

ILLINOIS NEW PRINCIPAL MENTORING PROGRAM



NEW PRINCIPAL SURVEY

ADMINISTERED FALL 2010



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	3
II.	Findings	4
III.	Evidence	6
	A. Leadership	7
	B. Instructional Focus and Rigor	8
	C. Assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement	9
	D. Planning	10
	E. Professional Development	11
	F. Culture and Communication	12
	G. Areas Well Prepared	13
	H. Areas Generally Prepared	14
	I. Areas Less Prepared	15
	J. Open-Ended Responses	16

I. INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2010, the Illinois New Principal Mentoring Program again partnered with ECRA Group, Inc., a leader in educational research, to conduct the third consecutive New Principal Survey for the New Principal Mentoring Program. The survey is directed at improving the New Principal Mentoring Program - specifically, to determine necessary resources and professional development needs for new principals. This is the second year in which the survey has been conducted. The survey was designed to identify areas in which new principals feel they need the most assistance in adjusting to their new role. Because the survey was a self-rated instrument and principals rated their levels of preparedness as generally high, program leadership should look at the items in relation to each other when determining higher and lower levels of preparedness when interpreting results.

Sample Demographics

A total of 149 new principals participated in the survey, which was conducted online. This number is comparable to the 2009 total of 145 new principals, illustrating that the NPMP is doing a good job in its outreach efforts. Demographics of the sample are tabled below.

Gender

Percent Male	Percent Female
53	47

School Setting

Setting	Percent of Principals
Rural	41
Suburban	42
Urban	16

Student Population

Number of Students	Percent of Principals
Under 100	5
100-500	63
500-1000	24
1000-2000	6
More than 2000	2

Type of School

Grade Levels	Percent of Principals
Early Childhood	4
Elementary	47
Middle	9
Junior High	8
Secondary	20
K-12	0
Other	13

Race/Ethnicity

	Percent of Principals
White	92
Black	2
Hispanic	6

II. FINDINGS



1.

Overall Satisfaction and Quality of the New Principal Mentoring Program

In general, new principals are highly satisfied with the New Principal Mentoring Program, and are also able to offer constructive suggestions of ways in which the program could be of more benefit to them. Most feel that their mentors are highly qualified and consider them a valuable resource for providing sound direction when called upon.



2.

Level of New Principal Preparedness

New Principals' level of preparedness have remained generally consistent over the course of the three surveys. Principals indicate they come into their new role very well prepared to accept accountability, communicate effectively and maintain an open door, recognize professional accomplishments of their staff, collaborate on decision-making and promote a culture of respect within the school. One area that showed an increase in the level of preparedness over the past two surveys as that of coaching classroom management strategies.

However, there were some areas on the 2010 survey in which principal ratings shifted from the “very well prepared” category to the “generally prepared category. These areas include maintaining high academic standards and expectations for teachers and students and engendering trust among faculty and staff, and providing timely feedback to all stakeholders. In addition, New Principals suggest that one of the ways in which the NPMP could be of additional benefit would be to provide guidance on managing expectations and maintaining excellence in standards.

Areas in which new principals feel least prepared are fairly consistent with years past. These areas include budgeting, allocation of resources and other areas of planning, integrating diversity into curriculum and instruction, and engaging parents and the community to promote achievement and enhance education.

II. FINDINGS

3.

Ways in Which the New Principal Mentoring Program Can be of Additional Benefit

While there were some suggestions that remained consistent over the course of the three surveys such as providing additional guidance on budgeting and how to deal with the general decrease in school funding, there were some new issues that emerged as areas to target for additional support to the new principals. These areas include the following:

- Establishing high standards, managing expectations and maintaining academic rigor
- Assistance with understanding diverse curricula and being a true instructional leader in the school
- Understanding and promoting best practices in education to self and to teachers and ways of encouraging teachers to take on new challenges, as well
- Guidance in dealing with union issues and other charged political challenges such as preparing for a community referendum
- Additional ways to foster teacher collaboration, promote buy-in to RtI and other curriculum initiatives, and to make the teacher evaluation process meaningful and constructive

4.

Time Management in Relation to the New Principal Mentoring Program

Time management emerged as one of the greatest challenges for New Principals, and a finding unique to the 2010 survey includes concerns over how much time new principals are required to dedicate to the NPMP. Some new principals indicate that 100 hours challenging with their current workload. Others suggest that the program consider offering a level of support appropriate to the individual being mentored.

5.

