

Illinois Principal Preparation Program Recommended Indicators

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THE NEED FOR COMMON PRINCIPAL PREPARATION INDICATORS

Principal preparation is essential to building and maintaining a strong, diverse principal workforce, and principal preparation program effectiveness contributes to state-level efforts to raise academic achievement, advance educational equity, and develop Illinois communities.¹ Universities and other principal preparation programs traditionally support districts to grow future leaders and many provide new principal induction support, as candidates transition to school leadership. As principal work demands increase, Illinois superintendents report that open principal positions are hard to staff. Research on school principals' influence on students, educators, and curriculum indicates that quality principals matter. Over 15 years of research points to school principals as highly influential on:

- Student academic performance: Recent meta-analyses suggest school leadership influences student performance about as much as classroom teaching.
- Educational equity: Several studies point to principals' daily focus on equity as pivotal to equity goals and to creating safe, productive learning environments that capitalize on diverse cultures.
- Teacher retention: Through their reputations and actions, principals influence educator choices to join or leave schools, according to teachers.
- Policy implementation: Research points to principals as important to state and district educational policy implementation, and the success of instructional improvement efforts.²

Principal preparation programs are encouraged by their professional associations to advance programming in response to data.³ Preparation programs are encouraged by their professional associations to engage in data-informed inquiry cycles that benchmark improvements. Iterative, data-rich improvement efforts among faculty and with state-level and district-level partners supports transparency and mutual accountability among partners contributing to future principals' preparation. Many principal preparation programs have adopted data-rich improvement practices, but many more preparation programs lack access to common data and analytic expertise necessary to produce annual and longitudinal progress reports, due to disparities in program size and funding.

Illinois will be a nationally recognized leader in principal preparation by providing all university and non-university principal preparation programs with common data and excellence indicators, thereby addressing data disparities among programs. Many Illinois principal preparation programs are driving improvement in light of data and building convincing evidence of principal preparation program effectiveness, while other programs lack access to good data to benchmark improvement. With support from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), principal preparation programs can be provided common data aligned with program excellence indicators.

¹ Darling-Hammond, et al. 2022

² Bartanen, 2020; Bowers & White, 2016; Boyd et al., 2011; Burkauer, 2017; Dhuey, et al., 2018; Grissom, Egalite & Lindsay, 2021; Leithwood et al. 2020;

³ University Council of Education Administration and New Leaders, 2018

This report proposes a set of common indicators for Illinois principal preparation programs, so that ISBE can provide access to a common dataset for all principal preparation programs. The common indicators were created by and for Illinois principal preparation programs and K-12 human resource directors, in consultation with national experts.

The Illinois principal preparation indicators system provides ISBE recommendations on data to be reported annually to preparation programs and considered in program reviews. Once the principal preparation indicator system is fully developed, multiple beneficiaries can access it to answer the following and other important questions:

- **For principal preparation programs...**
 - How can principal preparation be improved?
 - How satisfied are superintendents, hiring managers, and other constituents with the work of principals who complete the program?
 - How effective in our principal preparation program?
 - Are we serving educators in our region or state equitably?
- **For the state...**
 - How well are preparations programs supplying districts with diverse, well-trained principals?
 - Which areas of the state are underserved by principal preparation?
 - How successful is the system of principal preparation for principals, teachers, and students?
- **For school systems...**
 - Which programs prepare educators for administrative positions in my area or region?
 - Which principal preparation programs' graduates perform well and stay in our school system?
- **For future principals...**
 - Which programs show the best success in preparing principals?
 - Which principal preparation programs place new principals in nearby districts?

THE ILLINOIS PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAM INDICATORS

After a review of research and Illinois state data availability, the PEP steering committee recommends 13 principal preparation indicators which can serve as a data dashboard for principal preparation program performance. Multiple indicators are necessary because research has not identified one or two predictive measures of principal preparation program success. With a common set of indicators in place—and the accompanying longitudinal data analysis—principal preparation programs can benchmark progress and compare programs to statewide averages/norms.⁴

The PEP steering committee believes that the 13 principal preparation program indicators provide increased transparency about principal preparation and important data for program benchmarking. The steering committee also notes that data interpretation can be challenging, given analytic approaches and data quality, and it recommends ISBE provide educational materials and other supports for appropriate data interpretation, so that constituents make informed decisions.

The PEP steering committee identified a set of **program indicators**⁵ for principal preparation program faculty and others to guide decisions about program quality, impact, and improvement. The steering committee organizes indicators by **domains** and ⁶. The three functions are as follows:

- **Formative review:** Principal preparation programs receive indicator data for continuous improvement.
- **Program accountability review:** Principal preparation and state-level reviewers consider indicators data for periodic decisions about program performance. When combined with program descriptions (e.g., curriculum emphasis), program accountability indicators are valuable to principal preparation program candidates and school districts.
- **State principal preparation policy:** ISBE aggregates indicator data for the entire state to assess principal program system health and needs.

The PEP steering committee recommends the following indicators for principal preparation programs. The indicators can serve as a dashboard for gauging principal preparation program quality, access, and success.

Box 1. Terminology

To clarify terminology, we provide the following definitions.

