

Summary of the Case (from the Inquiry Brief Proposal)
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey— New Brunswick
Graduate School of Education
Educational Administration Program¹
Audit Dates: November 20-21, 2008

The Summary of the Case is written by the auditors and approved by program faculty. The Summary reflects the auditors' understanding of the case the faculty are making for accreditation.

Authorship and approval of the *Inquiry Brief Proposal*:

The *Inquiry Brief Proposal* was written by John Adamus, James Bliss, William Firestone, Edward Liu, Catherine Lugg, and was discussed and adopted unanimously by the Rutgers Graduate School of Education's Department of Educational Theory, Policy, and Administration on September 5, 2008.

Introduction:

Rutgers University, chartered in 1766, is the premier public university in New Jersey, with more than 50,000 students and 9,000 faculty. The University spans three campuses, and offers 27 degrees in more than 100 major fields. The Graduate School of Education is located on the New Brunswick campus and is divided into three academic departments: Educational Psychology; Educational Theory, Policy, and Administration; and Teaching and Learning. Teaching staff of the GSE includes 54 full time faculty, 11 teaching assistants, and 83 adjuncts.

The master of Education Program in Educational Administration ("the Program") is the only degree at the GSE designed to prepare practicing educators for careers as school leaders. State requirements for certification as principal or supervisor have played a significant role in shaping the curriculum, especially recent changes in state regulations governing internship experiences. New Jersey requires a two-stage process for administrative licensure. The first focuses on course work and internship experiences, culminating in a state-approved examination, the PRAXIS School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA). Successful accomplishment of this stage one is a certificate of eligibility to become a "provisional administrator." The candidate must then fulfill a two-year residency requirement under the supervision of an approved mentor, and only after successful completion of this second stage is the individual awarded full certification. Because a student's educational experience in stage two is largely out of the Program's control, assessment of professional competence by the Program is limited mostly to a student's course work and internship.

Student enrollment in the Program between 2001 and 2007 has ranged from 65 to 81, with an average of 73. Most students are teachers and work on their degrees part-time.

Program claims:

Because the Program is submitting an *Inquiry Brief Proposal* and not a full *Brief*, faculty have framed their claims as inquiry questions:

“Do Rutgers candidates demonstrate the basic skills, knowledge, and dispositions to enable them to:

1. Lead individuals and organizations? (*General Leadership*)
2. Implement and maintain high quality instructional programs for students? (*Instructional Leadership*)
3. Administer the operation of New Jersey schools? (*Management*)
4. Function effectively within the varied contexts of schools within the State of New Jersey? (*Context/Community*)”

Each of these questions is connected to the “quality components of preparation to promote student learning” mandated in the New Jersey Administrative Code, as well as TEAC Quality Principles 1.1 – 1.3 and the cross-cutting themes.

Method and categories of evidence supporting the claims:

Currently-existing evidence that the Program proposes to assess its claims includes GRE Verbal and Mathematics scores, Praxis SLLA, several “Claim GPAs” consisting of grades in clusters of courses appropriate for each claim, and “Demonstration Tasks,” standardized assessments embedded in core courses that require students to apply what they have learned to specific problems of practice. The Program plans to increase the number of Demonstration Tasks in its core curriculum, and institute internship evaluations (consisting of ratings of student work by cooperating administrators and supervising faculty, new demonstration tasks, a self-assessment, and a “synthetic essay”), and follow-up studies of graduates to determine how many have become licensed and eventually tenured. Evidence of student learning is maintained in a required student portfolio, begun in 2006, containing both required elements (evidence categories listed above) and elective material submitted by the student.

The Program is also collecting student course evaluation data and proposes surveys of graduates that will seek to assess Program strengths and weaknesses. These sources of evidence are related to the claims and to Quality Principle III, organizational learning.

Validity and reliability of measures:

The Program is undertaking reliability studies of its portfolios and rubrics used for demonstration tasks. Finding some inconsistency and lack of complete documentation in the portfolios, the Program has taken steps to ensure that the required information in them is complete. The Program is assessing the “face validity” of its rubrics by ensuring that each one accurately reflects critical content; it also will assign multiple raters to a randomly-selected set of

demonstration projects to determine inter-rater reliability. A pilot reliability study of rubrics in one course showed an inter-rater reliability of 67%, with 80% agreement on assigned grade. The Program intends to use the results of these assessments to improve both the instruments and the directions given for their use.

Quality control processes:

While the quality control system has become significantly more systematic in recent years, the Program recognizes that much remains to be done. To oversee the expanded assessment system, an Evaluation Coordinator has been appointed, to be responsible for data collection and coordination with other offices in the GSE and the University. The Program plans an annual faculty conference to review student assessment data and make recommendations for program modification.

Internal audit:

Because the electronic database and portfolio archives were still under development at the writing of this Proposal, the Program conducted a truncated internal audit.

- The files of all students who were recommended for principal eligibility and who graduated between January of 2006 and May of 2008 (n=68) were examined for compliance with all admissions, course, and graduation requirements. Complete admissions data were found in nearly all cases; all students who were required to participate in an internship or submit a portfolio did so; all met requirements for graduation.
- Appropriate procedures were followed for the establishment of all new courses, but a “glaring weakness” revealed by the audit was the lack of current course syllabi on file.
- Program faculty are appropriately prepared.
- Facilities were judged adequate to meet instructional needs.

¹ The program includes options in the following areas and New Jersey, following to its own policies and regulations, may grant teaching licenses in these areas to the program’s graduates:

The master’s degree options require courses in five areas: leadership and human resource management, communications, data-based research strategies for decision making, finance, and law. Option A requires 39 credits and leads to a recommendation for a certificate of eligibility to become a principal with supervisor certification in New Jersey. Option B requires 36 credits and is designed for students who want principal’s certification but not the New Jersey supervisor’s

certification. A third option offers an off-campus certificate program to students who already have a master's degree and are interested in a New Jersey supervisor's endorsement only.