Site Visits and Collaboration with Others in the Program

Another characteristic unique to the 2010 survey was a general desire that emerged among new principals to increase site visits – both mentor site visits and new principal site visits to other schools in the program. Along with this, new principals feel they might benefit from additional time spent with other mentors and new principals in the program to gain outside perspectives.




III. EVIDENCE

For the survey, principals were asked to state their level of preparedness for various items. The mean ratings are tabled, followed by a summary. These ratings are based on a scale from 0, indicating a low level of preparedness for the item, to 4, indicating a high level of preparedness. The following numerical assignment was used for mean calculations.

- 4 = Extremely Prepared
- 3 = Prepared
- 2 = Somewhat Prepared
- 1 = Unprepared

The highest mean rating possible is a 4.0. The following general rules can be used to interpret the mean ratings contained in this report. These rules are meant to provide a general framework for interpretation of items. However, they should not be interpreted as absolute standards.

Color-coding is based upon 2010 means:

-  Mean ratings of 3.3 or above reflect areas in which principals feel very well prepared.
-  Ratings between a 3.0 and 3.29 indicate areas in which principals feel generally prepared.
-  Ratings below a 3.0 indicate areas in which principals feel they need the most help.

In order to help you better understand the ratings, the percentage of principals who stated that they were “extremely prepared” for that item are also included in the tables.

A. LEADERSHIP

Ratings for Leadership Items

Sorted in
descending
order

Item	2008 Mean Rating	2009 Mean Rating	2010 Mean Rating	2010 Percent Extremely Prepared
Accepting accountability for decisions and actions	3.54	3.56	3.38	43
Maintaining high expectations for teacher and student performance	3.36	3.35	3.21	29
Engendering faculty/staff trust, confidence and commitment to the school	3.32	3.34	3.21	31
Facilitating teamwork at all levels of the organization	3.16	3.11	3.08	23
Implementing best practices of supervision	3.10	3.14	3.03	19

New principals felt most prepared to accept accountability for decisions and actions. Mean ratings indicate that the 2010 new principals feel slightly less prepared in the other leadership areas than their colleagues in previous years.

- Areas in which principals feel very well prepared
- Areas in which principals feel generally prepared
- Areas in which principals feel they need the most help.

B. INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS AND RIGOR

Ratings for Instructional Focus and Rigor Items

Sorted in
descending
order
↓

Item	2008 Mean Rating	2009 Mean Rating	2010 Mean Rating	2010 Percent Extremely Prepared
Maintaining high academic standards	3.23	3.30	3.19	29
Implementing best practices in instruction	2.89	3.13	3.08	24
Incorporating technology into the classroom	3.04	3.01	3.01	28
Integrating diversity into curriculum and instruction	2.79	2.90	2.81	14

New principals felt generally prepared in maintaining high standards, implementing best practices and incorporating technology. As in previous years, new principals feel they need the most help in integrating diversity into curriculum and instruction.

- Areas in which principals feel very well prepared
- Areas in which principals feel generally prepared
- Areas in which principals feel they need the most help.

C. ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Ratings for Assessment and CQI Items

Sorted in
descending
order

Item	2008 Mean Rating	2009 Mean Rating	2010 Mean Rating	2010 Percent Extremely Prepared
Providing clear feedback to subordinates without offending or patronizing people	3.26	3.17	3.18	33
Using assessment to improve instructional practices	2.98	3.06	3.13	28
Reporting assessment and evaluation findings	3.00	3.10	3.08	26
Appraising teaching methods to ensure alignment to curriculum	2.96	2.99	3.03	23

New principals felt generally prepared in each of the assessment and CQI areas. Ratings are very similar to previous years with a slight increase in the percentage of principals who feel better prepared to appraise teaching methods.

- Areas in which principals feel very well prepared
- Areas in which principals feel generally prepared
- Areas in which principals feel they need the most help.

D. PLANNING

Ratings for Planning Items

Sorted in
descending
order

Item	2008 Mean Rating	2009 Mean Rating	2010 Mean Rating	2010 Percent Extremely Prepared
Goal-setting	3.27	3.23	3.12	28
Understanding and implementing organizational change	3.20	3.13	2.99	21
Strategic planning	2.95	3.06	2.92	18
Allocating resources	2.69	2.62	2.67	16
Implementing a budget (formerly managing a budget)	2.67	2.54	2.57	13
Creating a budget	2.43	2.48	2.49	12

Planning items remain among the greatest areas where new principals need help, especially in the areas of creating and implementing a budget.