- **Indicators:** An area of program performance
- **Measures:** The method of collecting data for the indicators. A measure may include a survey, test, or other data collection approach.
- **Domains:** Groupings of indicators by content.
- **Functions:** Anticipated indicator uses.

⁴ The PEP steering committee recommends common indicators for all programs. Individual programs can supplement ISBE-provided indicators data with other information collected by the program.

⁵ Appendix C includes detail about the indicators and PEP subcommittee recommendations.

⁶ The PEP steering committee focused on teacher preparation includes a domain called “contribution to the state.” After consideration, the PEP subcommittee on principal preparation does not recommend using this domain for principal preparation indicators because some indicators belong in “contribution to the state” and another domain, which was confusing.

Candidate Selection and Completion Indicators

Candidate selection and completion indicators provide data on who applies and is selected into principal preparation programs, what candidates learn, and how candidates perform during preparation.

Domain	Indicator	Functions		
		Formative review	Program accountability	State policy
Candidate selection and completion	Program applicant and candidate employment location. ⁷	♦		♦
	Evidence of alignment to principal preparation national/state standards.	♦	♦	♦
	Candidate and applicant demographic and professional experience data, compared to statewide data.	♦	♦	♦
	Average undergraduate and graduate grade point for applicants and candidates prior to entry.	♦		
	Program candidate selection, matriculation rates by subgroup (e.g., by race, gender).	♦	♦	♦

Alumni Performance and Perceptions

Alumni performance and perceptions indicators describe the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of aspiring principals associated with the program, and it includes program endorsement rates.

Domain	Indicator	Functions		
		Formative review	Program accountability	State policy
Alumni performance and perceptions	Graduation rate by subgroup (e.g., by race, gender).	♦	♦	♦
	Post-graduate educator placement at 1, 2, 3, 4+ years by school type and position type (e.g., principal, director).	♦	♦	♦
	Program licensure rates displayed by candidate number and percentage passing exams and receiving licensure.	♦	♦	♦
	Percentage of program alumni indicating that pre-service preparation was high-quality, adequate upon graduation after the first year and third year as principal or other administrative position. ⁸	♦		♦
	Distribution of program alumni indicating relative readiness to lead schools and self-assessed effectiveness after their first year and third year as principal or other administrative position. *(see below paragraph)	♦		♦

⁷ An “applicant” is an educator that submits an application for program admission, and a “candidate” is an applicant that has been accepted into the program. “Alumni” are program graduates who may or may not have received an administrative endorsement.

⁸ The PEP subcommittee recommends ISBE develop or adopt a statewide principal preparation program graduate survey for formative feedback and state policy decisions. If additional research indicates survey data on program quality, then the subcommittee may later recommend survey data use for program accountability. The subcommittee recognizes that this is one way that the principal preparation program indicators system differs from the teacher preparation program indicators system. See Appendix C for more detail.

*The PEP steering committee identified an indicator within the alumni performance and perceptions domain as requiring a new measure. The steering committee recommends that ISBE investigate, create/identify, and administer an annual, statewide principal preparation alumni survey to gather alumni self-assessments on their readiness to be Illinois school administrators and their sense of preparation quality after the alumni are principals or other school-level administrators. Several principal preparation programs use alumni surveys now, but a standardized survey can provide statewide evidence of preparation program quality.

Performance as a School Leader

The indicators describe program graduate performance as a school leader, which includes program graduate performance as a principal. Indicators within the domain answer questions about how well program completers perform in school leadership and administrative positions in Illinois schools.

Domain	Indicator	Functions		
		Formative review	Program accountability	State policy
Performance as a school leader	Post-graduate job retention as principal or other educator after 1, 2, 3, 4+ years. ⁹	♦		♦
	Percentage of schools employing program alumni as the principal displaying with statistically significant, positive student performance, as represented by the school aggregate teacher value-added analysis after Year 3.	♦		
	The percentage of schools employing program alumni as the principal displaying statistically significant, positive school culture improvement after Years 1 and 3 after hire, in comparison to four years of trend data.	♦		

The PEP steering committee selected these indicators after considering statistical methods and available data. For example, the PEP steering committee opted not to recommend principal performance evaluation results as an indicator because principal performance evaluation methods vary within the state. The PEP steering committee also opted not to recommend the *performance as a school leader* indicators for program accountability and state policy because typical principal preparation programs intentionally produce low numbers of candidates, which means analyses would be underpowered; research is not definitive on mediating factors influencing hiring and school performance; and principal hire timelines and mobility rates influence the ability to associate preparation programs school-level performance.

