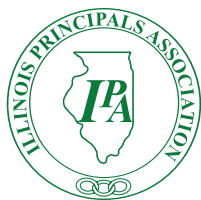


Effective and Sustained Principals For Every Illinois Community



*PREPARED BY
ILLINOIS PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION
OCTOBER 2020*

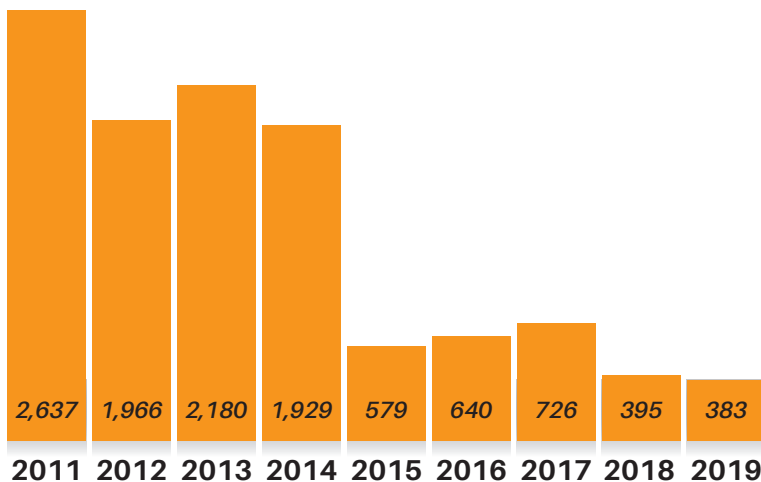


Introduction

Effective leadership, especially principal leadership, is vital to the success of every school. With adequate support, resources and time, principals can do extraordinary work to benefit their students, teachers, and communities. Unfortunately, principals today find themselves under-invested, overly stressed, and lacking the time to be effective. Thus, a high number of principals are choosing to leave the profession, and many who could be outstanding school leaders disregard the principalship as a viable career pathway.

The Illinois Principals Association, an organization serving nearly 6,000 school leaders throughout Illinois, intends for this document to serve as a reminder of the critical role principals play in creating effective schools. Further, it details the serious problem schools face with principal attrition and how attrition is exacerbated in Illinois with a dwindling pipeline. Lastly, recommendations are provided for consideration by policymakers, school districts, the IPA, and other stakeholders, to help slow attrition and bolster the principal pipeline.

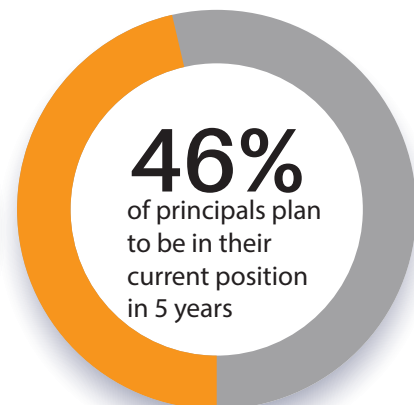
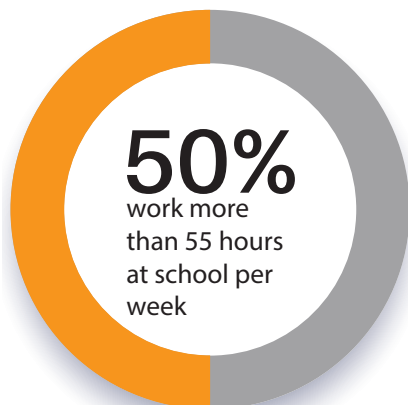
Principal Prep Completers



