

TITLE 23: EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES  
SUBTITLE A: EDUCATION  
CHAPTER I: STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SUBCHAPTER b: PERSONNEL

PART 35  
MENTORING PROGRAM FOR NEW PRINCIPALS

Section

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AUTHORITY: Implementing and authorized by Section 2-3.53a of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a].

SOURCE: Emergency rules adopted at 31 Ill. Reg. 7160, effective April 25, 2007, for a maximum of 150 days; adopted at 31 Ill. Reg. 14039, effective September 20, 2007; amended at 32 Ill. Reg. 17768, effective October 30, 2008; amended at 34 Ill. Reg. 7763, effective May 21, 2010; amended at 37 Ill. Reg. 9473, effective June 19, 2013; amended at 46 Ill. Reg. 13192, effective July 13, 2022.

**Section 35.10 Purpose and Applicability**

- a) This Part establishes requirements for the selection and training of experienced principals to serve as mentors for new principals and for new principals' participation in the mentoring program designed for them, as required by Section 2-3.53a of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a]. The provisions of this Part shall apply to each Illinois school district, other than a school district organized under Article 34 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/Art. 34], and to each first-year principal in a school district subject to this Part, except as otherwise provided by Section 2-3.53a(f) of the School Code. For purposes of this Part, a "first-year principal" is an individual who either:
- 1) is in the first school year of employment as a principal in Illinois, if the employment began prior to January 1 of that school year; or
  - 2) is in the second school year of employment as a principal in Illinois, if the employment began on or after January 1 of a prior school year.
- b) *Any individual may participate in a second year of mentoring if it is determined by the State Superintendent of Education as set forth in Section 35.20 of this Part that sufficient funding exists for such participation.* [105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a(a)] For the purposes of this Part, "second-year principal" is an individual who has completed in the previous school year the first year of mentoring in a program approved under this Part. Participation of a second-year principal in a mentoring program is discretionary and subject to the approval of the principal's employing school district.

(Source: Amended at 46 Ill. Reg. 13192, effective July 13, 2022)

**Section 35.20 Annual Program Planning; Fiscal Provisions**

- a) No later than June 1 of each year, each district superintendent shall report to the State Superintendent of Education, or to the State Superintendent's designee, the following information:
  - 1) the names, professional educator license numbers, and assigned schools of first-year principals, as defined in Section 35.10(a), who are expected to be working in the district in the coming school year and required to participate in the mentoring program; and
  - 2) the names, professional educator license numbers, and assigned schools of second-year principals, as defined in Section 35.10(b), who are expected to be working in the district in the coming school year and for whom a second year of mentoring is being requested.
- b) Each district superintendent shall continue to submit this information in a timely way for any first or second-year principal whose information was not included in the initial submission. Submissions after June 1 shall occur either immediately after the individual's employment begins or a contract is signed, but no later than December 30.
- c) The State Board shall operate a principal mentoring program under this Part in any year where funding is appropriated for such purposes by the Illinois General Assembly. Based on the number of first-year principals expected statewide and the level of available funding foreseen, the State Superintendent shall determine whether the appropriation is likely to be sufficient to serve all first-year principals. This calculation shall be based on a cost figure determined annually by the State Superintendent of the reasonable costs of mentoring for each first-year principal in the program, plus the cost of delivering the required training, coordinating the mentors' assignments, and providing the other necessary structure and support for the program. If the State Superintendent determines that appropriations are not likely to be sufficient to serve all anticipated first year principals in any given year, then the new principal mentoring program shall be voluntary and priority access to mentoring services shall be given to first year principals in the highest-need schools, ranked in descending order, based upon how much their low-income student population exceeds the statewide average.
- d) The new principal mentoring program shall only be available to second year principals if the State Superintendent first determines under subsection (c) that appropriations are likely sufficient to serve all anticipated first year principals.

- 1) If mentoring services are extended to second year principals, the State Superintendent shall establish the reasonable costs for mentoring a second-year principal and determine if appropriations are sufficient to serve all second-year principals who wish to participate in the new principal mentoring program. If appropriations are not sufficient, priority access to mentoring services shall be given to second year principals who are in the highest-need schools.
  - 2) Second-year principals not able to participate in a second year of mentoring in the year immediately following their first year of mentoring shall be ineligible for further participation in the mentoring program.
- e) As soon as possible after the level of the appropriation for a given year has been established, the State Superintendent shall notify all districts and the entities approved under Section 35.60 regarding whether mentoring will be provided for first-year principals only or for both first-year and second-year principals. If the appropriation is not likely to be sufficient to serve all first-year or all second-year principals, the State Superintendent will prioritize principals from high-need schools.
  - f) Each experienced principal who desires to serve as a mentor shall submit an application to an approved entity under Section 35.60, supply the required documentation of eligibility (see Section 35.40), and, if employed in a school or in a regional office of education, provide verification in a format specified by the State Superintendent of supervisory approval for participation. The State Superintendent or designee shall publicize the list of entities approved under Section 35.60 so that experienced principals can make application to the entity and complete the required training to be included in the pool of available mentors.
  - g) When verification is received in accordance with the requirements of Section 35.30(f) that a mentor has provided the service required under this Part, the State Superintendent of Education or designee shall make a payment for each first-year principal or second-year principal served in the amounts established by the State Superintendent pursuant to subsections (c) and (d)(1), respectively. Payment shall be made to the approved entity that facilitated the mentoring relationship for disbursement to the mentor.
  - h) *Using funds from the new principal mentoring program, the State Board may contract with an independent party to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the program as required by Section 2-3.53a(e) of the School Code. (Section 2-3.53a(m) of the School Code)*

