

Effective and Sustained Principals For Every Illinois Community



*PREPARED BY
ILLINOIS PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION
NOVEMBER 2021*

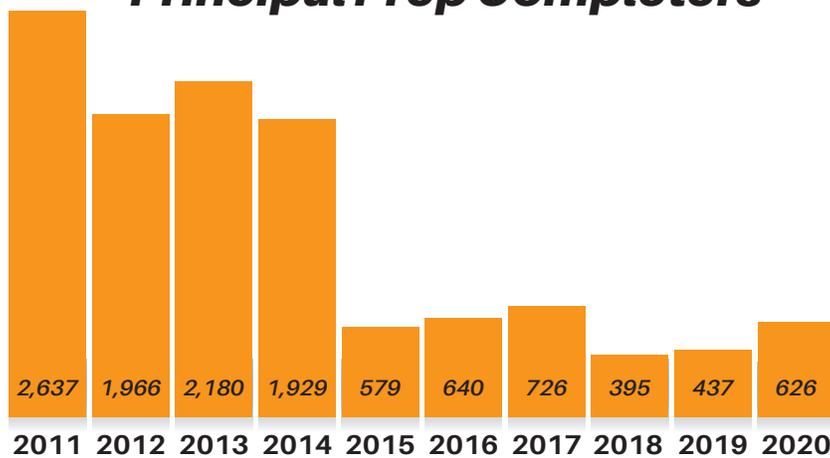


Introduction

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 over 6000 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 and school districts to help slow attrition and bolster the principal pipeline.

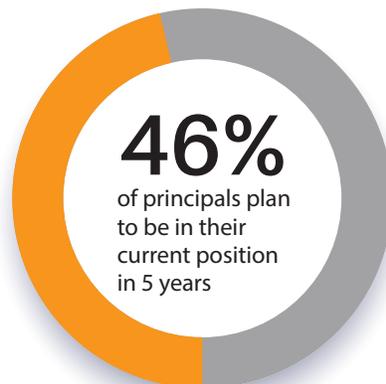
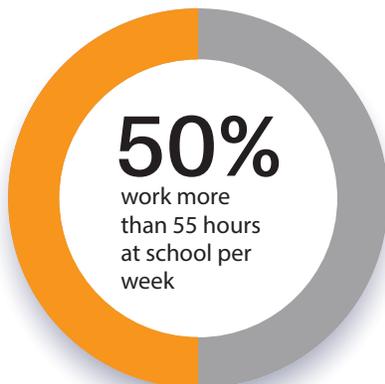
Principal Prep Completers



Principal Turnover

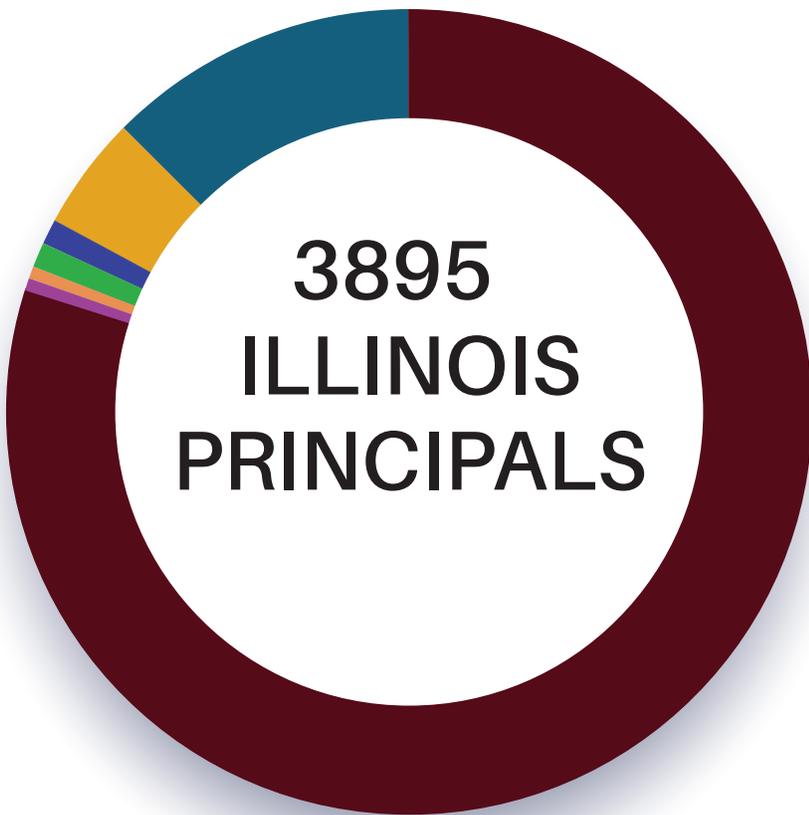


Principal Stressors (Pre-Pandemic)