Principal Turnover

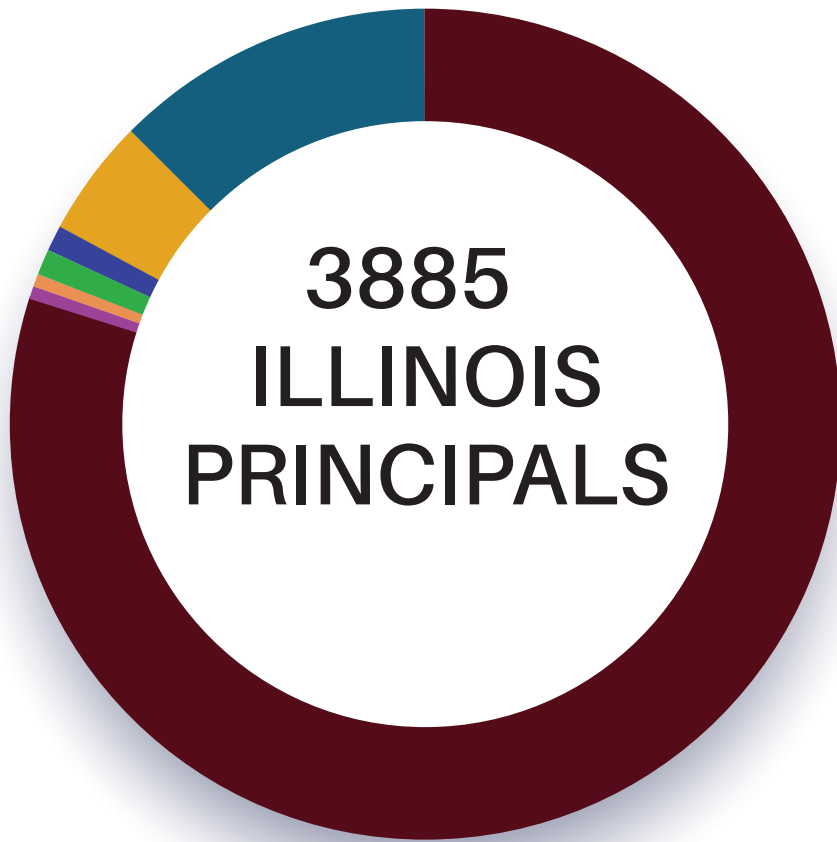


Principal Stressors



Statistics courtesy of the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Principals Association.
All data was collected pre-pandemic.

Profile of Principals in Illinois



78%
White

14%
Black or
African American

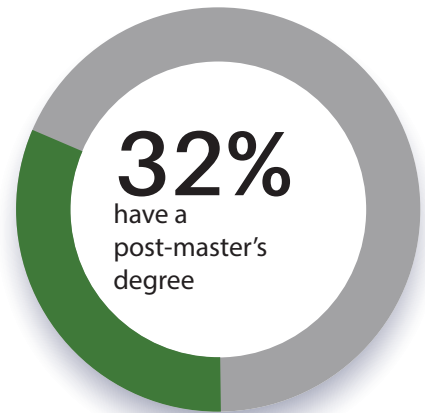
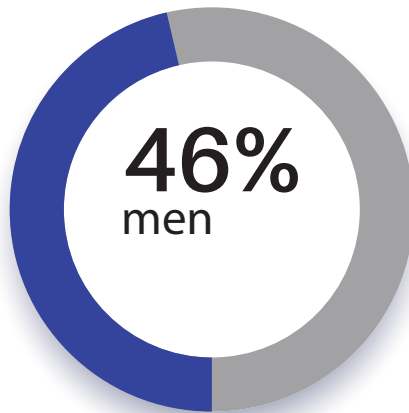
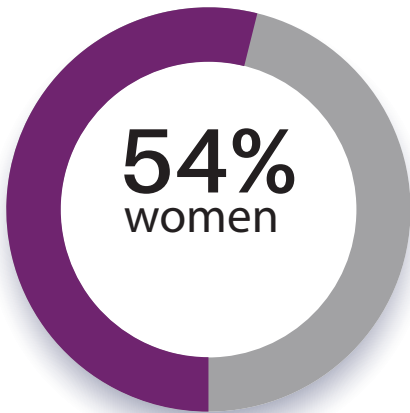
5%
Latinx

<1%
Multi-Race

<1%
Asian

<1%
American Indian
or Alaska Native

<1%
Native Hawaiian
or Other Pacific
Islander



46
Average
Age

\$101,000
Average
Salary

8
Average
Years of Experience

Statistics courtesy of the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Principals Association.
All data was collected pre-pandemic.

