

**Annual Program Reporting**  
**Principal Preparation Program Pilot**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

Updated: March 23, 2026

**Where do we enter Principal Preparation candidate data?**

Use the Principal Prep spreadsheets in the Annual Program Report (APR) system. Non-principal candidates remain on the General Enrollments spreadsheet. You'll see tabs/exports for Active Candidates, New Candidates, All Candidates, and a Blank Template for manual additions.

**Why are the Report Year and Program fields greyed out, and why does the Acceptance of Employment Type field show no selectable options even though other fields (such as Acceptance Date, Undergraduate GPA, Employment at Non-Public, and Out-of-State) can be updated?**

The options will not pop up until all the required fields are filled out (indicated with the asterisk \*). Please go ahead and fill out all the required fields, then the option to fill out all fields should pop up for you.

**What APR status should be used for Principal Program candidates who have not progressed with required evaluation training?**

Active. These candidates should be kept in *Active* status. Institutions should maintain communication to ensure these candidates still intend to complete requirements. If they decide not to continue, they may be moved to Withdrawn or another appropriate status.

**What does "applied in the last five years" mean on the Institution page of the APR?**

"Applied" refers to individuals who submitted an application to the principal preparation program, not to the university as a whole. Only applicants to the *principal preparation program* should be included in this count.

**Does "accepted candidates" refer to those officially accepted into the university or those accepted into the principal preparation program?**

"Accepted candidates" are individuals who are formally accepted into the principal preparation program. The acceptance date entered on the APR spreadsheet should be the date the candidate receives official notification that they are eligible to enter the program.

**The Principal Preparation: Domains, Indicators, and Definitions Guide states that admitted/enrolled candidates are those who “accept an institution’s offer of admission and enter the program.” Are these two separate data points? Can the pre-completion date serve as the program entry date?**

While the definition includes two actions — (1) accepting admission and (2) entering the program — the APR does not require these to be reported as separate data points.

- The acceptance date the date the candidate is formally offered admission into the program.
- The program entry date is the date the candidate officially begins the program, which may be recorded using the pre-completion (PC) date.

APR reporting should include candidates who were accepted *and* entered the program. Individuals who were accepted but chose not to enroll should not be included as admitted/enrolled candidates.

**The Principal Preparation: Domains, Indicators, and Definitions Guide asks us to report candidates who were previously enrolled, did not complete licensure requirements, but still graduated with a degree. Where should this data be reported?**

APR currently tracks whether candidates were enrolled and licensed, but it does **not** track whether they completed a degree. To address this issue, a new status has been added: unlicensed graduate. This field allows reporting for candidates who:

- enrolled within the last five years,
- did **not** complete licensure requirements, but
- **did** graduate with a degree by Aug. 31, 2025.

The data will be reported at the individual-candidate level within APR now that the new field is available.

**What GPA value should be reported for principal preparation candidates?**

We ask that the undergraduate GPA be reported for principal preparation candidates, even if they are enrolled in a doctoral program. In the future, ISBE may consider adding an additional column to report the most recent GPA for candidates.

**What “past five years” of data are we reporting?**

For the pilot year, provide any candidate-level data you have for Principal Prep from Sept. 1, 2020 through Aug. 31, 2025. If you lack some fields, use “U” (Unknown). Pilot-year data will not be public for two years; this is a transition period.

**“Employment location at time of acceptance” — what values go there?**

Use the coded values (not building/district names):

- High-needs public school – HNPS
- Public school (not high-needs) – PS

- Non-public school – NPS
- Out-of-state school – OOS
- Unknown (U)

These codes appear in the APR when adding a candidate (after the required fields are filled out).

### **Admissions/applications counts: which dates and where?**

Under **Institution Data** (last question), report the **total number of applicants** to Principal Prep for **Sept. 1, 2020–Aug. 31, 2025**. For accepted/enrolled tracking in candidate files, use:

#### **Acceptance Date Versus Status Date**

- Acceptance date = the date the candidate is allowed to enter (i.e., the date they are admitted)
- Status Date = the date they enter pre-completion

### **Do I need to manually add candidates one by one?**

No. You may upload via the spreadsheet. The on-screen “Add Candidate” form is primarily for occasional manual adds; some fields remain hidden until required fields are completed.

