

School and district leadership matters more than ever in giving all of the nation's students access to outstanding education. Through its Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship, which prepares math and science teachers for high-need schools in five states, beginning with Indiana, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation has learned—not surprisingly—that principals are a critical element in the Teaching Fellows' success in the classroom and for



retention in the teaching profession. Indeed, the research shows that school leadership is second only to teaching among school influences on student success: Principals account for at least 25 percent of a school's total impact on student achievement.

Accordingly, a high-ability principal is essential. Current school leader preparation programs, which typically offer an M.Ed. to successful principal candidates and an Ed.D. for prospective

superintendents, are generally poor. Admissions and graduation standards are the lowest among programs offered by education schools. Coursework is largely unrelated to the positions students are preparing for. The clinical portions of the program are often weak. Too many teachers take these programs, which are thought of as the easiest route to a master's degree, for the salary bump they bring. Thus many current programs place a premium on fast and easy programs. In fact, no state requires superintendents have an Ed.D.

Because of this, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation set out to create a new, more rigorous terminal degree to prepare school leaders, the MBA in Education Leadership. The WW MBA seeks to address twin problems in American education. First, well-resourced U.S. schools still rank below those of many other nations—such as Finland, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, China, the Netherlands, and Canada—on measures of student achievement. Most of the nation's highest-performing schools are not competitive internationally. On the other hand, too many of our high-need urban and rural schools still fall too far below domestic benchmarks for student achievement, causing significant achievement gaps within and between states.

To confront these twin problems, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation invited the University of Indianapolis (UIndy) and the Milwaukee School of Education (MSOE) to partner with the Foundation to create this new, innovative approach to education leader preparation. Beginning in late 2013, the Foundation led the development of this new degree, while working with MSOE and UIndy to build the capacity necessary to sustain it over the long term. At both campuses, the

first classes of 15 Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellows began their work in summer 2014. In Indiana, Lilly Endowment provided a \$14.5 million grant in fall 2014 to expand the program, both by extending the program at UIIndy and by adding programs at two additional universities in the state. In both Indiana and Wisconsin, the inaugural classes of MBA Fellows will graduate in summer 2015 and will assume leadership positions at high-need schools. Additional classes of Fellows in Indiana will begin in 2015 and 2016.

The Woodrow Wilson Model for Education Leader Preparation

Design of the Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership draws on the best available research and practical expertise in the fields of business and education to prepare leaders with the knowledge, skills and tools to improve systems, schools, and, ultimately, student achievement. As part of this comprehensive approach, the WW MBA Fellowship program:

- collaborates with school districts to help identify and establish conditions that will enhance the effectiveness of program participants and drive sustainable gains in student achievement;
- includes integrated clinical and academic instruction that draws on the most innovative thinking on leadership preparation in the fields of business and education;
- provides three years of executive coaching for graduates once they enter their leadership positions; and
- ensures all program participants have a two- to four-week immersion experience, either in a strong high-need school domestically, through a residency at a high-performing school in another country, or in an organization that helps develop necessary expertise in specifically identified areas.



While it is likely that most WW MBA Fellows are current classroom teachers who will move into school leadership positions immediately upon graduation, the mission of this program is to prepare education leaders who will gain the knowledge, skills, expertise, and tools to progress into district and/or state leadership positions or go on to lead other education entities. As a result, sitting principals with a desire to move into district (or other organizational) leadership positions may also participate in this program.

Under Woodrow Wilson guidance, MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership program works closely with the host university's business school and, where appropriate, education school. Additionally, each state-based program partners with approximately 15 highly ranked suburban school districts, chosen for their commitment to raise performance to world-class levels. Other Woodrow Wilson design principles for the MBA Fellows program include these:

- Fellows are selected through a highly competitive nomination process in which partner K–12 districts, along with a number of turnaround schools and charter schools across the state, are invited to nominate candidates from their current pools of educators. Nominees then go

through a multi-step review process before being asked to join the WW MBA program. For the inaugural MBA classes in 2014, for instance, from an initial pool of thousands of eligible teachers, only 15 were selected to be WW MBA Fellows at each of the two universities.

- Each Fellow receives \$50,000 to cover tuition for the 13- to 15-month (two summers and a full academic year) MBA program and related expenses. Each will be required to serve in a leadership position in an identified school for at least three years.
- All Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellows receive specialized preparation in areas such as leadership, quality management, talent management, data analysis, and organizational change—all provided through an education lens.
- The state program and its classes of Fellows will be spotlighted through aggressive public and media engagement efforts, highlighting its participants as the future of effective school leaders and the program and a model for other universities and school leader preparation programs.

Evaluation of the new MBA program will be primarily tied to two measures of progress. The first is the placement of Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellows in school leadership positions. Once in place, Woodrow Wilson will measure progress toward the goal of closing the achievement gaps at those schools where Fellows are placed as principals. Progress will be determined by metrics such as student test scores and graduation rates, in comparison with the best schools nationally and internationally.

Why Woodrow Wilson?

The Woodrow Wilson Foundation has been successfully developing and implementing selective fellowship programs for nearly 70 years. The Foundation's 21,000 Fellows have won remarkable awards and honors: 14 Nobel Prizes, 32 MacArthur "Genius" Awards, 16 Pulitzer Prizes, and more. Today the Foundation offers some 500 fellowships a year in fields like foreign affairs, secondary school teaching, and ethics and the humanities.

The Foundation's experience with its state Teaching Fellowships is critical to this project. In 2007, recognizing the urgent need for well-prepared teachers, the Foundation launched the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship, which recruits highly able candidates for teaching careers in high-need subjects such as math and science and prepares them to teach in the schools that most need them.

Now operating in five states, with 28 universities, the Teaching Fellowship also helps to transform teacher education, as participating universities strengthen their teacher education programs based on Woodrow Wilson standards. The MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership will be informed by the Foundation's experience with creating new teacher education programs through the Teaching Fellowship, and by its experience in recruiting, mentoring, and placing outstanding Fellows in school districts across the United States.