

## Proposal to Revise Admissions Criteria

### Background

According to our current admissions policy, the Educational Leadership program requires GRE scores for students applying to our masters degree program. We waive the requirement for: (a) applicants to the 24 licensure program, and (b) applicants with a 3.2 GPA or above. In addition to the GRE scores, our admissions committee reviews undergraduate and graduate transcripts, a statement of purpose, the applicant's life and work experience, and letters of recommendation.

### Proposal

We propose to make GRE scores optional and focus our admissions decisions on criteria we believe signal the potential for success in our program. Our faculty feel better indicators of potential for success include: (1) undergraduate and graduate transcripts, (2) strong recommendations from employers, (3) rich life and work experiences, and (4) demonstrated ability to speak to these in written and verbal form are. To ascertain the latter, we will review a writing sample (prompt and rubric below) for all students. We will also require an interview (detailed below) for those with weaker academic performance (undergraduate and graduate GPA below 3.0) or where experience and/or the written response raises concerns. We detail the use of these criteria below.

### Rationale

The educational leadership faculty proposes change our admissions requirements for our master's programs. This decision results from an examination of our application requirements and discussion of application materials which signal a good fit and potential for success in our master's programs. During this discussion the faculty concluded that the GRE score is the least helpful piece of information in admissions decisions. Further, we believe the requirement may present an additional barrier to applicants with strengths and experiences that would enrich our programs. Finally, we feel greater consistency between requirements for the degree and licensure is appropriate.

Information: We have not found the GRE score particularly useful in determining who will be successful in the program. Most of our applicants have been teachers for several years and apply to our master's programs to become principals or other school administrators. Our master's programs prepares school leaders to be moral and transformational agents committed to the principles of equity, justice, and diversity as they confront problems of practice rooted in the perennial problems of class, race, gender, ethnicity, (dis)ability, and other areas of difference. (The conceptual framework that guides our program is highlighted below). Experience suggests those students demonstrating weaker performance in the program did not necessarily have lower incoming GRE scores. Rather, our weaker students often lacked experience, maturity and/or an ability to reflect. Others did not embrace the mission or conceptual model for the master's programs. While the GRE provides little information regarding these concerns, these could be identified in an interview and a writing prompt.

Costs to Students: The GRE costs \$160 and also demands some investment for

preparation materials and study. We know from the literature that admissions requirements like the GRE presents additional barriers for students of color and low-income students. Feedback from applicants and our colleagues in the field suggest that the costs and time associated with taking the GRE may dissuade some applicants from applying to our program. Given the limited information yielded by the GRE, the potential to lose teachers and others with experiences and backgrounds that will enrich our program and the pool of potential administrators is a particular concern.

Consistency: Our programs admit degree-seeking (36-hour program) and licensure-only (24-hour program) applicants, but requires the GRE only for the former.

### **Review of written response and interview**

Our master's programs engage students in critical analyses of organization, community, curriculum, legal and financial issues, and leadership practice. This work demands the abilities to reflect and respond in written and oral form.

Writing Sample: As a screening device, the writing sample will be examined to determine whether the applicants possess the necessary skills to complete our coursework. Our prompt and associated rubric to evaluate written expression is attached.

Interview: As above, the interview will allow us to learn more about applicant understanding of and ability to discuss these topics and their relation to K-12 schooling. The interviews would also permit us to learn more about the experiences the applicants have gained from working in schools. Due to time and logistical constraints, interviews will be required only for applicants raising concerns related to prior academic achievement or experience and disposition as reflected in the other application materials.

### **Intellectual Traditions and Program Outcomes**

History of American Education: Understand, criticize, articulate, and justify the social and individual purposes of education in relation to issues of equity, justice, and diversity  
Race, Culture, Class, Gender and Other Areas of Difference: Comprehend, analyze, and reflect upon the historical, cultural, organizational, and political contexts of schools, with respect to issues of diversity and difference

Organizational Politics and Ethics: Act deliberatively, ethically, and skillfully within the evolving realities of contemporary educational institutions

Legal/Economic Foundations of Schooling: Know and apply their understanding to daily management of schools regarding all aspects of school-level leadership

Transformational Leadership: Develop and inquiry orientation to practice that is critical, transformative, educative, and ethical.

### Writing Prompt: Statement of Purpose

Leadership programs of the IU School of Education prepare educators to be moral and transformational agents leading high performing schools and fostering equity, justice, and diversity. Leaders of this sort routinely contend with and challenge barriers to educational opportunity relating to poverty, gender, (dis)ability, race, ethnicity and home language, among others. In preparation for this work, our students engage in ongoing discussions and critical analyses of school organization, community relations, curriculum development and delivery, legal and financial issues, and leadership practice. This work demands the abilities to reflect and respond in written and oral form.

So that we can assess interest and commitment to engaging with our faculty and fellow students in these efforts, we ask all candidates provide a statement of purpose for entering the IU educational leadership program. This statement should clearly introduce you, indicate your educational and professional goals and relate these to your educational, work and life experiences. The statement should be no more than three double-spaced pages.

Criteria for Statement of Purpose	Points allotted
<b>Substance and Insight (40 pts)</b>	
<i>Introduction:</i> Statement provides appropriate and sufficient detail regarding candidate.	
<i>Disposition:</i> Based on the information provided, the candidate's expressed beliefs, values, attitudes, etc. are consistent with the program mission and commitments.	
<i>Goals:</i> The candidate's stated educational and professional objectives reflect an appropriate trajectory aligned with the program mission.	
<i>Experiences:</i> The educational, professional and life experiences presented are rich and will enrich the program.	
<i>Reflection:</i> Candidate's discussion of beliefs, goals and experiences demonstrate an ability to reflect deeply and offer insights.	
Comments:	
<b>Argumentation and Articulation (40 pts)</b>	
<i>Logical flow:</i> The ideas are introduced in a logical flow, with strong transitions to signal shifts in argument and connections among ideas and points;	
<i>Phrasing and Structure:</i> The statement uses to good effect phrasing and structure to cue the reader.	
<i>Elegant expression:</i> As a whole, the statement provides for ease of reading and interpretation through logical organization and avoidance of awkward and/or ambiguous phrasing and overly complex sentence construction.	
Comments:	
<b>Attention to Detail (20 pts)</b>	
<i>Instructions:</i> Follows prompt instructions in terms of content, length, etc.	
<i>Proofreading:</i> Free of spelling, grammatical and/or typographical errors	
Comments:	
Overall Comments:	
Total	