

Illinois Partnerships Advance Rigorous Training (IL-PART) Project

Grant Award: 10/1/13-9/30/18

The U.S. Department of Education awarded the Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University a School Leadership Program grant of \$4.6M over 5 years. The grant will be used to support the Illinois Partnerships Advance Rigorous Training (IL-PART) project, which represents a collaborative effort between high-need school districts and universities that have come together in formal partnerships aimed at improving the way in which principals are prepared and developed in Illinois.

IL-PART is comprised of 3 qualifying high-need district/university partnerships:

1. Aurora (East) District 131 and North Central College
2. Bloomington District 87 and Illinois State University
3. Quincy District 172 and Western Illinois University

The grant also partners with the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness at Loyola University and the Catholic school diocese representing Aurora, Bloomington, and Quincy.

The consortium of partners are collaborating in the effort with three clear goals:

- Goal 1: Prepare highly-qualified school principals for high-need districts that positively impact student learning
- Goal 2: Develop effective partnerships between university principal preparation programs and high-need districts with the supports designed to build leadership capacity in an effort to improve student outcomes.
- Goal 3: Dissemination of IL-PART evaluation findings and emerging best practices in principal preparation and partnership development

Internship Requirements

One of the most significant changes mandated by the State in principal preparation has been the development of an extensive, competency based, well-supervised internship experience. Interns must show competency in very specific experiences in school improvement, teacher evaluation, and managing complex systems. They also need experiences with working with certain sub-populations of students.

IL-PART is an effort aimed at developing a pipeline of well-trained principals through rigorous and relevant principal preparation programs with intensive internships that address the many complexities faced by today's school leaders. To that end, the IL-PART funds will support two internship models: a full time/full semester internship and a traditional internship at each of the partnering institutions. Candidates will select either a traditional internship or a full-time/full semester internship in a partnering high needs school. An evaluation conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) will explore differences in outcomes between the two internship models.

The project will assist high-need districts in establishing a pool of highly skilled school leaders that are able to respond to partner district needs and fill projected principal and assistance principal positions by: providing intensive, authentic, school-based learning opportunities for aspiring principals and by providing mentor principals and faculty supervisors with training so that they provide rich learning experiences for principal interns focused on school improvement efforts and increased student achievement.

Benefits of Participation in the IL-PART Project

Benefits to aspiring candidates:

1. Candidates will be provided an opportunity to complete an intensive, full-time/full-semester internship experience (at no additional cost to the candidate or the district);
2. Candidates will be provided leadership opportunities involving school improvement efforts aimed at increasing student achievement. The full-time structure of the internship will allow candidates to gain a greater understanding of the principalship and hands-on experience with all aspects of school administration;
3. Candidates enrolled in partner principal preparation program will be provided with various pre-service training and workshops funded by the grant (e.g. Growth Through Learning, DuPage Regional Office of Education Principal Mentoring Illinois Administrator Academy).

Benefits to school districts:

1. There is no cost to the District. Funding will be provided to Districts to cover the cost of the substitute teacher needed to provide principal candidates with release time to complete a full-time/full-semester internship. (The grant will reimburse the District for the cost of the substitute teacher for an entire semester, based on the rate determined by your District's collective bargaining agreement and will include additional cost for compliance with the Affordable Care Act);
2. Participation in the project will provide an opportunity to explore and improve the District's talent development strategy through coordinated effort with the university partners. The newly redesigned principal preparation program, combined with the intensive full-time/full semester internship, provides the District with a pipeline of school leaders prepared for the challenges of today's schools. Program candidates completing an intensive internship will be exposed to a broad base of leadership experiences aimed at school improvement;
3. Candidates will return to their home District having completed the State mandated training required to evaluate teachers;

Benefit to the field:

1. The IL-PART Project seeks to better understand whether or not and to what extent a full-time/full semester internship yields different outcomes than a traditional internship.
2. If the evaluation finds significant differences between the two internship models, an appropriation request may be made to fund a larger pilot project to further examine if findings hold in partnerships between universities and non-high need districts.
3. The IL-PART project is also collecting and documenting data and processes with the implementation of the new P-12 Principal Endorsement between the partnering districts and universities and with the partnering Catholic Dioceses to share practices, strategies, and products.