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August 11, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC), which supports the 14 districts surrounding Jefferson County, I am writing to enthusiastically support the proposed changes to the University of Louisville's Education Leadership Program.

Across Kentucky and the nation, we are facing a serious challenge in the administrator pipeline, mirroring the ongoing shortage of qualified educators. The number of candidates pursuing administrative certification is alarmingly low, leaving districts struggling to fill vital leadership roles.

According to a recent Kentucky Department of Education survey, there were 64 vacant school-level administrative positions during the 2023–2024 school year. Nationally, data from the Wallace Foundation reveals that approximately 18% of principals are no longer in the same role just one year later—a rate that is even higher in high-poverty schools (21%) and among veteran principals with over 10 years of experience (14.7%). Additionally, half of school leaders have reported considering leaving their positions due to job-related stress, with 14% planning to leave within the next year. These trends highlight an escalating turnover crisis that, without intervention, will jeopardize school leadership stability across our state.

Our region is not immune. Of the 92 principal positions in OVEC districts outside Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), 23 turned over this year alone—representing 25% of our principal workforce. Furthermore, eight of our 14 superintendents have transitioned out of their roles in the past three years. These figures demonstrate the urgency of expanding and strengthening the leadership pipeline alongside ongoing efforts to address teacher shortages.

We believe that the University of Louisville's proposed stackable credential model represents a significant step forward. Making certification and degree pathways more accessible is essential for working professionals, many of whom are balancing careers and family responsibilities. A flexible, innovative approach is necessary to meet the realities of today's aspiring school leaders.

Most critically, the approval of the Master's in Education Leadership is a foundational component of this new pathway. Completion of this degree is required for candidates to earn full principal certification. UofL's redesigned program thoughtfully addresses the barriers many potential leaders face and will provide our districts with a more diverse and better-prepared pool of candidates.

We strongly support these proposed changes and urge their swift approval. Our schools, students, and communities depend on high-quality leadership, and this initiative will be instrumental in ensuring that future.

Empowering Educators so Students Thrive

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Adkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jason Adkins
Chief Executive Officer