Principal Leadership Matters

“Everything rises and falls on leadership,” according to leadership guru Dr. John Maxwell in his book *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*.¹ Maxwell’s claim is reinforced by Jim Collins’s research, which provided the basis for his best-selling book *Good to Great*. In his quest to determine what made good companies great, Collins identified the now well-known concept of Level 5 Leadership. According to Collins, Level 5 leaders “build enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.”²

Just as great companies need high-quality executive leaders, great schools need high-quality principal leaders. In their 2009 report, *Assessing the Effectiveness of School Leaders: New Directions and New Processes*, the Wallace Foundation recognized:

*Effective leadership is vital to the success of a school. Research and practice confirm that there is a slim chance of creating and sustaining high-quality learning environments without a skilled and committed leader to help shape teaching and learning.*³

Several studies back up Wallace’s claim noting school leadership as sitting second to classroom instruction as a primary driver for student performance, both positive and negative.⁴ In particular, the body of research indicates principals have the greatest impact on student achievement in schools with the greatest needs (i.e., high poverty rates, low student attendance, low graduation rates, and high teacher turnover).⁵ Furthermore, principal leadership is the most important factor for attracting and retaining quality teachers.⁶ Research indicates that the main reason teachers choose whether or not to stay in a particular school is the quality

of support they receive from their principal.⁷ Overall, schools require principals who are learning leaders capable of collaboratively crafting a vision for student success, cultivating a student-centered culture, building others’ leadership capacity, improving instruction, and leading school improvement efforts.⁸ Essentially, effective principals lead effective schools.⁹

*Effective leadership
is vital to the
success of a school.*

Our Problem of Practice

While developing student-centered cultures as well as attracting and retaining high-quality teachers are critical strategies for school leaders to improve their schools, there is another essential element that principals must possess: time. Typically, creating meaningful and lasting change in a school is equivalent to turning an ocean liner. For example, research tells us it takes 5 to 10 years for a principal to have a meaningful impact on a large school.¹⁰ Thus, school leaders need sufficient time to get the job done. Unfortunately, they are not often provided the necessary support to sustain longevity and create meaningful change.

According to the School Leaders Network, only 1 in 4 principals stay in a given leadership position longer than 5 years.¹¹ Of those that are brand new to the principalship, fifty percent leave the profession by the end of their third year. Locally, the Illinois Report Card reveals that schools in the state average at least 2 principals during a 6-year period.¹²

Besides losing talented people from the profession, the costs of principal turnover are high both in terms of real dollars and its effect on learning environments. For example, preparing and onboarding a new principal carries an average price tag of \$75,000 nationally.¹³ Furthermore, student performance in Math and English Language Arts decreases the year after a principal leaves, with the next principal requiring up to three years to make up the loss.¹⁴



*Only **1 in 4** principals stay in a given leadership position longer than 5 years.*

Why Principals May Be Leaving

Although some principals retire, move to the district office or take other building level positions, long hours, tough political environments, mounting mandates, rising expectations, shrinking resources, and narrowing pay with teachers push many promising principals out of school leadership altogether.¹⁵

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) found in their most recent 10-year study of the principalship (2018) that principals view their position as being increasingly complex, especially when it comes to handling student and staff social emotional issues.¹⁶ Also, principals report they are now spending over 60 hours a week on the job both inside and outside of their school.

In 2020, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), working in partnership with the Learning Policy Institute (LPI), also found that high-stakes accountability, poor evaluation systems, a lack of decision-making authority, and obstacles to professional learning opportunities caused principals to leave their positions.¹⁷

In Illinois, the IPA discovered in a 2019 survey that over 50% of principals surveyed (n=960) are under extreme stress 10 or more hours every week.¹⁸

Rising expectations, shrinking resources, and narrowing pay with teachers push many promising principals out of school leadership.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only added to school leaders' stress. According to an August 2020 survey by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, nearly half of the principals surveyed said they are considering leaving their positions because of the deterioration of their working conditions caused by the pandemic.¹⁹

Illinois' Principal Pipeline is Drying Up

Exacerbating principal attrition in Illinois is the fact that the state's principal pipeline is drying up. According to data retrieved from the Illinois State Board of Education, the number of people completing all requirements to become a principal has dropped over 85% between 2011 and 2019. In 2019, only 383 individuals met the requirements to become a principal. This barely meets the demand of available principal positions statewide each year, let alone other administrative positions (i.e. assistant principals, deans, etc.) that also require the principal endorsement. The chart on page 7 provides the historic principal preparation completion data by Illinois higher education institutions between 2011 and 2019.