Statistics courtesy of the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Principals Association.

Profile of Principals in Illinois



78%
White

14%
Black or
African American

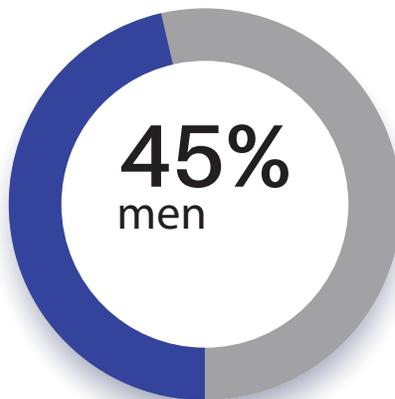
6%
Latinx

<1%
Multi-Race

<1%
Asian

<1%
American Indian
or Alaska Native

<1%
Native Hawaiian
or Other Pacific
Islander



46
Average
Age

\$101,500
Average
Salary

11
Average
Years of Experience

Statistics courtesy of the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Principals Association.

Principal Leadership Matters

“In many ways, the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. He or she is the person responsible for all activities that occur in and around the school building. It is the principal’s leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for teaching, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers, and degree of concern for what students may or may not become. The principal is the main link between the community and the school, and the way he or she performs in this capacity largely determines the attitudes of parents and students about the school. If a school is a vibrant, innovative, child-centered place; if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching; if students are performing to the best of their ability; one can almost always point to the principal’s leadership as the key to success.”

-U.S. Senate, 1970¹

Even over a half-century ago, members of the U.S. Senate understood what was needed to ensure the success of our nation’s schools, teachers, and ultimately students - School Leadership. Fifty years later, we have the research to back this up. In 2009, the Wallace Foundation determined in their report, *Assessing the Effectiveness of School Leaders: New Directions and New Processes*:

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.²

More recently, Wallace amped up the importance of school leadership, notably principal leadership, in its 2021 report, *How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systemic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research*, which states:

The impact of an effective principal has likely been understated, with impacts being both greater and broader than previously believed: greater in the impact on student achievement and broader in affecting other important outcomes, including teacher satisfaction and retention (especially among high-performing teachers), student attendance, and reductions in exclusionary discipline.³

“

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

”

Additionally, researchers have shed light on the central role school leaders must play to ensure all students, especially those who have been historically marginalized, are treated equitably.⁴ Of note, studies indicate school leaders have the greatest impact on student performance in schools with the greatest needs.⁵ In order to support all students adequately and appropriately, school leaders must dismantle

inequitable systems that perpetuate “the gaps” (access, opportunity, achievement, expectations, relationships and hope) resulting in ongoing student failure, chronic absenteeism, high suspension rates, consistently low graduation rates, and systemic racism.⁶

Overall, schools require school leaders who are 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.⁷ Essentially, effective school leaders lead effective schools.⁸

Our Problem of Practice

While we have gained a greater understanding of the importance of school leadership and the impact school leaders have on their schools, our Nation’s schools face a serious problem of practice - leadership churn. According to a 2019 report from the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the Learning Policy Institute (LPI), principals across the country only have an average tenure of four years at their schools.⁹ Drilling down into the data paints a starker picture showing that 35 percent of principals are in their schools less than two years with only 11 percent of principals being at their schools for 10+ years. The School Leaders Network plainly states that only 1 in 4 principals stay in a given leadership position longer than 5 years.¹⁰ Of those that are brand new to the principalship, fifty percent do not make it past year three.