⁹ The PEP subcommittee does not recommend using retention rates as a metric for program accountability due to available research on principal decisions to join/leave a school, which are commonly not associated with principal preparation program quality. For additional discussion, see Appendix C.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DATA REPORTING AND NEXT STEPS

The PEP steering committee recognizes that creating a statewide dashboard for principal preparation is a developmental process, and that the indicators are a first step toward creating a reporting system that serves preparation programs, school systems, educators, and state leaders. The steering committee recommends ISBE pursue an online reporting system that:

- Provides secure access for programs to in-depth data reports
- Allow program staff to view point-in-time and longitudinal data
- Provide capacity to examine individual candidate/principal data for some indicators
- Provide statewide principal preparation system reports and preparation program descriptions publicly
- Support accurate data interpretations by providing technical manuals and professional learning opportunities to preparation program staff, state leaders, districts, and other educators

The steering committee also recommends the following next steps for principal preparation indicators development:

- Investigate, identify/create, and pilot a statewide principal preparation alumni survey, with input from preparation program staff and school district representatives
- Map program indicators to extant ISBE certification, staffing, and school data to further characterize measurement feasibility and accuracy
- Assess the viability of longitudinal analysis by considering how data variables have changed over time
- Create a series of analytic memos and technical documents that describe measurement methods to support transparency and annual reporting
- Pilot the reporting system to set performance thresholds and report utility with input from university principal preparation representatives, school district representatives, educators, and state leaders
- Establish statewide and program-specific baseline conditions
- Create a communications and sustainability plan to support the principal preparation indicators system, which assigns responsibility to a department within ISBE
- Determine review processes and consequences for consistent, low performance
- Conduct research and validation studies to examine validity, reliability, and predictive power of the indicators
- Establish a system for periodic principal preparation program review, which includes indicators and data

THE PEP PRINCIPAL PREPARATION STEERING COMMITTEE

States are uniquely positioned to influence principal preparation programs and the pace of innovation, due to their statutory authority. Illinois, for example, grants initial and ongoing approval for principal preparation programs, and states establish administrative licensure criteria, which can drive preparation program design. State departments of education and governors' offices can also help to set principal preparation program improvement agendas by setting principal standards, providing access to data, supporting continuous improvement processes, and engaging preparation programs in dialogue about innovative practices.¹⁰

In 2020, the Partnership for Educator Preparation (PEP) steering committee, which was created by the Illinois State Board of Education to advise its creation of a new preparation program accountability system, began working to create an indicator and data system for teacher and principal preparation. This report focuses on principal preparation only.

The PEP principal preparation steering committee includes ISBE staff members, principal preparation program staff members, K-12 central office administrators, Illinois professional association representatives, and philanthropic organization representatives from across the state. The PEP principal preparation steering committee began with 12 members in 2020, and then the steering committee expanded to 31 members in 2022-23.

The following steering committee list displays 2022-23 members:

<i>Carole Collins-Ayanlaja</i>	<i>Eastern Illinois University</i>
<i>Lisa Castleman</i>	<i>Olympia West</i>
<i>Matthew Clifford</i>	<i>WestEd</i>
<i>Kelly Colgan</i>	<i>J Sterling Morton High School District #201</i>
<i>Shelby Cosner</i>	<i>University of Illinois-Chicago</i>
<i>Juletta Ellis</i>	<i>Illinois High School Association</i>
<i>Emily Fox</i>	<i>ISBE</i>
<i>Michaela Fray</i>	<i>Regional Office of Education #1</i>
<i>Athanase Gahungu</i>	<i>Chicago State University</i>
<i>Brittany Guerrero</i>	<i>Chicago Public Schools</i>
<i>Tammy Hermes</i>	<i>Ball-Chatham School District</i>
<i>Ed Howerton</i>	<i>Aurora University</i>
<i>Sandra Jamaica</i>	<i>Chicago Public Schools</i>
<i>Tom Kim</i>	<i>Niles Township School District #219</i>
<i>Jason Leahy</i>	<i>Illinois Principals Association</i>
<i>Christine Nelson</i>	<i>National Louis University</i>

¹⁰ Manna, 2015; Manna & Jordan, 2022

*Jim O'Connor
Edward Piotrowski
Michael Portwood
Patrick Rice
Brian Schwartz
Kenny Smith
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Chris Tennyson
Steve Tozer
LaTesh Travis
Gloria Trejo
Ana Weiss
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Lyons Township High School District
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University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign
Illinois Principals Association
Education First
Loyola University
Regional Office of Education #47
University of Illinois-Chicago
Berkeley School District #87
West Chicago Elementary School District #33
The Chicago Fund
Consolidated High School District #230
ISBE
Chicago Public Schools*

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APPENDIX A: ILLINOIS STATE PRINCIPAL PREPARATION POLICY CONTEXT

ISBE's PEP steering committee works within a rich policy history of principal preparation program improvement, which has developed over the past 18 years. The Illinois policy context sits within a growing, national awareness of school principal influence on schools, teaching, and students, and the need for improved principal preparation programs.

The initial impetus for policy action in Illinois and other states came from an influential report by Arthur Levine (2005), which concluded principal preparation programs were out of step with the rigors of leading schools. In the report, Levine characterized principal preparation as using low admissions standards, requiring less rigorous coursework, engaging students in less practical learning activities, and awarding degrees with fewer overall requirements. Principal preparation tended to be less rigorous leadership preparation processes in business, medical, legal, and military.

Levine's research prompted Illinois policymakers to examine principal preparation program quality in Illinois. With funding from the Wallace Foundation, McCormick Foundation, and other philanthropic organizations, a series of statewide task forces investigated principal and administrative supply and the quality of principal preparation within the state. Building upon previous reports, the Illinois State Action for Education Leadership Project (IL-SAELP) recommended changes to preparation program review, principal licensure, and ISBE data systems (Illinois Administrator Academy Task Force Report, 2006; Streamlining Illinois Educational Delivery Systems Task Force report, 2007; P-20 Council Leadership Effectiveness Committee, 2010).

