What LIFTS graduates say about the program...

"The training and knowledge acquired through the LIFTS program have provided me with a solid foundation of both theory and practice which I often draw upon to do my job. The program also provides the opportunity to learn and grow in my professional role through meaningful interactions with colleagues and mentors." - Buffalo Principal

"My experiences as a student in the LIFTS program were relevant, authentic, meaningful, hands-on, and comprehensive. My cohort learned together, learned from each other, learned from real-world experiences, learned through interactions with professionals in the field, and learned leadership skills were profoundly and permanently enhanced through my participation." - Suburban Principal

"I learned through my training in the LIFTS program that you have to work with teachers and parents to develop a vision for improvement that everyone will get behind. I don't know what I would have done without the LIFTS training and good mentoring. School administration has been a real challenge, but as a result of the program, I was extremely well prepared." - Buffalo District Administrator

"To become an effective Business Administrator, I felt it was important to expand my knowledge of teaching and instruction. Through the UB LIFTS program, I gained a better understanding of the instructional process along with insights that I will be facing in the future as a business leader. I have made many new contacts and friendships to turn to in the future." - Rural School Business Official

"I like that the UB LIFTS program is selective in the admission process. Cohort 15 was comprised of talented educators from many districts. The professors were knowledgeable and their experiences were invaluable. I was well prepared and was able to take what I learned and apply it to my future in the field. As a result of the program, I was well prepared for my role as a School Business Administrator." - Buffalo Assistant Principal

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The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy (ELP) in the Graduate School of Education (GSE) at the University at Buffalo (UB) offers three graduate programs to prepare candidates to apply to the New York State Educational Department (SED) for certification as school leaders:

1. School Building Leader (SBL)
2. School District Leader (SDL)
3. School District Business Leader (SDBL)

All three programs are guided by the values and principles that define GSE’s nationally known Leadership Initiative For Tomorrow’s Schools (LIFTS) approach to the preparation of educational leaders.

A set of core beliefs about leadership provides the philosophical bases of our programs to prepare school and district leaders:

- To promote quality teaching and learning, including student achievement that exceeds state standards.
- To create an environment that includes caring for others and an appreciation of cultural diversity.
- To empower teachers and staff to create a learning community with a collective vision for improvement.
- To reflect critically, ethically, and thoughtfully when making decisions and taking action.

Program Tracks

1. School Building Leader (SBL)
   This 33-hour graduate program prepares candidates for careers as Principals, Assistant Principals, and other administrative positions within a school.

2. School District Leader (SDL)
   This 36-hour graduate program (SBL program and one additional 3-hour course) prepares candidates for careers as Assistant Superintendents, Superintendents and other administrative positions at the district level.

3. School District Business Leader (SDBL)
   This 36-hour graduate program prepares candidates for careers as School Business Officials managing the finances and general operations.

Admission Requirements

The following admission requirements are the same for the School Building Leader and School District Leader programs:

1. Candidates are required to hold a Baccalaureate and Master’s degree from an accredited institution of higher education, or from an institution authorized by the Board of Regents to confer degrees. A graduate GPA of at least a 3.0/4.0 is required.

2. Candidates are required to possess a permanent or professional certificate in the classroom teaching service or pupil personnel service. By exception, and subject to clarification in the Commissioner’s Regulations, candidates will be considered for admission to the program if they can demonstrate the potential for instructional leadership based upon prior experiences assessed against criteria established by ELP.

(3) Candidates must have completed 3 years of teaching or pupil services experience.

(4) In addition, the following are required:
- an interview with faculty members;
- a sample of academic and professional writing;
- 1 academic and 2 professional letters of reference; and
- Official transcripts from all institutions of higher education attended.

These admission requirements also apply to the School District Business Leader program with two exceptions: permanent/professional certification and teaching experience are not required.

Application Process

In addition to the admission requirements described above and the online application, students must also submit an application fee by April 1. The online application may be found here http://gse.buffalo.edu/apply

Policy with Regard to Credit for Prior Learning

For these three programs, ELP will grant no more than six graduate credits for prior learning, as determined through an assessment of a candidate’s previous academic record. UB will state on a candidate’s academic record all graduate credit that the program has granted for prior learning and determined to be equivalent to a content requirement of the program.

Affiliated Faculty

Stephen Jacobson, Ph.D., Professor
Jill Koyoma, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Thomas Ramming, Ed.D., Clinical Assistant Professor
Corrie Stone-Johnson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

For a detailed description of LIFTS, including admission requirements and application process, please visit http://gse.buffalo.edu/programs/edadmin/lifts