The State of Leadership: Public School Principals in Illinois, 2001-08

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University Council for Educational Administration
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The IERC Principals Study

• First in a series of reports - future work will investigate principal attrition, principal effects, and job preferences and management practices

• Current study is a descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics, employment experiences, and academic backgrounds of principals in Illinois public schools from 2001 to 2008
  – Baseline evidence about the observable characteristics of existing school leaders prior to new administrative licensure policies

• Similar to the IERC’s work on teachers in Illinois public schools - we focus on the distribution of characteristics and changes in this distribution
• **Principal Data**
  - Principal service and certifications information from state administrative data (Illinois State Board of Education)
    - employment information (e.g. school, position, assignment)
    - identifying data (e.g. name and date of birth, gender, race)
    - undergraduate and graduate institutions and degree levels
  - ACT, Inc.
    - English, Math, and Composite test scores.
  - Barrons’ (2003)
    - rankings for each institution

• **School Data**
  - ISBE School report card
    - School level, enrollment, race, gender, poverty, and achievement
  - Common Core of Data (CCD)
    - location, urbanicity
Principal Population and Demographics, 2001-08
Study Population

• One principal for each school for each year
  – Charter schools not included due to missing data

• We were able to identify principals for 99% of the schools each year
  – 7% of principals worked in more than one school or position in a given year

• ~ 3,900 schools per year over eight years = 30,770 records
Population growth for students and teachers outpaced principals.
Today’s principals: younger (on average), slightly more racial diversity, and more women

### Illinois Principal Demographics, 2001-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristics</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
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<th>2008</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>81.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&lt;0.0</td>
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<td>&lt;0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Age 40 or Younger</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Age 55 or Older</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Minorities make up a larger proportion of principals than of teachers, but both under-represent the student population.
Almost 80% of teachers are women, compared to (now) just over 50% of principals.
Compared to HS principals, elem/mid school principals are more likely to be minorities and more likely to be women.

**Gender**

- **Year:** 2001 to 2008
- **Percent Female Principals:**
  - Elementary/Middle School: Approximately 20% to 30%
  - High School: Around 10% to 15%

**Race**

- **Year:** 2001 to 2008
- **Percent Minority Principals:**
  - Elementary/Middle School: Slightly over 20%
  - High School: Around 15%
Minorities make up a much larger proportion of principals in Chicago.

Principal Race by Region
Women make up a much larger proportion of principals in Chicago (and the rest of the Northeast region).
Principal Age Distribution (2001)

![Bar chart showing the age distribution of principals in 2001. The chart displays the frequency of principals at different age ranges, with the peak frequency occurring around the age of 50.](chart.png)
Principal Experience
The typical Illinois principal in 2008 was younger and less experienced than the typical principal eight years ago.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Age and Experience Characteristics</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Years as Principal</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Tenure as Principal at Current School</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Total Years (any position) in IPS</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% First Year Principals</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Three Years or Less Experience as Principal</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Principals with Assistant Principal experience</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Principals with Assistant Principal experience at Current School</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Principals with Teaching Experience in Academic Core Subjects</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>78.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High school principals tend to have slightly less experience as principals than their elem/mid school counterparts.

Principals’ Experience as Principals by School Level
Chicago principals have more overall experience, but there’s not much difference between regions in terms of experience as a principal.

**Experience in Any Position**

**Experience as a Principal**

**Principal Experience by Region**
Principals in high-poverty schools tend to have more overall experience, but comparable (or less) experience as principals.

Experience in Any Position (non-CPS Schools)

Experience as Principal

Principal Experience by School Poverty
More than 80% of principals have regular classroom teaching experience in Illinois public schools, and the proportion with experience as an AP is increasing.
Principals in the more populous regions of the state were more likely to have AP experience, and the proportion of CPS principals who were APs at the same school has increased substantially.
Principals in towns/rural schools were less likely to have experience as APs, special education, other certified staff, or student services, and more likely to have worked (or to concurrently work) as superintendents/asst supts.
The majority of principals have experience teaching core academic subjects, and they are least likely to come from vocational education and electives (such as foreign languages).
Principals in more populous locales are more likely to have experience teaching special student populations and less likely to have experience teaching “specials” (such as art or PE).
Academic Core Teaching Experience by School Racial Composition (Non-CPS Schools)

Even excluding Chicago, principals in high-minority schools are more likely to have an academic core teaching background.
Principals’ Academic Backgrounds
There were no major or consistent changes to principals’ academic backgrounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Academic Characteristics</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT Math</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Composite</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Undergraduate Competitiveness</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% from More Competitive Colleges</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% from Less Competitive Colleges</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Graduate College Competitive</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is little evidence that only the most academically talented teachers move on to the principalship.
HS principals tend to have stronger academic backgrounds
The principals in the most disadvantaged schools tend to have the weakest academic backgrounds.
Principals' academic characteristics tend to be similar to those of the teachers at their school.