ISBE and the Illinois State Board of Higher Education's (IBHE) Commission on School Leader Preparation report entitled *Blueprint for Change* (2007), for example, led to passage of Public Act 096-0903 (2011), which established new principal preparation expectations and licensure requirements for principals. The new law requires all principal preparation programs to apply for reauthorization and approval from the Illinois State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board and show program compliance with program design requirements. State law required programs to be jointly designed by the preparation program and school districts that they typically served, and for all candidates to meet new certification requirements. The law changed program admissions processes and criteria and requires programs to work in partnership with school districts, align curriculum with national and state principal standards, and engage in sustained, structured, and supervised internships.

As preparation programs adopted Public Act 096-0903, the Illinois School Leadership Advisory Council (ISLAC), working with the Illinois Education Research Council (IERC) and Consortium on Chicago School Research, monitored implementation successes and challenges. The final ISLAC report (2016) noted Illinois principal preparation programs had addressed the law, and that additional state investments in clinical practice redesign, cross-organization collaboration to scale best practices, and advanced data structures and analyses could support continuous program improvement.

The ISLAC report recommendations were released as ISBE's PEP steering committee began its work in 2015, with a focus on teacher preparation program indicators. In 2017, the PEP steering committee recommended administrative rule changes supporting annual review of teacher preparation programs according to a series of benchmarks and measures. Later that year, the PEP committee conducted data analyses to examine teacher preparation benchmarks.

In 2018, the PEP steering committee began examining principal preparation program indicators and benchmarks. The PEP steering committee's work occurs as the new Professional Standards for Education Leaders (2016) and National Educational Leadership Program standards (2018) are being adopted by states and are beginning to influence principal preparation nationally (RAND, 2018).

Year	Policy Action
2001	Illinois Consortium for Education Leadership recommends revisions to principal preparation program quality indicators.
2004	Illinois Consortium for Education Leadership and Illinois State University's Center for the Study of Education Policy (CSEP) publishes recommendations for principal preparation program policy improvements, which include improvement of data systems and accountability.
2005	Illinois Board of Higher Education creates the Commission on School Leader Preparation to examine improvements in principal preparation.
2006	Illinois Board of Higher Education publishes the "School Leader Preparation: A Blueprint for Change" report, which includes recommendations for program quality, improved feedback to districts and programs, and changes to program accountability and candidate certification.
2007	A task force is established by the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the governor's office to recommend policy changes, per House Joint Resolution 66.
2008	The Illinois School Leader Task Force recommends principal preparation program redesign options, changes in principal preparation program accreditation, and increased focus on post-graduation outcomes.
2010	Public Act 096-0903 is enacted, which requires changes to program accreditation and principal certification.
2011	Illinois State Board of Education issues administrative rules on Public Act 096-0903.
2014	Illinois State Board of Education revises rules on program accreditation and requires all programs be approved under the new rules. The Illinois School leadership Advisory Council develops plans for new rule implementation. Consortia of principal preparation programs and districts begin working to improve principal preparation and practicum experiences.
2015	The Partnership for Educator Preparation (PEP) examines educator preparation program accountability, beginning with a focus on teacher preparation.
2016	Illinois State Leadership Advisory Council (ISLAC) releases a report on Public Act 096-0903 implementation, recommending continued state investment in supporting better data infrastructure, clinical experiences, and P-20 partnerships for leadership education.
2017	PEP recommends educator preparation programs participate in an annual review, with a proposed rule change. PEP also recommends a series of process quality and outcomes (e.g., licensure rate, employment rate) measures, and benchmarks. ISBE launches an annual review pilot to examine implementation of rule changes in teacher preparation program contexts. The Illinois Partnership and University of Illinois Chicago receive

	national recognition for strong principal preparation program design work and impact evidence.
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APPENDIX B: PEP PRINCIPAL PREPARATION INDICATORS DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The PEP principal preparation steering committee adopted a set of norms and design principles, which drove indicators decisions. The PEP Principal Preparation indicators are driven by the following five design principles:

1. Focus on principal preparation, recognizing that educational leadership programs may prepare educators for multiple types of leadership positions
2. Support accountability for effective program design
3. Promote continuous program improvement through inquiry
4. Increase data transparency for key stakeholders
5. Employ essential, valid, and reliable measures

When employing these five design principles, the PEP steering committee determined to recommend indicators that were currently available through existing ISBE data systems, as well as indicators for future consideration by ISBE.

1. Focus on principal preparation.

Effective accountability and continuous improvement systems provide specific data on a host of performance indicators, which provide a comprehensive picture of performance. In 2018, the PEP committee focused on developing a comprehensive set of *principal preparation* indicators because, research indicates, principals are the second most influential school-level factor in student performance. The PEP committee's work is, therefore, focused solely on principal preparation and no other position, and the resultant system will provide an important, though partial, view of education leadership preparation program/department effectiveness. Educational leadership departments at universities, colleges, or other organizations often prepare educators for multiple leadership positions in schools, some of which are addressed by Illinois professional educator licensure endorsements. For example, education leadership departments may prepare educators for the following positions:

- Principal
- Assistant principal
- Superintendent
- Director of special education
- Chief business officer
- Teacher-leader
- Chief business officer
- Policy analyst
- Researcher/professor

Education leadership departments provide position-specific training for these positions by articulating a sequence of courses and other learning experiences. Coursework and learning experiences within one sequence (e.g., the principal track) may overlap with another sequence (e.g. teacher-leader).