### **Our Active list includes people who are completers (even from older years). What should we do?**

Update those rows to Completed (C) with the actual date you moved them to completed. If the date is outside the current range and triggers an error, send a screenshot to your liaison.

### **Candidates previously coded as Withdrawn are reappearing as Active. What now?**

Re-code them as Withdrawn using the appropriate code (e.g., AW for withdrawn in teaching programs), then notify your liaison so the team can investigate the recurrence and correct any system bug.

### **A candidate moved from Inactive – Testing to Complete this year, but their test pass date is from a prior year. Where do we report them?**

Include them in the current reporting file and set the appropriate status/date fields. The system is intended to allow out-of-window dates for such cases; send an error screenshot if you encounter a block.

### **How long can someone stay Inactive – Testing? Should we create a local policy?**

Currently, Inactive – Testing can remain indefinitely. ISBE encourages institutions to:

1. Proactively contact candidates to confirm intent to test; and

2. Establish a local policy for when to withdraw candidates who are unreachable or who no longer intend to test.

An IEPP Advisory Group will review and may recommend changes; watch for updates in future years.

### **Will Inactive/Withdrawn policies affect our IEPP designation or points?**

IEPP point breakdowns (including completer measures) are in the IEPP Technical Guide. Designations remain, but reauthorization statuses are paused pending advisory group work on a better timeline.

### **Do we have to re-report candidates from prior years to populate the five-year window?**

No. Do not go back and re-report Principal Prep candidates previously submitted under general spreadsheets. Report what the current Principal Prep sheets request.

### **Institution Student ID — is it required for every candidate?**

It's not essential to backfill hundreds of Institution IDs solely for APR if that field is optional in your template; prioritize other required data.

### **Upload errors after using the template — what's the fix?**

If you receive vague errors (e.g., "Unexpected error"), screenshot the error and email your liaison. The team will diagnose whether a field wasn't recognized, a code was missing, or a validation rule needs adjustment.

### **Safety Education item (Institution screen): Is this still required? The code link seems off.**

The Safety Education requirement applied to the cohorts you're currently reporting, but the underlying public act text changed as of Jan. 1, 2026. The link in APR will be updated to a PDF of the applicable historical wording for your reporting window. Hold any changes to your curriculum until ISBE confirms final guidance.

### **The active list is missing some currently active candidates — should we add them?**

Yes. Add them to the Active sheet (or Blank Template). Also, check that they exist in ELIS and are in pre-completion so APR can align going forward.

### **Clarify "applicant" for candidate selection. Does this mean the prospective student has submitted a formal application, including all admission materials, to the university? What if they apply but fail to attend an interview? Or they started an application but didn't submit everything?**

Applicant means the prospective student has submitted a formal application to the institution, including all admission materials. It does not apply to candidates who have started an application but have not submitted all materials.

**Will data be reported in the aggregate? Are data reported by calendar or academic year? Are you defining the calendar or academic year as when they applied, or as the term when they intended to enroll?**

1. Will data be reported in the aggregate?

Yes. ISBE's public-facing reporting system — the Illinois Educator Preparation Profile (IEPP) — reports aggregate program-level data, not individual candidate data. The APR system collects individual candidate records, but these are used by ISBE to produce aggregate analyses for public reporting. Principal preparation program data will be incorporated into the IEPP beginning in 2028.

2. Are data reported by calendar year or academic year?

Data are reported by academic year. The APR User Guide clearly defines the reporting year as Sept. 1–Aug. 31, which is an academic-year cycle. The collection window (e.g., Feb. 1–April 30) is when institutions submit, but the data corresponds to the academic year ending the previous August.

3. Is the academic year defined based on when candidates applied or when they intended to enroll?

The academic year is defined based on candidate activity within the program during the reporting year (Sept. 1–Aug. 31) — not by application date or intended enrollment term.

