



## *In the Pipeline: The Early Career Paths of Administrative Certificate Holders in Illinois*

This **Research Report** presents the results of the Illinois Education Research Council's study of recent type 75 (T75) administrative certificate earners in Illinois. The study examines the early career paths of a random sample of 300 of the approximately 1400 individuals who earned their T75 administrative certificates in 1999-2000. The response rate was 73 percent, with 219 individuals completing the survey. The findings reveal some troubling information about the workings of the labor market for public school administrators in Illinois.

The majority of newly certified administrators seek T75 positions within two years. Overall, 40 percent held a T75 position within two years of certification, and another 31 percent had applied for such a position. Nearly twenty percent of those who became T75 administrators did not apply for their jobs.

**African American certificants** were most likely to seek a T75 position (81%) and least likely to be hired or offered a position (49% of those seeking a position compared to 80% of White certificants). Not a single African American administrator obtained a job without applying compared to 19 percent of the White administrators. Only 22 percent of African American certificants held T75 positions within two years, half the 44 percent of White certificants.

**Female certificants** were somewhat less likely to seek a position (69%) than male certificants (76%) and had a lower success rate (71% hired or offered a position compared to 83% of males). Almost half of all male certificants held a T75 job within two years. They were also almost twice as likely not to have applied for their jobs (27%) compared to women holding T75 positions (15%).

**Age also makes a difference.** Older certificants were more likely to seek a T75 position than those

under the age of 40 (75% compared to 66%). Most younger T75 administrators applied for their positions (80%), while most T75 administrators age 40 or more obtained their job without applying (81%). Those in the older age group who did apply were not very successful, with almost 70 percent receiving no offers.

**Two routes** to educational administrative work appear to exist in Illinois. In one route, T75 certificants either do not apply for their jobs, or apply for one or two jobs and receive roughly the same number of offers, and become T75 administrators. In the second route, T75 certificants apply for one or often more jobs but have less success in obtaining jobs offers. Some portion of those in the first group, most notably those who obtain T75 jobs without applying, appear to be tapped or sponsored for specific T75 jobs. Women and African American candidates are less well served by this practice. Older candidates are best served by this practice, since most obtain their jobs without applying.

Recent evidence from national data indicates that women are less likely than men to be promoted into administrative positions in education. This study suggests that differential promotion is a problem in Illinois as well. Diversity of public school administrators is a concern in this state, and greater efforts are needed to ensure that traditionally under-represented groups gain access to these positions.

The full report, **In the Pipeline: The Early Career Paths of Administrative Certificate Holders in Illinois**, is also available at <http://ierc.siu.edu> under 'Publications'. For more information contact Dr. Karen DeAngelis at the Illinois Education Research Council. Her email is [kdeange@siue.edu](mailto:kdeange@siue.edu).

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## **HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Characteristics of T75 Certificants**

*New T75 administrative certificate earners in Illinois look similar to the State's K-12 teaching force (i.e., majority female and White).*

- 81% White
- 69% Female
- 57% aged 40 and over
- 87% were working in the Illinois Public Schools at the time of the survey.

### **Early Employment Outcomes of T75 Certificants**

*Within two years of T75 certification, 4 in 10 (40%) of the 1999-2000 certificants were holding T75 jobs.*

- About 3 in 10 (31%) had applied for but either did not obtain or did not accept a T75 job.
- About 3 in 10 (29%) had not applied for a T75 job.

*Female and African American certificants were less likely than male and White certificants, respectively, to be holding administrative jobs within two years of certification.*

- 36% of female certificants compared to 49% of male certificants became T75 Administrators.
- 22% of African American certificants compared to 44% of White certificants became T75 Administrators.

### **Reasons For Obtaining T75 Certification**

*The majority of respondents felt that they needed to become administrators in order to make positive organizational and curricular changes that would benefit teachers and students.*

*Nearly one out of four certificants (24%) pursued T75 certification because of the convenience of the program.*

*Those who became T75 administrators were more likely to cite encouragement by others as a very important factor for pursuing certification than those who did not hold such jobs.*

### **Applying For and Accepting T75 Jobs**

*Male and White T75 Administrators, as well as those aged 40 and older, were more likely to obtain their T75 positions without applying than female, African American, and younger (i.e., under age 40) T75 Administrators, respectively. Among those who became T75 administrators,*

- 27% male versus 15% female,
- 19% White versus 0% African American, and
- 29% aged 40 and over versus 9% under age 40 obtained their jobs without applying.