2. Support accountability for effective program design.

The principal preparation indicators are a key way that the Illinois State Board of Education will, eventually, hold preparation programs accountable for delivering high-quality services to aspiring principals. ISBE currently collects some data on program quality, but ISBE asked the PEP steering committee to augment quality indicators, with a focus on program outcomes. When fully developed, the

indicator system will improve ISBE capacity for confidently making consequential decisions about program approval and use of interventions to improve program quality.

The PEP committee recognizes, however, that principal preparation frequently occurs within an educational leadership department at a university, college, or other program, and that educational leadership departments prepare educators for multiple administrative positions.

3. Promote continuous program improvement through inquiry.

The principal preparation indicators can also provide program staff and stakeholders with high-quality, actionable data to verify program effectiveness and drive innovation or improvement. When creating the principal preparation indicators, the PEP steering committee recognized continuous improvement as a hallmark of program excellence, and an important approach to ensuring aspiring principals are ready to lead as the education sector continues to change. The PEP principal preparation indicators and, eventually, the data reports, will provide important, systematically collected data to programs. Many principal preparation programs that serve Illinois are engaged in data-driven continuous improvement processes by examining available data or collecting data themselves. The PEP steering committee noted statewide variation in preparation program capacity to systematically collect and use data for continuous program improvement. For example, some programs collect data on alumni job placement information annually, while others do not or collect them only occasionally. Once fully developed, the principal preparation indicators, therefore, represent an important resource for preparation programs.

4. Increase data transparency for key stakeholders.

Key stakeholders in principal preparation—especially school districts and aspiring principals—need good information to make informed choices about principal preparation programs. A comprehensive, transparent set of principal preparation indicators can provide aspiring principals information, for example, about program features, entrance criteria, and success criteria that enables comparative analyses, thus helping them choose the right program to meet their career trajectories and learning needs. School districts also need good program data to guide decisions about formalizing partnerships to support principal pipeline efforts, including recruitment and hiring decisions. The PEP steering committee recognizes that a statewide set of indicators, publicly provided to stakeholders, provides a basis for stakeholder decision-making.

5. Employ essential, valid, and reliable measures.

The PEP steering committee is seeking to produce a trustworthy data system, which means that valid and reliable measures should be used for collecting information *and* that the system should provide only the most essential information that is useful to stakeholders. The use of valid and reliable measures (e.g., test scores, surveys) under the right conditions will help ensure data accuracy and correct interpretation of principal preparation program effectiveness. When making recommendations about principal preparation indicators, the PEP steering committee will consider the psychometric properties of instruments as well as the data collection process, which must be feasible in order for it to be done accurately and systematically. The PEP committee also seeks to collect, analyze, and display only the most essential data on principal preparation programs. Given the complexities of principal development and ISBE's integrated data systems, a vast amount of data on principal preparation might be collected and analyzed. But more data is not always good, and annual collection, analysis, and reporting on large amounts of data can detract from ISBE and other stakeholder capacity to complete other activities.

APPENDIX C: DETAIL ON PROPOSED INDICATORS

Appendix C provide additional detail on the proposed principal preparation program indicators. The additional detail further defines the indicators and discusses PEP steering committee design decisions. Appendix C parallels tables presented on page 4 through 6 of this report.

Domain	Indicator	Functions		
		Formative review	Program accountability	State policy
Candidate selection and completion	Program applicant and candidate employment location. ¹¹	♦		♦
	Evidence of alignment to principal preparation national/state standards.	♦	♦	♦
	Candidate and applicant demographic and professional experience data, compared to statewide data.	♦	♦	♦
	Average undergraduate and graduate grade point for applicants and candidates prior to entry.	♦		
	Program selection and matriculation rates by candidate subgroup.	♦	♦	♦
Alumni performance and perceptions	Graduation rate by subgroup (e.g., by race, gender).	♦	♦	♦
	Post-graduate educator placement at 1, 2, 3, 4+ years by school type and position type (e.g., principal, director).	♦	♦	♦
	Program licensure rates displayed by candidate number and percentage passing exams and receiving licensure.	♦	♦	♦
	Percentage of program alumni indicating that pre-service preparation was high-quality, adequate upon graduation after their first year, and after their third year as principal or other administrative position.(see definition of alumni in footnote 11)	♦		♦
	Distribution of program alumni indicating relative readiness to lead schools and self-assessed effectiveness after their first year and third year as principal or other administrative position. (see definition of alumni in footnote 11)	♦		♦
	Post-graduate job retention as principal or other educator after 1, 2, 3, 4+ years.	♦		♦

¹¹An “applicant” is an educator who submits an application for program admission, and a “candidate” is an applicant who has been accepted into the program. “Alumni” are program graduates who have successfully accumulated adequate credits for program completion. Alumni may or may not become school leaders. A “school leader” has successfully received an administrative endorsement and has become a principal in an Illinois school.