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

Why Principals May Be Leaving

School leaders choose to leave their positions for a variety of reasons both positive and negative. District level opportunities or other building level positions may motivate individuals to move on. While these transitions are likely positive in most circumstances, negative forces have been mounting over the past couple of decades that keep prospective leaders from considering school leadership as a career path, push individuals out of positions, or cause some to leave the profession altogether. These forces include longer hours, tough political environments, mounting mandates, and rising expectations not backed with adequate resources.¹¹ In their 2019 report, *Understanding and Addressing Principal Turnover*, NASSP and LPI identified five reasons principals choose to leave their positions:

1. Inadequate preparation and professional development
2. Poor working conditions
3. Insufficient salaries
4. Lack of decision-making authority
5. High-stakes accountability policies¹²

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.¹³ Also, principals report they are now spending over 60 hours a week on the job both inside and outside of their school.

In Illinois, the IPA found in a 2019 pre-pandemic survey that over 50% of principals surveyed (n=960) are under extreme stress 10 or more hours every week.¹⁴

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.¹⁵

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 75% between 2011 and 2020. In 2020, only 626 individuals met the requirements to become a principal compared to 2637 in 2011. This does not meet the demand of open administrative positions (principals, assistant principals, deans, etc.) statewide each year that require the principal endorsement. The chart on the next page provides the historic principal preparation completer data between 2011 and 2020.

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

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Historic Principal Preparation Completer Data

Principal Preparation Program	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
American College of Education	751									
Argosy University	3									
Aurora University	153	86	108	148	8	29	47	91	63	78
Benedictine University	0	148	17	10						
Bradley University	21	9	10	25	6	5	12	7	1	8
Chicago State University	15	8	21	28	5	4	12	0	10	2
Concordia University	506	475	759	543	84	123	166	5	0	257
DePaul University	27	21	60	40	6	11	12	1	18	0
Dominican University	12	15	19	38	7	16	6	2	0	0
Eastern Illinois University	165	134	126	142	25	31	34	10	15	1
Governors State University	136	85	86	51	0	20	31	25	11	11
Illinois State University	23	24	2	6	0	7	14	15	13	14
Lewis University	54	18	88	51	0	5	5	0	12	10
Loyola University (Chicago)	31	24	7	7	0	0	0	5	1	15
McKendree University	53	112	95	90	8	19	62	37	36	34
National-Louis University	114	186	103	40	158	166	54	39	40	48
New Leaders		0	23	27	28	15	16	11	10	8
North Central College	20	8	6	12	10	8	18	19	22	11
North Park University	0	6	48	0	8	6	3	0	25	8
Northeastern Illinois University	92	61	80	86	29	45	63	5	5	3
Northern Illinois University	71	99	0	44	9	23	11	7	0	11
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	23	0
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale	7	9	7	0	0	0	6	8	8	3
Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville	88	64	87	63	15	12	29	14	27	26
St. Xavier University	42	87	94	90	87	6				
University of Illinois at Chicago	8	8	11	7	12	17	13	12	12	9
University of Illinois at Springfield	19	37	27	44	5	13	13	8	5	14
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	37	34	37	51	1	22	21	8	35	28
University of St. Francis	30	63	49	0	8	9	27	28	30	26
Western Illinois University	34	31	54	67	60	28	34	18	15	1
Total	2637	1966	2180	1929	579	640	726	395	437	626

Source: Illinois State Board of Education

Notes: A "Completer" is defined as an individual who has completed their degree, passed certification exams, and taken initial teacher evaluation training/assessment. Final Type 75 Certifications were issued in 2015.

In order to better support current principals, reduce attrition, and improve student outcomes, the IPA recommends the following:

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. ISBE has dedicated \$1.2 million of Federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds to support new principals during the 2021-2022 school year. When ESSER dollars are no longer available, the State should continue to provide the fiscal resources necessary for new principal mentoring to continue.

Provide continuous professional learning opportunities.

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.

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.¹⁶ The IPA is currently developing a new, growth-minded evaluation system with the intent of piloting it during the 2022-2023 school year.

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*.¹⁷ 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.