Principal Preparation Program	2011	2012	2013	2014*	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
American College of Education	751								
Argosy University	3								
Aurora University	153	86	108	148	8	29	47	91	63
Benedictine University	0	148	17	10					
Bradley University	21	9	10	25	6	5	12	7	1
Chicago State University	15	8	21	28	5	4	12	0	10
Concordia University	506	475	759	543	84	123	166	5	0
DePaul University	27	21	60	40	6	11	12	1	18
Dominican University	12	15	19	38	7	16	6	2	0
Eastern Illinois University	165	134	126	142	25	31	34	10	0
Governors State University	136	85	86	51	0	20	31	25	0
Illinois State University	23	24	2	6	0	7	14	15	13
Lewis University	54	18	88	51	0	5	5	0	12
Loyola University (Chicago)	31	24	7	7	0	0	0	5	1
McKendree University	53	112	95	90	8	19	62	37	36
National-Louis University	114	186	103	40	158	166	54	39	40
New Leaders		0	23	27	28	15	16	11	10
North Central College	20	8	6	12	10	8	18	19	22
North Park University	0	6	48	0	8	6	3	0	0
Northeastern Illinois University	92	61	80	86	29	45	63	5	5
Northern Illinois University	71	99	0	44	9	23	11	7	0
Olivet Nazarene University	106	93	114	194	0				
Quincy University	1	1	5	2	0	0			
Roosevelt University	18	20	37	23	0	0	17	20	21
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale	7	9	7	0	0	0	6	8	8
Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville	88	64	87	63	15	12	29	14	26
St. Xavier University	42	87	94	90	87	6	0	0	0
University of Illinois at Chicago	8	8	11	7	12	17	13	12	12
University of Illinois at Springfield	19	37	27	44	5	13	13	8	5
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	37	34	37	51	1	22	21	8	35
University of St. Francis	30	63	49	0	8	9	27	28	30
Western Illinois University	34	31	54	67	60	28	34	18	15
Total	2637	1966	2180	1929	579	640	726	395	383

*2014 was the last year the Type 75 General Administrative Endorsement was issued.

For Illinois to effectively combat the loss of quality principals and bolster the number of individuals who choose the principal profession as a viable career pathway, the Illinois Principals Association recommends policymakers, school districts, the IPA and other stakeholders take the following measures.

Stop the Bleeding

Maintain building administration staffing levels recommended by the Evidence Based Funding Model.

State statute requires that each school district shall receive the funding required to employ one principal position per 450 students in an elementary school, one principal position per 450 students in a middle school, and one principal position per 600 students in a high school. In addition, each school district should receive funding required to employ one assistant principal position per 450 students in an elementary school, one assistant principal position per 450 students in a middle school, and one assistant principal position per 600 students in a high school.

Provide statewide leadership mentoring and coaching, especially to new principals.

In 2006, Illinois recognized the importance of mentoring new principals to help them build a sustainable foundation for a successful career in school leadership. Public Act 94-1039, subject to appropriation, required new principals to be paired with an experienced school leader who is trained to be an effective mentor. The State should allocate \$1.2 million to ensure all new principals statewide receive the critical support of a mentor.

Provide continuous professional learning opportunities and other supports.

The IPA views principals as learning leaders leading learning organizations. To ensure principals continue to improve and model what they expect from students and staff, they must be afforded the time and resources to engage in meaningful professional learning experiences. For Black, Latinx, and other underrepresented leaders, consideration should be given to how these leaders endure certain biases and often lack the same community as their White counterparts.²⁰

Use formative and growth-minded evaluation systems.