(Source: Amended at 46 Ill. Reg. 13192, effective July 13, 2022)

### Section 35.30 Requirements of the Program

Each first-year principal, or those first-year principals who choose to participate in mentoring services in any year when the program is voluntary under Section 35.20(c), shall complete a mentoring program that complies with the requirements of this Section, provided that there is an appropriation for the program applicable to the fiscal year that includes the individual's first school year of service as a principal (see Section 2-3.53a of the School Code and Section 35.20 of this Part). If sufficient funding exists to allow for participation of second-year principals in a mentoring program, then those programs also shall comply with the requirements of this Section.

- a) Mentors who meet the requirements of this Part shall be paired with participating principals by entities approved under Section 35.60 of this Part, on the basis of the factors identified in Section 2-3.53a(d) of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a(d)]. Each approved entity shall notify the affected district superintendents of the assignments made, and each affected superintendent shall acknowledge each first-year principal's and, as applicable, each second-year principal's obligation or election to participate in the program.
- b) The role of each mentor shall include:
  - 1) collaborating with the assigned principal to identify and guide the principal in areas for improvement of the new principal's professional growth, including, but not limited to, professional growth in the areas addressed in the Illinois Performance Standards for School Leaders (see 23 Ill. Adm. Code 29.100);
  - 2) forming a supportive professional relationship with the participating principal;
  - 3) assisting the participating principal in adjusting to his or her new role and in developing skill as an instructional leader;
  - 4) coaching, observing, and providing feedback to the participating principal on aspects of organizational management; and
  - 5) helping the participating principal identify significant problems and issues that act as barriers to school improvement, as well as meaningful solutions to these.
- c) The number of contact hours that the mentor and new principal shall spend together in activities demonstrably involved in the mentoring process, as delineated in subsection (b), shall be determined annually by the State

Superintendent based upon the number of new principals admitted into the program and the amount of funding appropriated for the program, and may vary for first-year principals and second-year principals. Contact hours for mentors and new principals may be in person, by telephone, online, or by any other mechanism that allows for synchronous communication between the mentor and new principal. The mentor and participating principal shall meet in person at least:

- 1) near the beginning of the school year, in order to initiate the mentoring relationship, and
  - 2) at the conclusion of the school year, in order to complete the verification form and certify completion of the program as required by subsection (f).
- d) Time spent traveling by the mentor or recipient to meet with the other party shall not be counted as part of the required contact hours. The mentor shall bear the cost of any travel unless otherwise agreed to by the approved entity or by the mentor's employer.
- e) Each recipient of mentoring under this Part shall maintain a log of his or her work with the assigned mentor that includes at least the date of each contact, the purpose, and the amount of time spent.
- f) At the end of the program year or no later than June 30, verification of program completion shall be prepared in a format specified by the State Superintendent of Education and shall be signed by the participating principal and mentor to signify completion of the work outlined in the log required under subsection (e).
- g) Each approved entity shall review the accuracy of the verification forms and shall submit a summary of the information presented in a format specified by the State Superintendent or designee by June 30 of each year.

(Source: Amended at 46 Ill. Reg. 13192, effective July 13, 2022)

**Section 35.40 Eligibility of Mentors**

Pursuant to Section 2-3.53a of the School Code, eligibility for service as mentors under this Part shall be limited to individuals who have served as principals in Illinois for at least three years, who have demonstrated success as instructional leaders, and who have completed the training required pursuant to Section 35.50.

- a) For purposes of this Part, "at least three years" means no fewer than three full school years, provided that a principal need not have accrued all three years' service in the same school or district.
- b) Each approved entity shall establish a process for identifying and selecting mentors. As part of this process, each mentor applicant shall submit at least two professional references that address:
  - 1) the nature of the working relationship between the letter-writer and the principal in question,
  - 2) the letter-writer's reasons for believing that the principal in question is of ethical character and possesses strong interpersonal skills, and
  - 3) one or more specific examples of the principal's accomplishments related to particular aspects of the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards set forth at 23 Ill. Adm. Code 29.100.
- c) No individual shall serve as a mentor if more than five years have elapsed since the individual's last date of service as a principal in an Illinois school or service in some other educational capacity that routinely requires interaction with principals and familiarity with the issues and challenges they face. Evidence of the latter type of service shall be a contract, job description, or other document generated by the employing entity.

