

The Chicago Public Schools Revised Principal Eligibility Policy and Process

On December 17, 2008, the Board of Education adopted a new policy regarding requirements for qualification and selection of CPS principals that went into effect on January 1, 2009.

WHAT IS THE PRINCIPAL ELIGIBILITY PROCESS?

Great schools start with great leaders.

Today’s real life challenges require instructional leaders prepared to transform schools and ensure the success of every child. To that end, CPS must also continuously improve the process by which we identify, prepare, qualify and support principals. Therefore, our revised Principal Eligibility Process ensures that we have the most qualified principal candidates who are prepared to meet those real-life challenges from their first day on the job.

CPS performed an extensive analysis of the principal role in order to have the most up-to-date understanding of the challenges faced by our principals. This analysis validated our CPS Principal Competencies and gave us additional insight into the knowledge, skills and abilities required for success in the principal role. The Principal Eligibility Process is designed to ensure we are gathering the right information and assessing those factors which best predict success. It will help us to consistently identify high-quality principal candidates, support LSCs and others selecting the best principals for their schools, and provide principal supports to ensure success for all our district principals.

The revised Principal Eligibility Policy establishes a Principal Candidate Pool comprised of candidates actively seeking a principalship. Local School Councils will select principals for principal contracts only from the Principal Candidate Pool. CPS leadership may only appoint first-time principals from that pool. Current principals do not need to establish eligibility or become part of the CPS Principal Candidate Pool in order to renew a contract.

One of the key differences in the revised policy is that you should only pursue Eligibility if you are actively seeking a principalship. Your eligibility will expire after three years if you are not selected as an acting, interim or contract principal during that time.

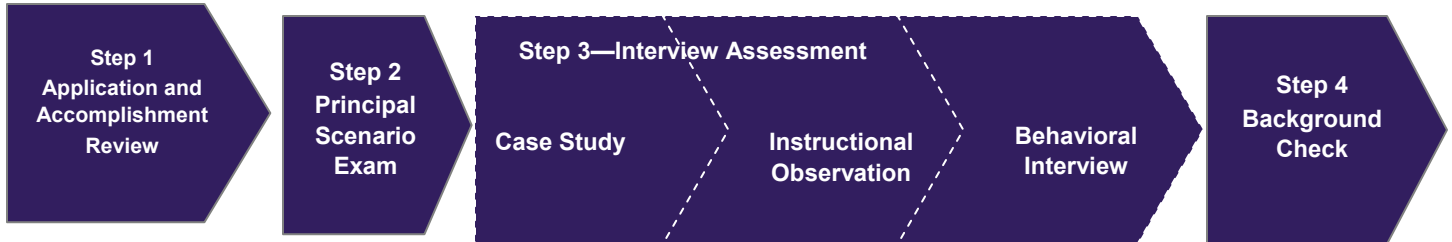
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ABOUT THE REVISED ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

The revised Principal Eligibility Process requires candidates to demonstrate proficiency in the CPS Principal Competencies and Success Factors. It also streamlines the process, resulting in reduced preparation time for documents that candidates are required to submit.

Candidates must have a valid Type 75 or equivalent administrative certificate in order to apply.



Step 1– Application and Accomplishment Review

Interested applicants should download and complete the Application for Principal Eligibility and the Candidate Accomplishment Review from the OPPD website, www.oppdcps.com. In the Application for Principal Eligibility, candidates provide information about their education, credentials, work experience, and relevant skills. The Accomplishment Review asks candidates to demonstrate evidence of the Principal Competencies and related Success Factors using specific examples of leadership experiences and results/outcomes achieved. Each candidate participates in an interview that further assesses the evidence documented.

Step 2—Principal Scenario Exam

The Principal Scenario Exam (PSE) measures a candidate’s ability to effectively manage real-life situations commonly experienced by principals in CPS. The PSE is an hour-long, multiple choice written assessment typically given on the same day as the Accomplishment Interview.

Step 3– Interview Assessment

Upon successful completion of Steps 1 and 2, the next step is a series of three (3), one hour interviews, typically scheduled on the same day.

