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

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The IERC Principals Study

• Descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics, employment experiences, and academic backgrounds of principals in Illinois public schools from 2001 to 2008

• Similar to the IERC’s work with teachers in Illinois public schools, we focus on changes in and the distribution of these principal characteristics

• Empirical baseline evidence about the observable characteristics of existing school leaders

• First in a series of reports; future work will investigate principal effects/effectiveness and principal attrition/retention
• **Principal Data**
  - ISBE teacher service record (TSR) and teacher certifications information system (TCIS)
    - 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

The Illinois Education Research Council follows strict protocols to protect individually identifiable information.
Data II

• One principal for each school for each year
  – Charter schools not included

• 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
Principal Population and Demographics, 2001-08
Population growth for students and teachers outpaced principals.

Population Change since 2001

[Graph showing population changes from 2001 to 2008 for principals, schools, students, and teachers.]
The proportions of Hispanic and female principals increased.

<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>Race</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</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>80.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>14.8</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>&lt;0.0</td>
<td>&lt;0.0</td>
<td>&lt;0.0</td>
<td>&lt;0.0</td>
<td>&lt;0.0</td>
<td>&lt;0.0</td>
<td>&lt;0.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</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</td>
<td>52</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</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Illinois Principal Demographics, 2001-2008
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 women.

### Principal Gender and Race by School Level

**Gender**

- **Year**: 2001 to 2008
- **Percent Female Principals**:
  - HS: Steady increase from 2001 to 2008
  - Elem/Mid: Steady increase from 2001 to 2008

**Race**

- **Year**: 2001 to 2008
- **Percent Minority Principals**:
  - HS: Steady increase from 2001 to 2008
  - Elem/Mid: Steady increase from 2001 to 2008

**Legend**

- Red: Elementary / Middle School
- Black: High School

School Level:

- Elementary / Middle School
- High School
Minorities make up a much larger proportion of principals in Chicago.
Women make up a much larger proportion of principals in Chicago and the Northeast

Principal Gender by Region
Principal Age and 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>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>
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<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>
<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</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>79.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High school principals tend to have slightly less experience as principals than their elem/mid school counterparts.
CPS principals have more overall experience, but there’s not much difference between regions in terms of experience as a principal.
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' Prior Positions in IPS**
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 core academics and special student populations and less likely to have experience teaching “specials” (such as art or PE).

Prior Assignments by Locale
(Principals with teaching experience only)
Even excluding Chicago, principals in high-minority schools are more likely to have an academic core teaching background.

Academic Core Teaching Experience by School Racial Composition (Non-CPS Schools)
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>

**Principals’ Academic Background Characteristics, 2001-2008**
There is little evidence that only the most academically talented teachers move on to the principalship.
HS principals tend to have stronger academic backgrounds

Principal Academics by School Level
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