(Source: Amended at 46 46 Ill. Reg. 13192, effective July 13, 2022)



**Section 35.50 Training for Mentors**

- a) Prior to beginning the first assignment as a mentor under this Part, each experienced principal shall be required to complete a standardized training program prescribed by the State Superintendent of Education. This training program shall be made available at no cost to the participating mentors and shall focus on equipping the participants to perform the functions outlined in Section 35.30. The training program shall address areas of expertise including, but not limited to:
- 1) the Professional Standards for Education Leaders (2015), adopted by the National Policy Board for Education Administration, 1904 Association Drive, Reston VA 20191 and posted at <http://npbea.org/psel/>. No later amendments to or editions of these standards are incorporated by this Section;
  - 2) ethics;
  - 3) principles of adult learning;
  - 4) establishing a mentoring relationship; and
  - 5) mentoring skills and techniques.
- b) In admitting individuals to the required training, entities approved under Section 35.60 shall give first priority to those who intend to be included in the pool of available mentors for the program as described in Section 35.20(d). Other individuals may be accommodated if space permits.
- c) Each entity approved under Section 35.60 shall provide to the State Superintendent or designee a list identifying the individuals who have completed the required training sequence.
- d) Each entity approved under Section 35.60 shall be responsible for providing continuation training to its mentors, including notifying them during this training of any changes in the requirements for the mentoring program. Each mentor who intends to continue providing service under this Part for the following year shall complete the continuation training.

(Source: Amended at 46 Ill. Reg. 13192, effective July 13, 2022)

**Section 35.60 Approval of Entities and Their Role**

The State Superintendent of Education shall, through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process governed by the State procurement process, approve one or more entities to administer and implement the new principal mentoring program according to the requirements stated in Section 35.30, including delivering the training program for mentors that is required under Section 35.50. Eligible entities are defined as regional offices of education, intermediate service centers, Illinois higher education institutions, statewide organizations representing principals, and school districts.

- a) Any entity seeking approval under this Section shall submit to the State Superintendent an application, in a format prescribed by the State Superintendent, outlining the organization's qualifications for serving potential mentors and recipients of mentoring. Applications shall be submitted to the State Superintendent by a date set forth in the RFP application.
- b) The State Superintendent shall approve one or more entities whose applications:
  - 1) provide evidence of an overall commitment to professionalizing education and school improvement efforts;
  - 2) demonstrate capacity to meet the needs of an identified geographic area or set of districts; and
  - 3) indicate that the applicants have staff or access to other presenters who:
    - A) have been employed in roles requiring mastery of the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards; and
    - B) have experience in providing professional development to educators.
- c) Each approved entity shall, with respect to each mentor who enrolls with that entity:
  - 1) provide or arrange for another entity approved under this Section to provide the initial training required under Section 35.50 if the individual has not already completed it;
  - 2) to the extent necessitated by the level of demand, facilitate the individual's assignment to one or more new principals based on the factors set forth in Section 2-3.53a of the School Code;

- 3) provide support and professional resources to the mentor in the course of his or her mentoring relationships;
  - 4) provide at least annually networking sessions to enhance the mentor's skills and provide structured opportunities for problem-solving;
  - 5) guide the mentor in the compilation of information that will contribute to the evaluation of individual mentoring relationships and of the mentoring program as a whole;
  - 6) receive and distribute payments to mentors as delineated in Section 35.20(h); and
  - 7) provide annual continuation training.
- d) Approval of entities shall be valid for a term of three years. To request continuation funding in years two and three of a grant term, an approved entity shall submit a continuation application in a format specified by the State Superintendent of Education, containing:
- 1) a description of any significant changes in the material submitted as part of its initial approved application; or
  - 2) a statement that no significant changes have occurred.
- e) An approved entity's continuation application shall be approved if the application conforms to the requirements of subsection (d), provided that the State Superintendent has received no evidence of the entity's failure to provide the required services under the program and provided that there is sufficient appropriation for such purposes.
- f) The State Superintendent of Education may evaluate any approved entity at any time to ensure the consistent quality of the mentoring program. Upon request by the State Superintendent, an approved entity shall supply information regarding its activities in conjunction with the mentoring program, which the State Superintendent may monitor at any time. In the event an evaluation indicates that an approved entity is not furnishing services in keeping with subsection (c), the State Superintendent will withdraw approval of the entity.

(Source: Amended at 46 Ill. Reg. 13192, effective July 13, 2022)



**Section 35.70 Alternate Arrangements**

In cases where an assigned mentor becomes unavailable after a mentoring assignment has been initiated, the approved entity that facilitated the mentor's assignment shall be responsible for identifying a replacement to complete the assignment and for determining the appropriate allocation of the payment to the individuals involved.

(Source: Amended at 46 Ill. Reg. 13192, effective July 13, 2022)