- Areas in which principals feel very well prepared
- Areas in which principals feel generally prepared
- Areas in which principals feel they need the most help.

E. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ratings for Professional Development Items

Sorted in
descending
order

Item	2008 Mean Rating	2009 Mean Rating	2010 Mean Rating	2010 Percent Extremely Prepared
Recognizing and celebrating the professional accomplishments of faculty/staff	3.39	3.38	3.35	41
Coaching classroom management strategies	3.20	3.20	3.33	42
Mentoring staff to improve their instruction	3.01	3.14	3.09	28
Implementing best practices in staff development opportunities	2.93	3.13	3.01	22

Principals feel very well prepared in recognizing and celebrating professional accomplishments and coaching classroom management strategies, the latter of which is an increase over past years. They are also generally prepared to mentor staff and implement best practices in staff development opportunities.

- Areas in which principals feel very well prepared
- Areas in which principals feel generally prepared
- Areas in which principals feel they need the most help.

F. CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

Ratings for Culture and Communication Items

Sorted in
descending
order

Item	2008 Mean Rating	2009 Mean Rating	2010 Mean Rating	Percent Extremely Prepared
Maintaining an open-door policy	3.72	3.69	3.62	65
Communicating effectively with teachers, counselors, deans and other administrators	3.53	3.53	3.44	48
Promoting a culture of respect within the school	3.54	3.55	3.42	49
Using collaboration to make decisions	3.34	3.39	3.42	47
Providing timely feedback to all stakeholders	3.32	3.32	3.25	36
Negotiating school conflicts	3.21	3.15	3.15	29
Engaging parents to promote achievement	3.00	2.98	2.96	20
Engaging the community in support of the school	2.83	2.83	2.77	14
Partnering with the civic and business community to enhance education	2.57	2.62	2.55	39

Ratings on culture and communication items were also very similar to years past. New principals feel best prepared to maintain an open-door policy and communicate effectively with fellow administrators, faculty and staff. They also feel very well prepared to promote a culture of respect and collaborative decision-making. Areas to target include engaging parent and community support, including partnering with other organizations to enhance education.

- Areas in which principals feel very well prepared
- Areas in which principals feel generally prepared
- Areas in which principals feel they need the most help.

G. AREAS IN WHICH PRINCIPALS FEEL VERY WELL PREPARED

2008	2009	2010
Accepting accountability for decisions and actions	Accepting accountability for decisions and actions	Accepting accountability for decisions and actions
Maintaining high expectations for teacher and student performance	Maintaining high expectations for teacher and student performance	
Engendering faculty/staff trust, confidence and commitment to the school	Engendering faculty/staff trust, confidence and commitment to the school	
	Maintaining high academic standards	
Recognizing and celebrating the professional accomplishments of faculty/staff	Recognizing and celebrating the professional accomplishments of faculty/staff	Recognizing and celebrating the professional accomplishments of faculty/staff
		Coaching classroom management strategies
Maintaining an open-door policy	Maintaining an open-door policy	Maintaining an open-door policy
Promoting a culture of respect within the school	Promoting a culture of respect within the school	Promoting a culture of respect within the school
Communicating effectively with teachers, counselors, deans and other administrators	Communicating effectively with teachers, counselors, deans and other administrators	Communicating effectively with teachers, counselors, deans and other administrators
Using collaboration to make decisions	Using collaboration to make decisions	Using collaboration to make decisions
Providing timely feedback to all stakeholders	Providing timely feedback to all stakeholders	

As illustrated, there are fewer items in which principals feel most prepared than in previous years, with an improvement in one item: coaching classroom management strategies. Color coding indicates the category that each item fell into in alternate years.