Performance as a school leader	Percentage of schools employing program alumni as the principal displaying with statistically significant, positive student performance, as represented by teacher value-added analysis after Year 3.	♦		
	The percentage of schools employing program alumni as the principal displaying statistically significant, positive school culture improvement after Years 1 and 3 after hire, in comparison to four years of trend data.	?		

Domain: Candidate selection and completion.

Program applicant and candidate employment location. The PEP steering committee recommends ISBE collect and report information on the geographic location of school districts currently employing principal preparation program applicants and candidates. While principal preparation programs typically know this information, the information will be useful to educators, K-12 system administrators, and state-level leaders. The indicator can be particularly useful for state-level leaders when considering “catchment areas” (i.e., naturally occurring geographic areas served by preparation programs) for principal preparation programs which can help the state to identify underserved areas or types of candidates that lack access or do not easily access preparation programs.

Evidence of alignment to principal preparation national/state standards. The PEP steering committee recommends ISBE continue to collect and document program curriculum alignment to professional standards. Currently, ISBE and the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) require principal preparation programs to describe program standards alignment and selection criteria for program recognition purposes.

Candidate and applicant demographic and professional experience data, compared to statewide data. Demographic and professional experience data are routinely collected at the program level, and current program review practices examine the degree to which principal preparation programs admit applicants based on minimum educational experience requirements. Demographic information includes race, ethnicity, gender, and locale. Comparative and longitudinal data on candidate and applicant demographics can help programs see changes over time and compare their program to other programs. When aggregated, the data help state leaders and others to address questions about equitable access, workforce disproportionality, and educator workforce movement into school administration.

Average undergraduate and graduate grade point for applicants and candidates prior to entry. The PEP steering committee recognizes that undergraduate and graduate grade-point averages are not shown to be predictive of success as principals, but preparation programs commonly gather these data. Given public interest in program admissions rigor, the PEP steering committee recommends gathering and reporting the data.

Program selection and matriculation rates. High-quality principal preparation programs have rigorous, fair candidate selection processes. Selecting the right candidates for admission ensures investment in educators who are likely to complete the program and become principals. The PEP steering committee recommends ISBE annually document program selection and admissions rates.

The program “selection rate” can be reported as the percentage of aspiring principals admitted into the program divided by the total number of program applicants. The program selection rate is an indicator that the program is adequately selective, thereby providing some assurance that programs are admitting the most qualified candidates into professional ranks. ISBE may consider whether to also report the selection percentage by the “full admission” or “provisional admission” rates because some programs allow for provisional admissions due to relatively low candidate, documented leadership potential and closely monitor candidate performance. The PEP steering committee notes program selection rates should be interpreted with some caution, however. For example, a high selection rate may indicate programs are not sufficiently selective or it could indicate that programs are effectively recruiting candidates into the principal pipeline. Due to this caution, the program selection rate is not included as an accountability indicator. The PEP steering committee does, however, recommend ISBE continue to collect and report the number of programs admits meeting the minimum years of teaching requirement, as required by law, as an accountability indicator.

The “matriculation rate” is the percentage of candidates actively taking coursework divided by the number of individuals selected into the program. The continuous improvement indicator will be helpful to ISBE and programs in identifying candidates or types of candidates who accept admission into the program, and provides a better, up-stream statistic on principal workforce preparation. ISBE may consider disaggregating the program matriculation rate by candidate race, gender, ethnicity, current position, and geographic location.

The PEP subcommittee recommends this indicator be used by state-level leaders and that the data be accessible to the public (e.g., principal candidates or applicants, school districts) because the data provides important information about program entrance. However, the PEP subcommittee recommends public release of this information be accompanied by explanations about selection and matriculation rates, so that the public is sufficiently informed. This is because principal preparation programs vary with respect to their perspectives on admissions, admissions criteria, and capacity to serve large numbers of students. For example, some principal preparation programs follow national recommendations to “raise the bar” on program admissions to increase application rigor and delimit the number of candidates entering the principal pipeline, while others do not.

Domain: Alumni perceptions and performance.

Program graduation rate by subgroup. High-quality principal preparation programs support candidates during professional learning experiences and graduate a high percentage of candidates. In educator preparation, the graduation rate is the most immediate program output. The PEP steering committee recommends annually reporting the program graduation rate as an indicator of program quality, for continuous improvement purposes. Should program statistics indicate differences in graduation rate among subgroups, the program should take appropriate steps to improve.

The PEP steering committee notes that the program graduation rate differs from the endorsement attainment rate, which is included in the “contribution to the state” organizer. In Illinois, candidates may graduate from a principal preparation program, and then candidates can seek endorsement from the state by passing an examination. Policymakers note that, like program selectivity, interpretation of the program graduation rate should be done with some caution. For example, a very high graduation rate may indicate that program benchmarks and assessments are not sufficiently high to select the most talented candidates, but a high graduation rate may also mean that the program has an excellent recruitment strategy.

