

Summary of Challenges to Illinois' New Principal Endorsement
Developed by Center for the Study of Education Policy

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Challenge One: Illinois Teaching Certification Requirement

During the rules process for the new Principal Endorsement, the rules were written to state that to qualify for the Illinois P-12 Principal Endorsement, a candidate must have an Illinois teaching certificate, which was not the intent of the Principal Endorsement statute. This has proved to be problematic because it adds an additional burden to candidates with out of state teaching certificates because it requires them to have to also earn their Illinois teaching certificate in order to successfully enroll in an Illinois Principal Endorsement Program. This additional rule goes beyond simply transferring an out of state teaching license by also requiring principal candidates with out of state teaching certificates to also take the Illinois Teaching Academic Proficiency (TAP) exam, the Illinois content test for teaching, and EdTPA assessment just to enroll in an Illinois Principal Endorsement Program. This presents a disproportional disadvantage to candidates that want to enroll in an Illinois Principal Endorsement program but do not have an Illinois teaching certificate. Large urban districts and universities near the border often enroll candidates from other states into their programs. While these are examples, this policy impacts all principal preparation programs in Illinois.

In order to address this barrier, during the 2014 Fall Veto Session, legislation (SB 2711; Public Act 098-1147) was passed and signed by Governor Quinn to allow out-of-state candidates with the appropriate number of years of teaching on any state's teaching certificate (not just Illinois) to qualify for the Illinois P-12 Principal Endorsement upon successful completion of an ISBE approved principal preparation program.

While SB 2711 allows ISBE approved principal preparation programs to admit principal candidates with teaching certificates from other states, one question still remains - whether or not the new Illinois Principal Endorsement is considered a subsequent endorsement. If ISBE interprets the Illinois P-12 Principal Endorsement as a subsequent endorsement, then the candidate still faces the additional burden of securing a Professional Educator License (PEL), meaning that the principal candidate would still need to: (1) successfully complete a content test in a teaching field, a test of basic skills, and the APT; and, (2) complete other applicable coursework (e.g., 3 hours in ELL Methods, 3 hours in SPED Methods, 6 hours in reading methods and reading in the content area). SB 2711 did not explicitly address this issue and this issue is being resolved through proposed legislation for out-of-state reciprocity of educator credentials that is described in Challenge Two below.

Challenge Two: Out of State Reciprocity of Educator Credentials

An early concern expressed by principal preparation programs regarding the new P-12 Principal Endorsement regulations focused on the need for some mechanism of quality assurance for out-of-state universities that prepare administrative candidates for Illinois' schools. Separate rules (Illinois Administrative Code 25.337) were passed that require individuals holding an out-of-state principal license to apply to an Illinois program approved under the new P-12 Principal Endorsement requirements to determine if and what is needed for the out-of-state educator to receive an Illinois Principal Endorsement. This approach, while acknowledged as an adequate quality control measure, creates real challenges for districts, as it limits the ability of districts to recruit experienced school leaders from out of state for positions that need to be filled in a timely manner. According to the current regulations, there is currently only one way in which an individual trained and licensed out of state may receive an endorsement for principal on a PEL - the individual seeking the endorsement has:

- 1) had his or her coursework and preparation program reviewed by an institution approved to offer a principal preparation program in Illinois; and,
- 2) has successfully completed any deficiencies in that preparation that the institution has identified, as applicable; and has been recommended for entitlement by that institution (23 Illinois Administrative Code 25.337(b)(1)).

Assuming that an approved principal preparation program wishes to engage in this process, then the candidate would also need to meet the requirements for the Professional Educator License (PEL) in a teaching field in order to obtain a PEL in which to affix a subsequent endorsement for the principalship. This includes the following:

- 1) successful completion of a content test in a teaching field, a test of basic skills, the APT; and,
- 2) other applicable coursework (3 hours in ELL Methods, 3 hours in SPED Methods, 6 hours in reading methods and reading in the content area).

Once this has occurred, the institution would further need to ensure that the other portions of Illinois Administrative Code 30.70 are met (internship assessments, etc.).

ISBE recognizes the complexity of this and is developing language to modify the statute. Revised statutory language has been submitted to the Legislative Research Bureau to draft into legislation that includes the following recommendation for an out of state principal to receive a Professional Educator License in Illinois:

1. Completed an out of state program leading to the receipt of a certificate or license endorsed either for principal or superintendent.
2. Successfully completed the principal/superintendent exam(s) in Illinois.
3. Have at one point in time received a certificate or license endorsed in a teaching field (please note that the license does not need to be valid....some states allow an educator to hold a principal license, for example, and a 9-12 math license. These are separate and if someone is a practicing administrator he or she may have let the teaching license lapse).

These proposed changes would allow an individual to receive a PEL endorsed in the principalship by ISBE taking the responsibility away from the universities for assuring that the out of state candidates meets the appropriate requirements. If the individual does not meet the requirements set forth in the proposed language, ISBE would grant the out of state candidate an Educator License with Stipulations (ELS), which would provide the individual time to complete the requirements in order to receive the PEL.

For more information on the current Administrative Requirements for the Illinois Principal Endorsement and the Illinois Professional Educator License, see the following:

- Frequently asked questions related to the new Professional Educator License:
<http://www.isbe.net/licensure/pdf/ELJS-faq.pdf>
- PowerPoint presentation on Administrator Requirements: <http://www.isbe.net/licensure/ppt/lic-officer-trng-fall14-webinar6-100714.pdf>