H. AREAS IN WHICH PRINCIPALS FEEL GENERALLY PREPARED

2008	2009	2010
		Maintaining high expectations for teacher and student performance
		Engendering faculty/staff trust, confidence and commitment to the school
Facilitating teamwork at all levels of the organization	Facilitating teamwork at all levels of the organization	Facilitating teamwork at all levels of the organization
Implementing best practices of supervision	Implementing best practices of supervision	Implementing best practices of supervision
		Maintaining high academic standards
	Implementing best practices in instruction	Implementing best practices in instruction
Incorporating technology into the classroom	Incorporating technology into the classroom	Incorporating technology into the classroom
Reporting assessment and evaluation findings	Reporting assessment and evaluation findings	Reporting assessment and evaluation findings
	Using assessment to improve instructional practices	Using assessment to improve instructional practices
Providing clear feedback to subordinates without offending or patronizing people	Providing clear feedback to subordinates without offending or patronizing people	Providing clear feedback to subordinates without offending or patronizing people
		Appraising teaching methods to ensure alignment to curriculum
Goal-setting	Goal-setting	Goal-setting
Understanding and implementing organizational change	Understanding and implementing organizational change	
Coaching classroom management strategies	Coaching classroom management strategies	
Mentoring staff to improve their instruction	Mentoring staff to improve their instruction	Mentoring staff to improve their instruction
	Implementing best practices in staff development opportunities	Implementing best practices in staff development opportunities
		Providing timely feedback to all stakeholders
Negotiating school conflicts	Negotiating school conflicts	Negotiating school conflicts

As illustrated, some items have shown increases in preparedness over previous years, and others have shown a decrease in ratings. Color coding indicates the category that each item fell into in alternate years.

I. AREAS IN WHICH PRINCIPALS FEEL LESS PREPARED

2008	2009	2010
Appraising teaching methods to ensure alignment to curriculum	Appraising teaching methods to ensure alignment to curriculum	
Integrating diversity into curriculum and instruction	Integrating diversity into curriculum and instruction	Integrating diversity into curriculum and instruction
		Understanding and implementing organizational change
Strategic planning		Strategic planning
Allocating resources	Allocating resources	Allocating resources
Managing a budget	Implementing a budget (formerly managing a budget)	Implementing a budget (formerly managing a budget)
Creating a budget	Creating a budget	Creating a budget
	Engaging parents to promote achievement	Engaging parents to promote achievement
Engaging the community in support of the school	Engaging the community in support of the school	Engaging the community in support of the school
Partnering with the civic and business community to enhance education	Partnering with the civic and business community to enhance education	Partnering with the civic and business community to enhance education

The above chart should be used to target the greatest areas for improvement when mentoring new principals. Color coding indicates the category that each item fell into in alternate years.

J. OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

In your role, what do you perceive as your major challenges, and how can the Principal Mentor Program help you the most?

New principals cite a wide variety of challenges in their role. Some consider supervising other administrators a challenge in that they are concerned about maintaining high expectations and getting the best out of their school leaders. Along the same lines, some struggle with fostering a collaborative environment among teachers, promoting best practices in education and encouraging teachers to take on new challenges, and union issues. Some would appreciate guidelines and direction in how to deal with teacher unions.

Some New Principals consider understanding diverse curricula, maintaining academic rigor, and being a true instructional leader to be challenging. Some new principals are still learning time management and organization in their new role. As in years past and as illustrated in the quantitative data, budgeting issues provide unique challenges to new principals. School funding also presents challenges for new principals. Principals are interested in the NPMP providing budgeting workshops in the future. Communication and engagement of teachers, staff, parents and community members to enhance the educational process also emerges as a challenge for new principals. Fostering a positive school climate is also a concern.

Some mentioned that their mentors are helpful in many of these areas – especially for those principals who do not feel they have a mentor to call on within their district. They appreciate that mentors are available to them to listen and to offer direction when called upon. Another area in which new principals feel the NPMP could be of benefit is providing guidance on how to deal with political issues among stakeholders. One example is helping provide direction on how to approach community referendums, teacher negotiations, and other highly charged political situations. Other suggestions include providing additional guidance on personnel evaluations and staff development initiatives, as well as how to get teacher buy-in to RtI and curriculum initiatives.

A few new principals mentioned that the hours requirement for the NPMP is challenging when they are already having time management issues.

J. OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

Principals' additional comments and suggestions regarding the New Principal Mentoring Program?

As in past surveys, the vast majority of new principals report very positive experiences with the program and their mentors. It is clear that the new principals find their mentors highly qualified and beneficial in their direction. One notable difference in open-ended responses on the 2010 survey is that there is an increase of comments indicating that the 100-hour requirement of the program is simply too much for already overloaded responsibilities. Administrators who are already quite experienced feel that there should be consideration for the level of mentoring needed, rather than strict formal requirements for the program. Some would also like to see an increase in site-visits – whether it is an on-site visit or observation from the mentor, or new principals conducting site visits of other new principals to gain a different perspective. Several principals mentioned how they might benefit from meeting with other New Principals and mentors in the program occasionally. Other suggestions included implementing the program prior to the start of the school year because that is the most stressful time – for example, holding a workshop in July to help principals prepare.