In order to encourage principals' efforts to be learning leaders, they must be supported with evaluation systems that are growth-minded and provide routine, formative feedback. Too often, principal evaluation systems are compliance driven and lack meaning for the individuals those systems are meant to support. This can be changed by engaging with principals to collaboratively develop feedback loops and other systems that support their work to improve their practice.²¹

Remove, clean up, and stop creating policies that make the job untenable.

Since 2000, the School Code has nearly doubled in size. While there has been important legislation passed over the last 20 years to positively impact schools, several mandates, many unfunded, have been codified requiring principals to do additional work with little to no additional resources or time. Policy makers should engage stakeholders to review current and future mandates to determine their necessity. Adequate resources must be provided to meet any remaining mandates so that they can be implemented with fidelity.

Rebuild Illinois' Principal Pipeline

Adopt the School Leader Paradigm as the state's principal leadership framework.

In 2019, the IPA and 9 other principals' associations from across the United States published the School Leader Paradigm.²² This new and innovative school leader framework not only outlines the work highly effective principals do, but the Paradigm also specifies the internal competencies and attributes principals must possess to do their work effectively. Visit ilprincipals.org/grow/school-leader-paradigm for further information on the Paradigm.

Study why individuals are not choosing school leadership as a viable career path.

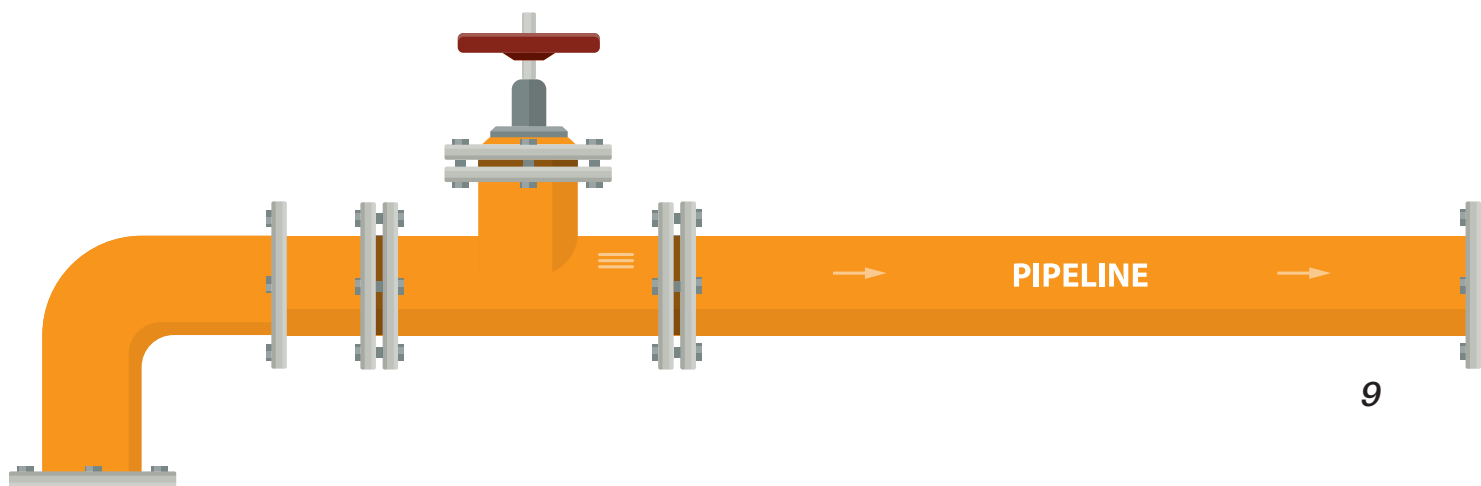
While some broad data exists as to why individuals are not choosing to become school leaders (i.e. working conditions, compensation, etc.), work should be done to contextualize this data for Illinois.

Begin identifying prospective school leaders earlier in their education career.

Current school leaders must intentionally seek out and identify individuals who possess the competencies and attributes needed to be effective principals. From the beginning of their careers in education, these promising individuals should be encouraged to consider school leadership by being provided opportunities to lead, support with attaining advanced degrees, and encouragement to grow their professional learning network by connecting with current and future school leaders.

Offer scholarships and other incentives for individuals who choose the principalship as a career path, especially for Black, Latinx and other underrepresented groups.