The PEP subcommittee views the indicator as potentially useful for state policy discussions about program quality and equity, as state-level leaders have a strong understanding of principal preparation program design, candidate population matriculation and state demographics. The PEP subcommittee also believes that the public can benefit from the data, represented at the aggregate level and with explanations about matriculation and graduation rates of adult learners, who are working full-time as educators.

Post-graduate educator placement at 1, 2, 3, 4+ years of graduation by school and position type. The PEP steering committee believes that principal preparation program graduate hiring rates, as principal, is an important success indicator, but the steering committee also recognizing multiple factors contribute to a candidates' abilities to secure a position. For example, a qualified candidate may have to wait for an open principal position within a reasonable driving distance from their home.

For continuous improvement purposes, the PEP steering committee recommends providing program job placement data for all program graduates, for each year after program graduation. The job placement information should include information about the number of graduates securing positions as principals or as other educational positions, including assistant principal, director, teacher-leader, or district-level administrative positions. By including additional leadership positions, the indicator considers inevitable delays in securing principal positions (e.g., lack of vacancies) as well as interest in alternative leadership opportunities. The PEP steering committee also recommends disaggregating job placement data by (1) candidate demographics, (2) school type by high-need designation and grade band, and (3) school location, so that programs understand who obtains positions and where positions are obtained.

While the PEP subcommittee views indicator data as potentially useful for state policy discussions and the public, the subcommittee strongly recommends that data representations to the public be accompanied by an explanation of principal pipeline employment patterns. The explanation should note that principal preparation programs primary responsibilities are to produce strong principal candidates and hiring/placement is beyond preparation programs' span of control. A preparation program may produce excellent candidates, but those candidates may not be hired as principals for many reasons, including availability of open positions, district politics, candidate family situations, variation in district hiring practices, and other reasons.

Program licensure rates displayed by candidate number and percentage passing exams and receiving licensure. High-quality principal preparation programs support candidates in acquiring knowledge, skills, and dispositions conducive to effective school leadership and to securing an Illinois principal endorsement. Additionally, high-quality programs select and train candidates motivated to becoming school principals in Illinois. Therefore, the PEP committee recommends ISBE report data on the number and percentage of candidate passing exams and receiving licensure annually.

Percentage of program alumni indicating that pre-service preparation was high-quality, adequate upon graduation after their first year and after their third year as principal or other administrative position. The PEP steering committee recommends ISBE administer an alumni survey to program graduates one year and three years after graduation to assess perceptions of program quality and training adequacy. The steering committee felt survey data administered immediately upon graduate are insufficient for gauging program quality and training adequacy because alumni do not have time to apply knowledge/skills on the job. Program graduate perception data have been useful in providing preparation staff actionable data about program quality, particularly feedback on candidate readiness to

lead schools. Currently, the state does not employ a statewide program graduate survey, though several programs within the state employ valid and reliable program graduate surveys. The steering committee recommends ISBE consider adopting a program graduate survey to measure program satisfaction and training adequacy so that all programs have access to these data.

The PEP subcommittee recommends that survey data not be used for program accountability discussions, due to the nature of survey data. After review of commercially available surveys and the data to support them, the subcommittee noted low correlation between survey results and graduate success as a principal. Additionally, the PEP subcommittee conjectured that satisfaction ratings could change, as graduates become more experienced in principal work. For example, a graduate may indicate dissatisfaction with program quality initially due to their experience in school leadership but later the graduate may be very satisfied with program quality because he/she is more experienced and can appreciate lessons learned.

Though the PEP subcommittee does not recommend satisfaction survey data for program accountability, the subcommittee recommends employing satisfaction data for state policy discussions and, potentially, releasing satisfaction data to the public, with due explanation of the data. The PEP subcommittee recommends that the state identify/create and conduct research on a satisfaction survey to test correlation between satisfaction, position retention, school retention, and job performance.

Distribution of program alumni indicating relative readiness to lead schools and self-assessed effectiveness after their first year and third year as principal or other administrative position. The PEP steering committee recommends ISBE administer an alumni survey to gather data about readiness and effectiveness in leading schools. The steering committee recommended a survey of alumni because principal performance evaluation data are inconsistent across the state, and surveying principal supervisors is challenging. The subcommittee recommends that a single survey be administered to program graduates, which includes program satisfaction (see above), readiness, and effectiveness constructs.

Though the PEP subcommittee does not recommend survey data for program accountability, the subcommittee recommends use of data for state policy discussions and, potentially, releasing satisfaction data to the public, with due explanation of the data. The PEP subcommittee recommends that the state identify/create and conduct research on a survey to test correlation between satisfaction, position retention, school retention, and job performance.

Domain: Performance as a school leader

The PEP steering committee noted that all three indicators in the *performance as a school leader* were methodologically challenging to calculate and report, due to methodological concerns principal attrition rates, and principal workforce size. Despite significant limitations, the steering committee believes data analyses in this domain are important for principal preparation programs to consider. However, the steering committee noted mediating factors in educator retention, school culture improvement, and student performance make causal links between preparation program and these outcomes problematic.