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

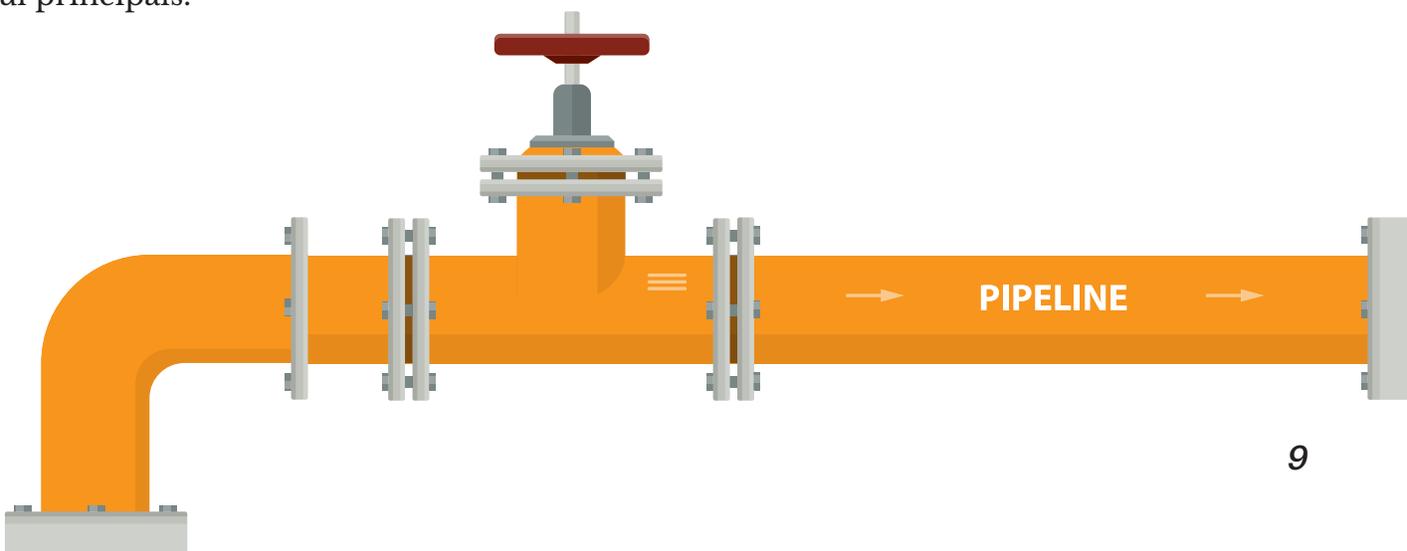
While some broad data exists as to why individuals are not choosing to become school leaders (i.e. working conditions, compensation, etc.), work should be done to contextualize this data for Illinois.

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 12% of the principals are Black. The disparity is worse for Latinx students who make up 26% of the student population and only 9% of Illinois principals are Latinx.¹⁸ The State allocated \$1.8 million of funding to support the development of the principal pipeline. Funds should be dedicated to providing the necessary resources for prospective school leaders of color to become successful principals.



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. The IPA has developed a list of recommended changes to the rules and regulations that govern Illinois' principal preparation programs. They can be found in the Appendix.

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.

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 and school districts 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 school has an effective and sustained principal.



Endnotes

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Appendix

Recommendations for Revisions to Part 30 Rules Governing Principal Preparation Programs in Illinois

In 2010, Public Act (PA) 96-0903 was signed into law, which required the redesign and reaccreditation of all principal preparation programs in Illinois. After ten years, lessons learned must be captured to make improvements to the principal preparation program requirements to ensure the programs are current and relevant moving forward. Further, the State must contend with the fact that the number of individuals doing everything necessary to earn a principal endorsement dropped over 75% since PA 96-0903 was passed. In 2019 and 2020, only 437 then 626 prospective leaders completed all principal endorsement requirements, which does not provide enough individuals needed to fill the school leadership positions (principal, assistant principal, etc.) that open annually in Illinois. Although other forces impacting the education profession are contributors to this dramatic drop, recognition must be given that the redesign of principal preparation programs a decade ago also played a role.