The **Case Study** measures the candidates ability to understand and interpret school data and develop school improvement strategies. Candidates review a series of hypothetical school data and then discuss their observations and approach to school improvement.

The **Instructional Observation** assesses the candidate’s ability to observe and evaluate classroom instruction and provide appropriate development feedback to teachers. Candidates view a short video of a teacher instructing a classroom, perform a role play exercise to explore their ability to provide feedback to a teacher, and discuss the pre- and post observation process

The **Behavioral Interview** is a structured interview used to gather verifiable, concrete evidence about how the candidate has responded to school leadership situations in the past. The interview asks questions about key skill areas that are critical to success in the principal role.

Step 4— Background Check

This check begins once a candidate has successfully completed the Accomplishment Review and Principal Scenario Exam. Candidates complete a fingerprint background check and have their work history, education, credentials and background verified. Additional exclusionary criteria is now included in the revised policy. See www.oppdcps.com for more information.

Documents related to the revised Principal Eligibility Process including the Application for Principal Eligibility and Accomplishment Review forms are posted on the OPPD website. Please see www.oppdcps.com for more information or call the Office of Principal Preparation and Development at (773) 553-1515.

THE CPS PRINCIPAL COMPETENCIES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

The CPS Principal Competencies define excellence in the principal role. In addition, through an extensive analysis of the principalship, CPS gained additional insight into what strategic activities principals perform and the knowledge, skills and abilities required for success. This insight was gathered from available research, best practices and a survey of CPS principals to gather information unique to CPS.

Aligned to the CPS Principal Competencies, the Principal Success Factors define the knowledge, skills and abilities candidates are required to demonstrate in order to establish Eligibility and be admitted to the Principal Candidate Pool. For more detailed descriptions of the Success Factors, visit our website at www.oppdcps.com.

1. Develop and Articulate Belief System through Voice and Action.

Related Success Factors: Strategic Thinking, Service Leadership, Impact and Influence

2. Engage and Develop Faculty

Related Success Factors: Team Leadership, Developing Others

3. Assess the Quality of Classroom Instruction

Related Success Factors: Instructional Leadership, Accountability

4. Facilitate/Motivate Change

Related Success Factors: Driving for Results, Leading and Managing Change, Building and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships

5. Balance Management

Related Success Factors: Operational Excellence, Planning and Organizing

IMPORTANT PRINCIPAL ELIGIBILITY DATES

Summer 2009 Application Period

Application Deadline: June 5, 2009

Applicants should download and complete the Application for Principal Eligibility and Candidate Accomplishment Review. Submit both documents via email to OPPD by 5 pm.

June-August 2009

Accomplishment Interviews, Principal Scenario Exams and Step 3 interviews scheduled.

September, 2009

Applicants notified of Eligibility Status.

Fall 2009 Application Period

Application Deadline: October 2, 2009

Applicants should download and complete the Application for Principal Eligibility and Candidate Accomplishment Review. Submit both documents via email to OPPD by 5 pm.

HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR THE REVISED PRINCIPAL ELIGIBILITY PROCESS?

The revised Principal Eligibility Process is designed to assess the real-life knowledge, skills and abilities candidates have been developing in preparation for a principal role. There is no study guide and the process has been streamlined to reduce the amount of time that is required for candidates to prepare and submit required Eligibility documents.

The best way to prepare for the revised Eligibility Process is to reflect on your development as a leader. Review the leadership experiences you've had and be prepared to document and discuss your accomplishments and the impact of your efforts during the Eligibility Process.

In addition, review the Principal Competencies and Success Factors and the revised process to ensure you understand what's required and key submission dates.

Visit the Office of Principal Preparation and Development (OPPD) website at www.oppdcps.com for more information. Watch for upcoming Information Sessions and/or call the Office of Principal Preparation and Development with your specific questions at (773) 553-1515.

OPPD

PRINCIPAL ELIGIBILITY POLICY AND PROCESS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How do I know what my current Eligibility status is?

If you are unsure of your Eligibility status, please call the Office of Principal Preparation and Development (OPPD) at (773) 553-1515.

Q: Are principals or certain groups of individuals grandfathered in?

