



Castleton University

April 20, 2017

To: Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators
Program Approval Committee
From: Ric Reardon, Ph.D.
RE: ROPA Approval

Program Approval Committee:

I write this letter to provide clarity on work happening within the *Castleton Institute for School Leaders*, our newly approved principal licensure program. When Castleton first presented this 36-credit Master's degree/principal endorsement program to the ROPA review team a few years ago for approval, the intent was to provide 19 credits of coursework specifically designed to address all of the content/topic areas of the principal endorsement (#91), 7 credits of coursework focused on transformative leadership, re-cultured schools, and inclusive learning environments, and 9 credits specifically dedicated to supporting each students' Mediated Achievement Plan (MAP) and internship work. The Mediated Achievement Plan is a 2-year systems change project that meets each Master's degree students' thesis requirement and the credited internship support was to assure that students completed their required 300 hour internship in appropriate educational settings with sufficient district and university mentor guidance. The leadership program was unanimously approved and the first course of the 2-year rotation began in the summer of 2016.

Shortly after that approval occurred, I received a call from John Castle, superintendent for the North Country Supervisory Union in the Northeast Kingdom, who spoke on behalf of a number of superintendents in his area about their desire to "grow their own administrators" since they were having a very difficult time finding viable candidates to fill principal positions as they became available. They were hoping to identify about 2-3 teacher leaders in each of their respective districts who would then participate in our new leadership program. That "recruitment" work resulted in a 15-member cohort of teachers from multiple districts eager to add the principal endorsement to their current licenses.

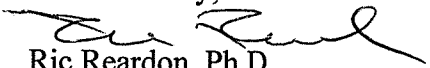
The issue that arose was that every one of the teachers in the NEK cohort had already earned a Master's degree. Since Vermont licensing regulations simply states that a Master's degree is required (page 6 of Rule 5440 – Licensing Endorsements Supplement A), they had met that requirement and the requirement of having "three or more years of PK-12 teaching experience". They then only needed to successfully complete the 7 endorsement courses specifically designed to demonstrate Competence in the *Core Leadership Standards for Vermont Educators* and complete a 300-hour internship.

The candidates all applied for the principal endorsement program and were required to submit an official transcript of their earned Master’s degree (with an expected minimum 3.0 GPA). Once they were accepted into the program, we began offering our leadership courses in the original 2-year rotation that was approved by the ROPA team and the endorsement-only students would “jump in” when endorsement courses were offered in that rotation.

Those students would then need to successfully complete the seven endorsement courses that addressed the *Core Leadership Standards for Vermont Educators* (see chart below) and submit to us a letter signed by their administrative mentor (per AOE memorandum titled “Transcript Review for Administrators and Internship Requirements” ; June, 2016) as evidence of having successfully completed their 300-hour internship and we would recommend them for the principal endorsement. They were also informed that, since they would be completing all of the courses designed to address the principal endorsement from a ROPA approved program, they would be exempt from the SLLA exam. Any student coming to us with coursework already started would be allowed to access our courses and advised to use the transcript review process for the endorsement since they would not be completing their entire program with us.

My question... does what has been described as a pathway to endorsement for those with an earned Master’s degree warrant a substantive change to our Institutional Profile and to the description of the program itself as originally approved? We did not anticipate so many candidates with a Master’s degree applying and we established this “program within a program” to allow them to earn licensure and address the critical problem of administrative shortages in the Northeast Kingdom.

Professionally,



Ric Reardon, Ph.D.

Course	Endorsement Content/Topic Area
EDU 6610-Supervision, Evaluation, and Professional Development	Supervision and evaluation
EDU-6402 -Managing Change: School and Special Education Law	School law and ethics
EDU 5215-Managing the Learning Environments	Foundations of school leadership and the education system
EDU 6403-Managing Change: School Finance	Organization management, operation, and resources (e.g. school finances, technology)
EDU 6022- Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Curriculum and instructional leadership; Data and assessment
EDU 5560- Leading with Integrity	School law and ethics
EDU 6530 The Larger Context: Community Policy and Partnerships	Collaboration and community;