*Among the 31 percent of certificants who applied for but did not hold T75 jobs, 43 percent obtained offers that they chose not to accept.*

### **Factors Affecting T75 Certificants' Labor Market Decisions**

*Factors associated with individual schools and districts had the greatest impact on T75 Administrators' decisions to accept their jobs. The majority of these respondents cited the following as "very important" factors:*

- philosophy of the district's leadership
- a school or district's reputation for high quality education and for safety
- the amount of resource support in the school

*The levels of stress and responsibility associated with administrative work were not important factors for a majority of those who applied for but did not become T75 administrators. Proximity of job was the most important factor.*

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study show that within two years of initial certification, about 7 out of 10 individuals who obtain T75 administrative certification in Illinois seek T75 jobs. Only about 4 out of 10, however, end up working as T75 administrators; the others who pursue administrative work either fail to obtain job offers (57%) or obtain one or more offers that are unacceptable to them. Of the near thirty percent of T75 certificants who do not apply for administrative jobs within the first two years of certification, only a small proportion (21%) never intend to apply for such positions.

Recent evidence from national data indicates that women are less likely than men to be promoted into administrative positions in education (Joy, 1998). This study suggests that differential promotion is a problem in Illinois as well. The results show that new T75 administrative certificate earners in Illinois look similar to the state's K-12 teaching force (i.e., majority female and White), but certificants who actually become T75 administrators within the first two years of certification more closely resemble those already holding such positions (i.e., majority male and White). Specifically, 69 percent of the 1999-2000 T75 certificants in our sample were female, but only 36 percent of them secured T75 jobs within two years of certification. Forty-nine percent of the male certificants, in contrast, were holding T75 jobs. And while individual choices made by female certificants may be partly to blame for this gender difference, males appear favored for administrative roles as evidenced by the fact that more males than females obtain such jobs without even applying. African American certificants were the most likely to apply for T75 jobs, but the least likely to be successful. While 81 percent of the African American certificants sought T75 jobs, only 22 percent became T75 Administrators; in contrast, seventy percent of White certificants sought T75 jobs and 44 percent became T75 Administrators. And not a single African American T75 Administrator obtained the

job without applying, compared to 19 percent of White T75 Administrators who did so. The age of certificants also was found to make a difference. While older certificants (i.e., those aged 40 and older) were much more likely than younger certificants to obtain jobs without applying, those who applied were less successful at obtaining offers than their younger peers. Diversity of public school administrators is a concern in the state, and greater efforts will be needed to ensure that traditionally underrepresented groups gain access to these positions.

These results also suggest that some portion of T75 certificants are tapped or sponsored for specific T75 jobs. Sponsorship into administrative positions can be good or bad depending on how the mechanism operates. Respondents to this survey indicated that proximity of the job to home was an important consideration when deciding to accept an administrative job offer, which shows a role for "grow your own"-type initiatives that encourage movement into administrative positions within a school or district. On the other hand, prior research has shown that administrators tend to hire individuals who resemble themselves in behaviors and interests (Hassenpflug, 1996). Given that 83 percent of Illinois' superintendents were male and 4 percent were minority in 2001-02 (ISBE, 2002), sponsorship-type initiatives may serve to perpetuate discriminatory hiring practices in the absence of focused efforts to promote greater diversity at the administrative level.

As a group, individuals who obtain T75 administrative certification are motivated by the belief that administrators have the ability to make organizational and curricular changes that can positively impact teachers and students. Those who successfully obtain T75 jobs also are motivated by the encouragement that they receive from others to pursue such work; those who do not become administrators soon after certification do not appear to receive as much encouragement.

The majority of T75 Administrators overall accept jobs based on the philosophy of the district's leadership, the reputation of the school or district for educational quality and safety, and the availability of resource support. Among those not holding T75 jobs within the first two years of certification, the availability of local job openings and preferences for their current jobs were cited most frequently by the Applicants and Non-Applicants, respectively, as reasons for not accepting or applying for T75 positions. And like the individuals in the T75 Administrator group, the majority of respondents in these two groups of certificants stated that there are schools and districts in the state where they would not apply or from which they would not accept job offers. Proximity of the job to home, the salary level offered, and the safety of the surrounding neighborhood were cited as primary factors affecting the certificants' views of these "unattractive" schools and districts, rather than the locale (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural) or the background characteristics of students in these schools and districts.

The results of this study suggest a few key policies that the state and local districts can adopt to improve the recruitment of T75 administrative certificants into administrative jobs in Illinois:

- Administrators need to look locally for qualified individuals to fill administrative positions. Leadership initiatives designed to "grow your own" would seem beneficial given many certificants' preferences for jobs close to home.
- To increase the diversity of administrators in the state, female and minority candidates need to be provided with more opportunities to serve in administrative roles. Given that some portion of those who obtain T75 positions appear to be sponsored for specific jobs, more focused efforts to promote diversification through "grow your own"-type initiatives is needed.
- Search processes need to be more open to perspective administrators who differ from past administrators.
- Hard-to-staff schools and district offices need to offer competitive salaries to their administrators compared to those of other area districts in order to improve their attractiveness. In addition, these schools and districts might consider internship opportunities that would enable administrators to have positive leadership experiences in their schools.