Candidates will not be grandfathered into the Principal Candidate Pool. If candidates previously completed the full, outgoing Eligibility Process, they will be granted transitional admission to the Principal Candidate Pool only until September 1, 2009. If those candidates have not been selected as an acting, interim or contract principal by that date, they must successfully complete the revised Principal Eligibility Process in order to remain in the Principal Candidate Pool.

Q: Do contract, interim or acting principals need to become Eligible?

Contract, interim or acting principals' current contract or assignment is unaffected by the revised policy. Principals do not need to be a member of the Principal Candidate Pool in order to receive a contract renewal. However, in order to accept a new Uniform Principal Contract or assignment, principals must be a member of the Principal Candidate Pool. Non-membership in the Principal Candidate Pool will not affect the CEO's ability to appoint a current or former principal to a school as an interim principal if the CEO determines that the candidate is exceptionally qualified to meet the needs of that school.

Q: What weight does previous experience as a principal carry in the new process?

The new process is designed to assess the Principal Success Factors developed as a result of a survey of current principals during the job analysis of the principal role. Experience as a principal may be very relevant, but does not guarantee Eligibility or membership in the Principal Candidate Pool.

Q: What is the process for candidates from outside the district to become Eligible to be a principal in CPS?

The process for external candidates is the same. They must successfully complete the revised Eligibility Process. If you are an external candidate and have questions about CPS or the revised Eligibility Process, please contact OPPD at (773) 553-1515.

Q: Why do candidates no longer have the option of submitting a Portfolio?

The Accomplishment Review is closely aligned to the Principal Competencies and Success Factors. It is also shorter and will not take as much candidate time to complete. We do recommend that aspiring candidates keep a portfolio to document their experiences as they develop as a leader and use those experiences to complete the Accomplishment Review.

Q: When will you offer the Principal Scenario Exam?

Candidates will take the Principal Scenario Exam on the same day as their Accomplishment Interview.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Do candidates still need to take the Board Policy Exam?

Training on Board policies will be a required part of New Principal Induction and is not included in the new assessment process.

Q: What is the Candidate Profile? What information is included in the Candidate Profile?

The Candidate Profile is prepared by OPPD and provides information to Local School Councils and others who are selecting interim or contract principals. It includes information about the candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities demonstrated in the Principal Eligibility Process. This information is designed to assist LSCs and others in selecting the best principal candidate for the school based on that school's particular needs. Candidate Profiles contain information about the Principal Success Factors that the candidate demonstrated in the Eligibility Process, as well as any non-exclusionary criminal and/or disciplinary history. If candidates have a question about their Candidate Profile, please call OPPD at (773) 553-1515.

Q: If I successfully complete Eligibility, how long will I be Eligible?

Candidates who successfully complete Eligibility and are admitted to the Principal Candidate Pool will be Eligible for three years after the date Eligibility is granted unless they are hired as an acting, contract or interim principal. If hired as a principal, Eligibility will last for three years following their principalship.

Q: If I do not successfully complete Eligibility, how long must I wait to reapply?

Applicants must wait twelve (12) months from the date of their Application for Principal Eligibility to re-apply for Eligibility. Because the Eligibility process is based on the Success Factors, it is not something that can be studied and learned in a short period of time. The Success Factors are skills and abilities that are developed over time. Therefore, the waiting period gives applicants time to practice and develop those skills in which they needed development.

Q: Does the process favor certain types of candidates, such as Assistant Principals or Principal Prep program candidates?

No. The Eligibility process measures demonstration of the Principal Success Factors and is not dependent on position or program. We recognize that there are multiple routes to development as an aspiring principal. What the process measures is your demonstration of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary.

Q: Who are the assessors?

Our assessors have specific expertise as they are usually principals, former principals, principal coaches and/or Area Instruction Officers. The assessors are extensively trained and use a very structured interview guide and rubric for each interview to assess candidates. In addition, candidates are evaluated by at least six (6) different assessors to ensure objectivity.

Q: Why is the Eligibility List no longer on the website?

In order to be selected as an interim or contract principal, candidates must now be a member of the Principal Candidate Pool. If you have a question about your status or if you are a member of an LSC with a question about a candidate's membership in the Principal Candidate Pool, please contact OPPD at (773) 553-1515.