The APR User Guide specifies that candidate records include individuals who:

- were *new, active, completed*, or otherwise enrolled during the reporting year
- had an enrollment status reflecting actual program participation between Sept. 1 and Aug. 31

Application dates are *not* used to define the year for reporting. Instead, the reported year aligns with the term in which candidates were *actually enrolled or active* in the preparation program.

This same rule applies in the Principal Prep Pilot uploads: Candidates are reported based on their status and activity within the same reporting year window, not based on when they originally applied or intended to start

**How will we submit this data? Spreadsheet, manual entry into an ISBE data system, or paper/pencil?**

This data will be submitted in APR via the principal preparation spreadsheets.

**Candidate selection: Please define "candidate." Some IHEs use the term candidate to designate a student who has qualified for a capstone, dissertation, internship, or other graduate culminating experience (as a program benchmark). Do you just mean a student who has been accepted and started taking classes in the program?**

A candidate in this instance is a student who has been accepted to the institution and has started taking classes in the teaching, administrative, or school support program.

**Please define "year" for candidate selection, whether calendar or academic years. Will data be reported in the aggregate by calendar or academic year? Are you defining the calendar or academic year as when they applied, during the term when they intended to enroll, or when they completed?**

As mentioned above, the academic year will be utilized. Data will be reported in aggregate in the IEPP but collected at the candidate level in APR. ISBE reporting is based on candidate activity within the academic reporting year, not application timing or intended enrollment term.

Candidates are included based on their status (new, active, completed, withdrawn) during the reporting year, defined as Sept. 1–Aug. 31. Reporting requires updating "new and active candidate records for those who completed or withdrew during the reporting year."

Per the Principal Prep Pilot guidance:

- Programs must report data for the "past five years," again defined strictly by academic-year date ranges (e.g., Sept. 1, 2020–Aug. 31, 2025), and report candidate-level data aligned to those academic years — not by application date or intended enrollment term.

Therefore:

- Not based on application date
- Not based on intended enrollment term
- Yes, based on when the candidate was actually enrolled, active, completed, or otherwise had status changes within the academic reporting year

**Will this data be reported by each individual candidate? Are we required to supply names and an IEIN if the candidate is out-of-state and not seeking Illinois licensure (do we include or exclude them)?**

Data will be reported by individual candidates in APR, just as teaching candidates are reported on in APR. Names and an IEIN should be included for each candidate if they enrolled and took classes at your institution, even if that candidate is out-of-state now and not seeking Illinois licensure.

**Are you defining the year as a calendar or an academic year? Are you counting the year as when they applied OR when they enrolled and started taking classes?**

ISBE uses an academic year (Sept. 1–Aug. 31) for principal preparation reporting and for APR-related dates. "Admitted, or enrolled, candidates" are defined as individuals who accept an institution's offer of admission and enter the preparation program. This is not tied to the application date but the actual enrollment/entry date.

Indicators such as candidate experience, GPA at entry, and employment data are all anchored to the candidate's status at the time of acceptance/enrollment, not application submission

**Does ISBE have any plans to create a comprehensive career-tracing system for nonpublic and out-of-state completers?**

Currently, ISBE does not currently have plans to create a comprehensive career-tracing system for nonpublic and out-of-state completers.

**Candidate Selection: Will this data be reported by each individual completer or in the aggregate?**

In the IEPP, this data will be reported in aggregate. However, in APR, this data will be reported at the individual level.

**For Candidate Selection: Please define "year," whether calendar or academic years. Are you defining the calendar or academic year as when they applied, during the term when they intended to enroll, or when they completed?**

Academic year (Sept. 1–Aug. 31). The "year" for determining which five-year window applies is tied to the candidate's acceptance date — not application date, enrollment term, or completion date.

**Please define "candidate." Some IHE use the term candidate to designate a student who has qualified for a capstone, dissertation, internship, or other graduate culminating experience (as a program benchmark). Do you just mean a student who has been accepted and started taking classes in the program?**

A candidate = a person who has been accepted and has entered (enrolled in) the preparation program.

**Are we required to supply names and an IEIN number if the completer is out-of-state or non-public and not seeking Illinois licensure (do we include or exclude them)?**

The documents require reporting all completers' data, including those with nonpublic or out-of-state experience.