When reviewing the Part 30 Rules governing principal preparation programs in Illinois, the current rules are antiquated and overly prescriptive. Currently, the rules leverage an outdated set of school leadership standards, the *Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders (ISLLC) (2008)*, to drive program curriculum decisions. The rigidity of the rules makes it difficult for programs to adapt to meet the ever-changing needs of their students (candidates). Moreover, the rules limit who has access to principal preparation, insist on staffing requirements that puts pressure on preparation programs' fiscal sustainability, and demand a breadth of curriculum that does not allow for depth of teaching about the critical leadership dispositions and dimensions for aspiring principals to lead their schools successfully. To remedy these issues, the Illinois Principals Association proposes the following changes.

Adopt the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Program Recognition Standards as the Illinois Framework for Preparing and Developing Principals

Developed in 2018, the *NELP Standards* are aligned to the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL)* ensuring they, *NELP*, are rooted in both research and effective practice. Importantly, the *NELP Standards* focus on what is most essential to prepare, support, and evaluate prospective educational leaders to effectively lead a learning organization that provides equitable learning opportunities for all students.

Recommendations for Section 30.30 General Program Requirements

- Section 30.30(b)(3) - The requirement for programs to adopt the Southern Regional Education Boards internship success factors and competencies should be removed.

Internship expectations, protocols, and procedures should be aligned to the *NELP Standards* so as not to create confusion of the State's expectations for these critical experiences.

- Section 30.30(c) - ISLLC 2008 should be replaced with the *NELP Standards*.
- Section 30.30(d) – Reference should be included that curricula offerings will address the leadership requirements outlined in the *NELP Standards*.

Recommendations for Section 30.40 Internship Requirements

The general internship requirements for Illinois' principal preparation programs are overly prescriptive. For example, the IPA agrees that program faculty supervisors should meet routinely with interns and their site mentors. However, we do not agree that rules should stipulate the number of meetings and modality for meeting as is required in Section 30.40(c) (2)(A). In order for the rules to balance programmatic expectations but still provide flexibility, the following changes should be made:

- Section 30.40(a)(1) – Reference should be included that the internship will provide experiences that address the leadership requirements outlined in the *NELP Standards*.
- Section 30.40(a)(1)(B) – Delete this section since these activities are addressed in the *NELP Standards*.
- Section 30.40(a)(2) – Revise this section to state, “The internship shall not include activities that are not directly related to the provisions of school leadership outlined in the *NELP Standards*.”
- Section 30.40(a)(3) – Remove this section. See Recommendations for Section 30.30 General Program Requirements.
- Sections 30.40(b) & (c) – Qualifications for site mentors and faculty supervisors are too prescriptive and inconsistent. Qualifications should be reduced to 2-years of successful principal experience as determined by the preparation programs. Site mentors and faculty supervisors should also hold an active or exempt Illinois professional educator license.
- Section 30.40(c)(2)(A) – Remove the requirement and modality for meetings between interns and faculty supervisors.
- Section 30.40(c)(2)(B) – Remove the number of times faculty supervisors should evaluate interns.
- Section 30.40(c)(2)(C) – Remove the seminar requirement.

Recommendations for Section 30.45 Assessment of the Internship and Section 30.50 Coursework Requirements

Currently, Sections 30.45 and 30.50 are overly prescriptive and redundant. Considerations should be given to combining both into a new section that outlines general internship and curricular requirements aligned to the *NELP Standards*.

Recommendations for Section 30.60 Staffing Requirements

Sections 30.60(a), (b), and (c) – Principal preparation programs are currently under significant budgetary pressure caused by small enrollment numbers and reduced state funding. The requirements stipulating ratios for the number of full-time faculty, how much instruction a student can receive from a given instructor, and how much can be taught by an adjunct faculty member create affordability problems. Meaning, higher education institutions are finding it more difficult to pay for these programs under these staffing mandates. The staffing requirements need to be eliminated or greatly modified.

