing procedures as do other professions. When we begin to do that, then we can fulfill the promise that these preparation programs have the potential to deliver.

¹ *Horace's Compromise* (Ted Sizer) which refers to mutually low expectations for high school students and teachers.