**Regarding Candidate Completion: Documentation states the following requirements: Name and IEIN of candidates who were previously enrolled and who did not complete the licensure program but still graduated with a degree. Data should be provided for completers who enrolled within the last five years and graduated by August 31, 2025. Please clarify example scenarios of what ISBE intends to capture for this ask.**

You must report the name and IEIN of candidates who:

1. Previously enrolled in the principal preparation licensure program,
2. **Did not** complete the licensure program,
3. But still graduated with a degree,
4. And who enrolled within the last five years and graduated by Aug. 31, 2025.

ISBE intends to capture situations like:

#### Scenario A — Degree earned, licensure abandoned

A candidate enrolls in the principal preparation program in 2022, completes most coursework, but ultimately decides not to pursue the principal endorsement, yet still completes a non-licensure graduate degree (e.g., M.Ed. in Educational Leadership).

→ This person must be reported because ISBE needs to know who “stopped out” of licensure but still graduated.

#### Scenario B — Switched pathways after enrollment

A candidate begins the principal licensure program but switches into another graduate pathway within the same college (e.g., moves to a curriculum leadership program), completing a degree but not the licensure.

→ ISBE wants these cases to evaluate program “leakage” in the licensure pipeline.

#### Scenario C — Internship or exam non-completion

A candidate completes coursework but:

- never enters or completes the internship,
- or never takes/passes the Illinois principal exams, but graduates with a degree.  
→ ISBE wants these candidates included because they represent “non-licensure finishers” who still leave the institution with a credential.

#### Scenario D — Candidates who enrolled but finished after withdrawing from licensure

If someone initially enrolls in fall 2021 but withdraws from the licensure program early — yet the institution still awards them a different graduate degree prior to Aug. 31, 2025 — they must be reported.

What ISBE is trying to measure:

The principal preparation pilot program’s goal is to understand program quality, candidate development, and workforce outcomes, including individuals who do not complete licensure but continue on to earn a degree.

**Are we required to supply names and an IEIN number if the completer is out-of-state or non-public and not seeking Illinois licensure (do we include or exclude them)?**

Yes, any candidates who were once enrolled in your program should be reported on.

**Define what ISBE means as “the past five years” overall.**

When ISBE says “past five years” for the principal pilot indicator, they mean academic years running Sept. 1–Aug. 31.

**Define ISBE's meaning of completer for principal preparation program data. Understand that the term "completer" is used differently by different stakeholders. For example, accreditation defines a completer as someone who is fully qualified, including degree and licensure attainment, for the role the program was preparing them for.**

For the Principal Prep Pilot, "completer" is not limited to "degree + licensure." It includes program finishers, and ISBE separately tracks whether those completers obtained the principal endorsement; it also asks you to report degree-only graduates who did not complete the licensure route.

**Does ISBE interpret the new requirement for career tracing of nonpublic and out-of-state completers as an unfunded mandate?**

No, ISBE does not interpret the new requirement for career tracing of nonpublic and out-of-state completers as an unfunded mandate. We are asking programs to provide this information if they have it currently and to collect this information moving forward.

**Please share the name and email of the person at ISBE for whom institutions may contact for technical assistance.**

Please contact your assigned ISBE preparation team liaison or [preparation@isbe.net](mailto:preparation@isbe.net) with any questions.

**Please help programs understand how to handle data reporting for their students/candidates/completers in related but non-licensure programs. Are they excluded from these data asks?**

In the principal preparation data collection, we ask that institutions report data for anyone who entered the principal preparation program, even if they later finished with a non-licensure degree. We ask that you do not report individuals here who were only in separate, non-licensure programs and never principal-prep candidates. We ask that you report all other teaching, school support, and administrative candidates as you normally would in APR for right now.

**What does the asterisk (\*) next to "Total Number of Applicants" mean on the Institution page?**

The asterisk indicates that these fields are required for any institution that has a Principal Preparation program. No additional instructions are associated with the asterisk.

