



Position Statement on Principal Preparation Programs
Prepared by the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance
January 2008

The School Management Alliance supports strengthening principal preparation programs. We propose the following:

First, the admission of students to these programs needs to be more selective and need to involve more partnerships with local school districts to determine the level of need and potential students. The admission criteria should be accompanied by standards and should include: expectations for the percent of students accepted into programs compared to those who graduate from the program; percent of those passing the state test; and the number of graduates who are actually employed.

Second, the state test needs to be strengthened to insure that all of the standards of any program are actually being taught.

Third, curriculum being taught in principal preparation programs should reflect the real work of the principal. Also, consideration should be given to aligning the curriculum to the Illinois New Principal Mentoring Program and Illinois Distinguished Principal Leadership Institute.

Fourth, there needs to be a consistent internship mandatory for every program. Additional funding to accomplish this may not be needed if we do a better job in admissions instead of turning out 500% more graduates than needed.

Fifth, an outside review of programs is needed which would include the authority to place on probation or terminate preparation programs which are not meeting the standards. The Board of Higher Education and ISBE do not have the staff or the independence to conduct this assessment. They also do not have adequate authority to suspend or terminate programs.

Sixth, there needs to be a requirement of training programs that at least half of the teaching staff have had recent experience in the field (being within the past 5 years). Principal preparation programs should be discouraged from employing anyone that has no experience in the field.

Seventh, the state should develop a framework for the development of educational leaders recognizing that principal preparation programs can not create "master" principals upon certification.

Finally, the type 75 certificate should be left as is. Most students do not plan on starting out as a dean or department head or athletic director, but often these are first steps for principals. Different certifications would mean individuals would continually be going back to school for different certificates, while many of the duties overlap in different ways in each school.