**ACT Composite**

- School Average Teacher ACT Quartile
  - Lowest Teacher ACT
  - Mid-Low
  - Mid-High
  - Highest Teacher ACT

**College Competitiveness**

- School Average Teacher College Competitiveness Quartile
  - Highest Teacher Competitiveness
  - Mid-High
  - Mid-Low
  - Lowest Teacher Competitiveness

**Principal Academics by Teacher Academics**
Summary

• Proportion of women increased to more than 50% and proportion of minorities slightly increased
  - Principals in more populated areas (Chicago/ Northeast/ urban/suburban) are more likely to be minorities and more likely to be women

• Today’s principals are younger and less experienced than those eight years ago
  - But assistant principal and academic core teacher experience have increased, and principals in the state’s more populous areas are more likely to have such experience

• Principals’ academic characteristics have not changed much
  - And they are distributed in much the same manner as teacher academic backgrounds - schools with low proportions of poor and minority students tend to have principals with the strongest academic backgrounds
First Year Principals’ Positions After 6 Years (2001 and 2002 Cohorts)

First Time Principals in Illinois

- Principal, same school: 28.3%
- Principal, same district: 16.6%
- Principal, different district: 9.1%
- Left IPS: 14.2%
- Other administrator: 3.3%
- Teacher: 4.0%

First Time Principals in Chicago

- Principal, same school: 39.9%
- Principal, same district: 37.2%
- Principal, different district: 14.2%
- Left IPS: 0.9%
- Other administrator: 2.7%
- Teacher: 4.4%
- other: 1.8%
Average One-Year School Attrition Rates, by Principal Characteristics

- **Age**
  - ≥40
  - 41-54
  - ≥55

- **Barrons**
  - Less Competitive
  - More Competitive

- **Gender**
  - Female
  - Male

- **Highest Degree**
  - Bachelor’s
  - CAS/6-year certificate
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- **Principal Experience**
  - First Year
  - Inexperienced
  - Experienced

- **Experience at Current School**
  - First Year
  - Inexperienced
  - Experienced

- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - African American
  - Latino
  - White

Mean = 20.9
Average One-Year Attrition from Profession, by Principal Characteristics

- **Age**
  - ≥40
  - 41-54
  - ≥55

- **Barrons**
  - Less Competitive
  - More Competitive

- **Gender**
  - Female
  - Male

- **Highest Degree**
  - Bachelor's
  - CAS/6-year certificate
  - Master's
  - Doctorate

- **Principal Experience**
  - First Year
  - Inexperienced
  - Experienced

- **Experience at Current School**
  - First Year
  - Inexperienced
  - Experienced

- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - African American
  - Latino
  - White

**Mean = 15.3**
Average One-Year School Attrition Rates, by School Characteristics

- % Free Reduced Lunch (FRL) Students
  - Low
  - Mid-Low
  - Mid-High
  - High
  - Highest 10%

- AYP Status
  - Met AYP
  - Did Not Meet AYP

- Minority/FRL
  - Low/Minority/Low FRL
  - High Minority/High FRL

- ISAT Quartiles
  - Lowest
  - Mid-Low
  - Mid-High
  - Highest

- Locale
  - Chicago
  - Urban
  - Suburban
  - Town
  - Rural

- Minority
  - Low
  - Mid-Low
  - Mid-High
  - High
  - Highest 10%

- PSAE
  - Lowest
  - Mid-Low
  - Mid-High
  - Highest

- Regions
  - Chicago
  - Northeast (w/o Chicago)
  - Northwest
  - East Central
  - West Central
  - Southeast
  - Southwest

- School Level
  - Elementary/Middle School
  - High School

Mean = 20.9
Average One-Year Attrition from Profession, by School Characteristics

% Free Reduced Lunch (FRL) Students
- Low
- Mid-Low
- Mid-High
- High
- Highest 10%

AYP Status
- Met AYP
- Did Not Meet AYP

Minority/FRL
- Low/Minority/Low FRL
- High Minority/High FRL

ISAT Quartiles
- Lowest
- Mid-Low
- Mid-High
- Highest

Locale
- Chicago
- Urban
- Suburban
- Town
- Rural

Minority
- Low
- Mid-Low
- Mid-High
- High
- Highest 10%

PSAE
- Lowest
- Mid-Low
- Mid-High
- Highest

Regions
- Chicago
- Northeast (w/o Chicago)
- Northwest
- East Central
- West Central
- Southeast
- Southwest

School Level
- Elementary/Middle School
- High School

Mean = 15.3