Job retention rates, as principal or other educator after 1, 2, 3, and 4+ years of graduation. The PEP subcommittee recognizes that principal preparation programs should produce program graduates that attain principal positions and are retained as principals in their schools and in the profession. For these

reasons, the PEP steering committee recommends providing job retention data to programs for continuous improvement purposes, and that the job retention rates include information about program graduate retention as principals, assistant principals, directors, and teachers. The data provide programs important information about post-graduate career patterns. Further, the job retention indicator should display retention in profession, retention in first placement district, and retention in first placement school. The data might also be disaggregated by candidate demographics, school type, and school location to provide program staff and district partners ample information for program improvement.

The PEP subcommittee does not, however, recommend that job retention rates as principal or other position be used as a program accountability measure, though the indicator can be beneficial for state policy considerations. Given research on principal workforce, the subcommittee noted that principal mobility and retention decisions are often based upon family, political, and job challenges, which are not associated with principal preparation program quality. Therefore, principal preparation programs should not be accountable for other mitigating factors associated with retention/departure decisions.

Percentage of schools employing program alumni as the principal displaying with statistically significant, positive student performance, as represented by teacher value-added analysis after Year 3. Principal preparation programs aim to produce leaders capable of improving student achievement, equity, and non-cognitive outcomes. However, researchers have observed that principal turnover can produce student “performance dips” and new principals often require several years to increase student performance. Therefore, the steering committee recommends ISBE measure student performance gain for alumni hired as principals in schools after three years.

Researchers have noted the following limitations and concerns in using schoolwide academic or non-cognitive performance as an accountability indicator for principal preparation programs:

- *Multiple school-level factors contribute to schoolwide student performance.* Principal preparation program influence on school principal performance and schoolwide student performance is likely quite small. Additionally, school-level and district-level contexts, such as principal autonomy and school structures, contribute to principal abilities to influence instruction and student performance. Finally, some researchers argue that schools experience a student “performance dip” upon principal replacement that can last three or more years, so the measurement approach would need to take multiple years of school performance into account. These factors must be considered and attended to when measuring principal preparation program influence on student performance.
- *Schoolwide student performance research methods are controversial and evolving.* The state must carefully select a measurement approach that reflects best practices in the field.
- *Sample size may be too small.* The analytic sample must be sufficiently large to say something definitive about principals graduating from preparation programs. Many Illinois principal preparation programs produce few principal candidates each year, and fewer of those individuals take positions, as principals, immediately after graduation. An annual analysis may be significantly under-powered, which would not enable definitive statements about principal preparation program performance. More program graduates take teacher-leader or other administrative (e.g., assistant principal) positions upon graduation, but these educational leaders cannot influence schoolwide student performance due to positional spans of control.

- *Need for a comparative analysis.* To assess schoolwide student performance gain, analysts would likely need to employ quasi-experimental approaches that, preferably, employ a comparative sample. These analytic approaches are challenging and costly to implement.
- *Non-cognitive student outcomes measures and indicators must be identified.* If non-cognitive student outcomes measures are to be considered, the state must select a single metric or indicators set in order to enable comparative measurement. Then, the state would need to begin employing the non-cognitive measures for a minimum of three years prior to its use as a principal preparation program indicator.

The percentage of schools employing program alumni as the principal displaying statistically significant, positive school culture improvement after Years 1 and 3 after hire, in comparison to four years of trend data. Effective principals use direct influence on school culture to improve teaching and learning conditions. Research has associated certain school culture constructs (e.g., trust, collegiality) with improved student performance. A school culture improvement accountability indicator could, therefore, be used to describe the influence of program graduates on schools. The PEP steering committee recommends ISBE consider inclusion of school culture as a principal preparation program indicator, while recognizing significant challenges and limitations with the indicator. For this reason, the steering committee recommends additional investigation and consideration of the indicator.

Researchers have noted the following limitations and concerns in using school culture as an indicator for principal preparation programs:

- *Multiple factors contribute to school culture, some of which may be outside the principals' control.* Principal preparation program indirect influence on school culture is likely quite small, and the association between principal practice and school culture improvement is unclear within the research literature. As with student performance, principal influence on school culture likely varies by local context (e.g., principal autonomy). Some researchers also argue that school culture may actually become less strong for a period of time in low-performing schools where the principal must make rapid changes. These factors would need to be considered as potential limitations for inclusion of the indicator.
- *Sample size may be too small.* As with the student performance metric, analytic sample sizes for the school culture indicator must be large enough to say something definitive about the principals graduating from preparation programs. Many Illinois principal preparation programs produce few principal candidates each year, and fewer of those individuals take positions as principals immediately after graduation. So, it is likely that an annual analysis of school culture will be significantly under-powered for the purpose of examining principal preparation program quality. More program graduates take teacher-leader or other administrative (e.g., assistant principal) positions upon graduation, but these educational leaders cannot influence schoolwide school culture in the same way that principals do.
- *Need for a comparative analysis.* To assess school culture gain, analysts would likely need to employ quasi-experimental approaches that, preferably, employ a comparative sample. These analytic approaches are challenging and costly to implement.

Although these limitations should be considered, Illinois is uniquely positioned to employ school culture as a principal preparation program metric because it has implemented a statewide (or nearly statewide) school culture survey for many years (i.e., the 5 Essentials).