**Could you provide additional explanation about how the number of applicants is expected to inform program quality metrics?**

**For example:**

- **Is a larger applicant pool considered a positive indicator?**
- **Is there an expected relationship between applicant numbers and program quality indicators?**

ISBE does not treat the size of an applicant pool as a quality indicator. Applicant data informs ISBE about admissions patterns — like the proportion accepted and the proportion who enroll — rather than judging program strength based on applicant volume. Program quality metrics in the Principal

Prep Pilot are tied to candidate outcomes, licensure attainment, and workforce data, not how many people applied.

**How to Determine the Number of Applicants:**

- **Is this one year of applicant data or multiple years?**
- **Some pilot materials mention five years, but it is not clear from the screen what timeframe is expected.**

We are looking for the total number of applicants who have applied between Sept. 1, 2020-Aug. 31, 2025.

**Data Requested for Individual Candidates: When reviewing the APR screens, it appears that PRIN candidates records back to Report Year 2022 now show errors due to missing values in the new fields. Will institutions be able to submit the 2024-25 report with prior-year records still showing errors, or is the expectation that we retroactively populate these new fields for all candidates going back to 2022?**

We would like for IHEs to provide any principal preparation program data for the new fields from the date ranges of Sept. 1, 2020-Aug. 31, 2025. If any of these values are unknown for previous years, your institution should still be able to submit data by marking the fields as unknown.

**Acceptance Date vs. Pre-Completion Date: Should institutions report admission offer acceptance date or date entered into pre-completion?**

Acceptance date should be considered the date that the candidate received the offer of admission to the institution. The enrollment date should be considered the date the candidate was entered into pre-completion.

**Spreadsheet Upload Validation: When using the spreadsheet upload process, will there be data validation controls that restrict dates to the reporting window? If so – how can we handle this for the previous report year data?**

There will be data validation controls in place, but they should not flag dates outside of the typical reporting window. If this occurs, please reach out to your preparation team liaison.

**Undergraduate GPA Field: What value should institutions enter when the undergraduate degree is not the most recent degree?**

We ask that you submit the undergraduate degree GPA. In the future, we may look at adding a column for most recent degree GPA.

**Previously Submitted GPA Data: When reviewing historical candidate records, it appears that previously reported program-entry GPA values are no longer visible. Institutions had already gathered and reported these values in prior APR submissions, so clarification would be helpful on whether:**

- **these values have been archived elsewhere, or**
- **institutions are expected to locate and re-enter them.**

Previous years' data should be available in previously uploaded spreadsheets within the APR system. This is something that has now been fixed in APR so that they will populate automatically for institutions.

**Employment Location at Time of Acceptance: Clarification is needed about the point in time represented by the field. Which employment location should be reported?**

Employment Location at Time of Acceptance refers to the location of employment when the candidate accepted the offer extended by the program.

**Years Teaching / School Support: Additional clarification is needed about what point in time this variable represents.**

This is based on the years of employment at the time of acceptance into the program. This would mean, in this instance, the time during which the candidate is offered a letter, email, or formal notification into the program.

**On the candidate entry screen for years of the employment, the field appears to accept values between 0 and 99, but it is unclear what the number represents.**

0-99 represents the number of years of employment.

**Five-Year Work History:**

- **Which five years should institutions consider?**
- **Are institutions expected to know five years of employment history prior to admission?**
- **Are institutions expected to track employment after completion? It would seem we'd need to do this I think on an ongoing basis for at least five years post-program completion if we need to continue to report that every year. Most institutions do not have the staff capacity and time to do this.**

The past five years includes dates from Sept. 1, 2020-Aug. 31, 2025. Institutions are not expected to know five years of employment history prior to admission, only employment history within these dates. Institutions will not be expected to track employment after completion at this time.

**Is completion GPA required for PRIN candidates? If so, how should institutions report it?**

Yes, this is available in APR now to report principal preparation candidates' GPA upon program completion.

**Licensure Acquisition: How and where do we report this? If we have already reported these students as withdrawn, terminate, or inactive, do we report them again?**

This should already be in APR, as these students would likely be labeled as inactive-testing or active-testing in APR. If they are already in the APR system, they should be changed to the unlicensed

graduate status which was just added. Any candidate who graduated with a degree but did not complete licensure will need to be labeled with the unlicensed graduate status.