Financial incentives, including scholarships and paid internships, should be offered to those pursuing the principalship, especially for those committed to serving in underperforming schools. These incentives are especially critical for Black, Latinx, and other groups who are significantly underrepresented in the principalship. For example, 17% of the student population in Illinois is Black while 14% of the principals are Black. The disparity is worse for Latinx students who make up 26% of the student population while only 5% of Illinois principals are Latinx.²³



Rebuild Illinois' Principal Pipeline (cont.)

Improve principal preparation program requirements.

In 2010, Public Act 96-0903 was signed into law, which required the redesign and re-accreditation of all principal preparation programs in Illinois. After ten years, it is time to make some improvements to the principal preparation program requirements. Fortunately, the Illinois Council of the Professors of Educational Administration has conducted a review of the rules and regulations governing principal preparation programs. The outcome of their review includes recommendations for the state to adopt new school leadership standards, enhancements to program entry requirements, and improvements to the internship experience.

Create alternative pathways to the principalship.

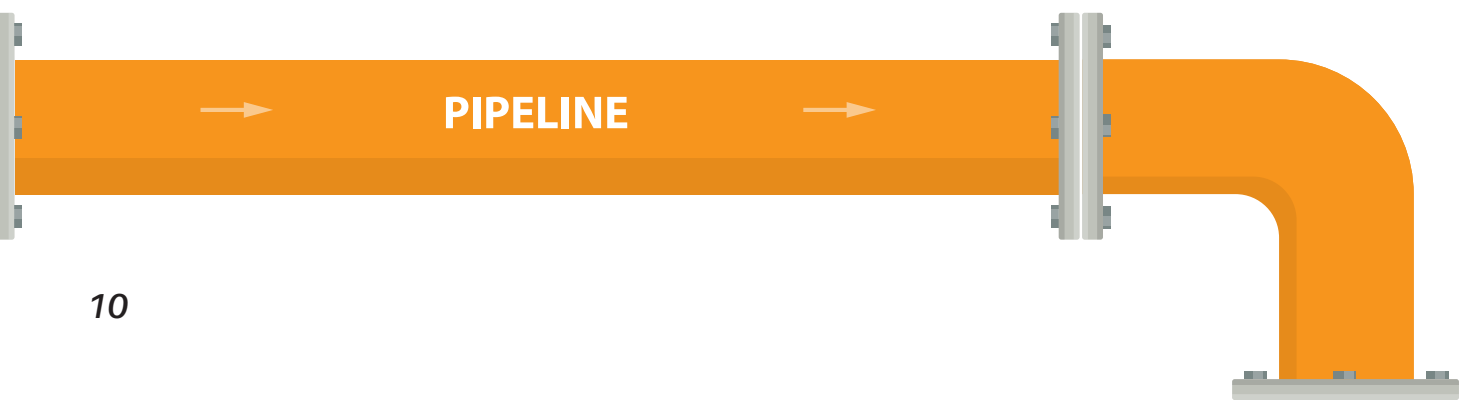
The traditional pathway to the principalship may not be a viable option for some individuals who desire to be a school leader, especially veteran educators. The state should explore alternative ways for promising individuals to demonstrate their competency and efficacy for school leadership.

Develop intentional hiring systems.

Obviously, finding a prospective leader that is the right fit for a principal opening is critical for a school to move forward successfully. In order to secure a leader that is the right fit, school districts should create intentional hiring systems which seek to determine the needs of the learning organization, the desirable attributes of the leader required, and the processes necessary to attract the ideal leader to the position.