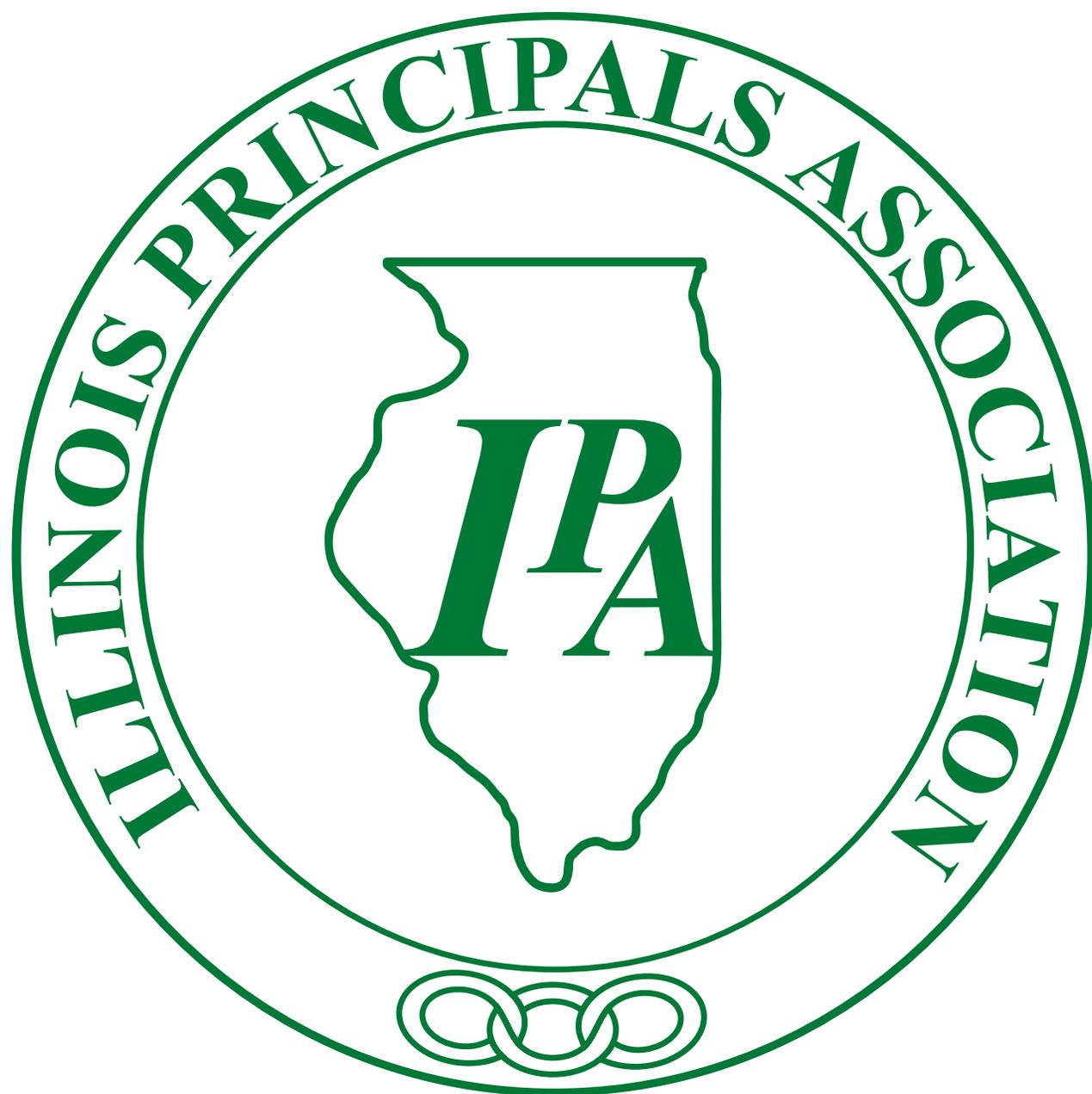
Recommendations for Section 30.70 Candidate Selection

Section 30.70 (c) and (d) – The portfolio submission requirements provide a significant barrier for prospective candidates to gain entry into principal preparation programs. In many cases, potential candidates do not possess the expertise or have the experiences needed to create artifacts outlined in rule. Ironically, it is the reason they need entry into preparation programs – for these experiences in order to gain expertise. The portfolio submission requirement needs to be eliminated or greatly modified.

Recommendations for 30.APPENDIX A Internship Assessment Rubric

The internship assessment rubric should be eliminated from administrative rule. Over time, the learning required for prospective school leaders to be successful frequently changes due to how society and education evolve. By their nature, however, administrative rules are not meant to change often. Thus, rubrics designed to measure intern performance should exist outside of rule and be given the flexibility to adapt as required by the field.





The IPA serves over 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 ilprincipals.org.