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For Immediate Release

Governors State University Hosts Education Leadership Project

University Park, IL, May 30, 2008 – Providing students with an effective education is not just the province of the classroom teacher. According to a recent meeting of more than 30 members of the Illinois State Action for Education Leadership Project (IL-SAELP) at Governors State University, it is also the product of effective principal leadership.

IL-SAELP is comprised of education leaders from Illinois' universities and public school districts. Their purpose is to investigate leadership education programs and make new and revised policy recommendations to the State. The goal of IL-SAELP is to help create stronger, more capable educational leaders across the state through more effective preparation and support.

"Creating a better education system requires leadership at all levels. Preparing well trained, innovative, and effective building principals is the goal of every university education administration program," said Alicia McCray, Director of the Metropolitan Institute of Leadership in Education (MILE) at GSU.

MILE hosted the meeting at the University Park campus and used the opportunity to showcase its Principal Mentoring Program, which provides trained mentors to advise and guide first year principals, as well as its professional development opportunities for school administrators and school board members.

"MILE strives to respond to the educational needs of educators in more than 80 districts and communities," added McCray.

The members of IL-SAELP listened to three south suburban school superintendents discuss their vision of school leadership in the future and provide their suggestions for improving current educational standards for administrators.

"I am concerned about the depth of the research process in which administrative candidates are involved. More thought should be given to the topics and process during the candidates' preparation programs," said Dr. Blondean Y. Davis, Superintendent of Matteson School District 162.

"To attain more rigor in the classroom, we need more rigor in educator's training," added Dr. Brian Ali, Superintendent of Kankakee School District 111. "Just as teachers take responsibility for student learning, building leaders must take responsibility for student learning and achievement. They must work together. School leadership improves quality."

The members of IL-SAELP were encouraged to return to their colleges and universities and develop programs that responded to the high demand for qualified school leaders.

"It is not enough to be a good principal, you need to manage, understand, and lead with a passion. You have to be able to take criticism and understand what the community wants and needs," said Dr. Doug Hamilton, Superintendent of South Holland School District 151.

According to McCray, "The members of IL-SAELP have the opportunity to influence the administrator education programs offered at colleges and universities in Illinois. Today's meeting provided a clear vision of the leadership needs. We are very excited about the information that was presented at GSU today."