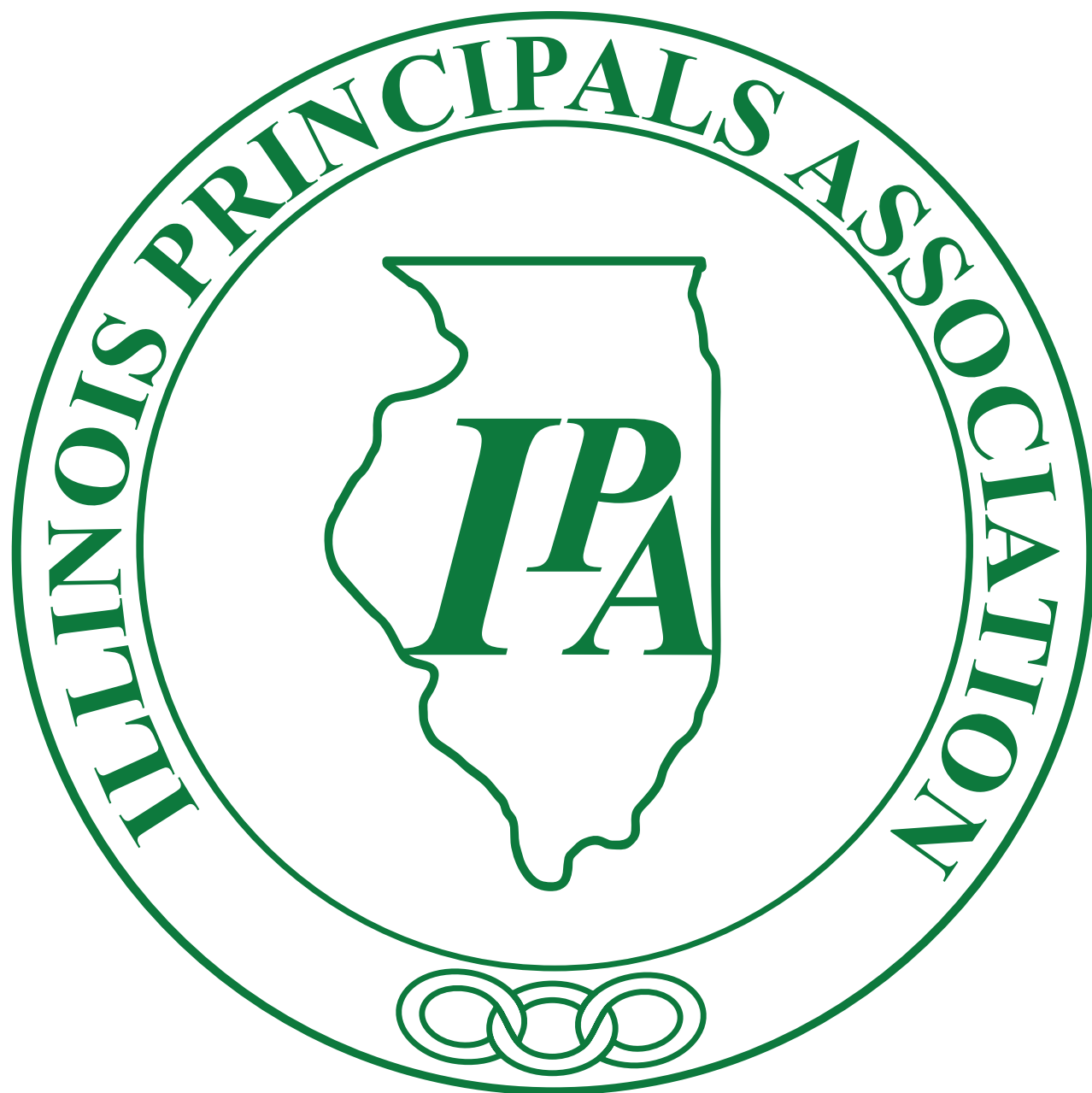
Conclusion

While “crisis” is not a term to be used or taken lightly, it is not an understatement to say that the rate of principal attrition and the lack of individuals entering the principalship in Illinois are at crisis points. Policymakers, school districts, the IPA and other stakeholders must make a concerted effort to invest in both current and future school leaders. The recommendations offered in this document are meant to jumpstart conversations to develop strategies that ensure every Illinois school has an effective and sustained principal.



Endnotes

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The IPA serves almost 6000 school leaders across Illinois including principals, assistant principals, deans, aspiring, and other school leaders. With a mission of developing, supporting, and advocating for innovative educational leaders, the Association serves its members by providing high quality professional learning, community building opportunities, and advocacy with state and federal policymakers. You can learn more about the IPA by visiting www.ilprincipals.org.