

TITLE 23: EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES  
SUBTITLE A: EDUCATION  
CHAPTER I: STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SUBCHAPTER b: PERSONNEL

PART 35  
MENTORING PROGRAM FOR NEW PRINCIPALS

Section

35.10	Purpose and Applicability
35.20	Annual Program Planning; Fiscal Provisions
35.30	Requirements of the Program
35.40	Eligibility of Mentors
35.50	Training for Mentors
35.60	Approval and Role of Providers
35.70	Alternate Arrangements

AUTHORITY: Implementing and authorized by Section 2-3.53a of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a].

SOURCE: Emergency rules adopted at 31 Ill. Reg. 7160, effective April 25, 2007, for a maximum of 150 days; adopted at 31 Ill. Reg. 14038, effective September 20, 2007.

**Section 35.10 Purpose and Applicability**

This Part establishes requirements for the selection and training of experienced principals to serve as mentors for new principals and for new principals' participation in the mentoring program designed for them, as required by Section 2-3.53a of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a]. The provisions of this Part shall apply to each Illinois school district, other than a school district organized under Article 34 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/Art. 34], and to each first-year principal in an affected school district, except as otherwise provided by Section 2-3.53a(f) of the School Code.

**Section 35.20 Annual Program Planning; Fiscal Provisions**

- a) No later than May 1 of each year, each district superintendent shall report to the State Superintendent of Education, or to the State Superintendent's designee, the number of first-year principals who are expected to be working in the district in the coming school year and required to participate in the mentoring program. No later than June 30, each district superintendent shall update this information with the names, administrative certificate numbers, and assigned schools of the individuals chosen.
- b) Based on the number of first-year principals expected statewide and the level of available funding foreseen, the State Superintendent shall determine whether the appropriation is likely to be sufficient to require operation of the mentoring program in the coming year. This calculation shall be based on a cost figure of \$2,000 for each first-year principal in the program plus the cost of delivering the required training, coordinating the mentors' assignments, and providing the other necessary structure and support for the program. The program shall be implemented in a given year only if sufficient funds are available based on these cost factors.
- c) As soon as possible after the level of the appropriation for a given year has been established, the State Superintendent shall notify the affected districts and the training entities approved under Section 35.60 of this Part regarding whether the program will operate in the coming year.
- d) No later than June 15 prior to a school year during which the program will be in operation, each experienced principal who intends to serve as a mentor shall notify the State Superintendent or designee of his or her availability, supply the required documentation of eligibility (see Section 35.40 of this Part), and, if employed in a school or in a regional office of education, provide verification in a format specified by the State Superintendent of supervisory approval for his or her participation. The State Superintendent or designee shall:
  - 1) publicize the list of approved training entities so that individuals who need to complete the required training can do so and be included in the pool of available mentors; and
  - 2) make the list of those who have expressed intent available to the approved training entities so that these individuals can be given priority in admission to the required training over others who may wish to complete the training simply for its value as professional development.

- e) When verification is received in accordance with the requirements of Section 35.30(h) of this Part that a mentor has provided the service required under this Part, the State Superintendent of Education or designee shall make a payment in the amount of \$2,000 to the approved provider that facilitated the mentoring relationship for disbursement to the mentor.

**Section 35.30 Requirements of the Program**

Each new principal shall complete a mentoring program that complies with the requirements of this Section, provided that there is a sufficient appropriation for the program applicable to the fiscal year that includes the individual's first school year of service as a principal (see Section 2-3.53a of the School Code and Section 35.20 of this Part).

- a) Mentors who meet the requirements of this Part shall be paired with new principals by entities approved under Section 35.60 of this Part, on the basis of the factors identified in Section 2-3.53a(d) of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a(d)]. Each approved entity shall notify the affected district superintendents of the assignments made, and each affected superintendent shall acknowledge the new principals' obligation to participate in the program.
- b) The role of each mentor shall include:
  - 1) forming a supportive professional relationship with the new principal;
  - 2) assisting the new principal in adjusting to his or her new role and in developing skill as an instructional leader;
  - 3) coaching, observing, and providing feedback to the new principal on aspects of organizational management;
  - 4) helping the new principal identify significant problems and issues that act as barriers to school improvement, as well as meaningful solutions to these; and
  - 5) providing structured opportunities for the new principal's reflection on his or her educational practice.
- c) The mentor and recipient principal shall spend no fewer than 50 contact hours in activities demonstrably involved in the mentoring process, as delineated in subsection (b) of this Section. The mentor and recipient may conduct some or most of their contact using means of telecommunication but shall meet in person at least:
  - 1) near the beginning of the school year, in order to initiate the mentoring relationship;

- 2) near the middle of the school year, in order to complete the survey of progress required by Section 2-3.53a(e) of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a(e)]; and
  - 3) at the conclusion of the school year, in order to complete the verification form and certify completion of the program as required by that Section.
- d) Each mentor and his or her employer, if any, shall be responsible for reaching a mutually agreeable arrangement regarding the mentor's availability for activities that necessarily occur during paid time, such as observing the first-year principal.
  - e) Time spent traveling by the mentor or recipient to meet with the other party shall not be counted as part of the required contact hours. The mentor shall bear the cost of any travel unless otherwise agreed with the mentor's employer.
  - f) Each recipient of mentoring under this Part shall maintain a log of his or her work with the assigned mentor that includes at least the date of each contact, the purpose, and the amount of time spent.
  - g) At the conclusion of the school year, the recipient shall prepare a summary of the mentoring experience, indicating how selected aspects of his or her practice have been affected by the interaction with the assigned mentor.
  - h) The year-end summary shall be included in the verification to be signed by both individuals to signify completion of the program. This document shall be prepared in a format specified by the State Superintendent of Education and shall also be signed by the recipient principal's supervisor and by the mentor's supervisor, if any, to signify completion of the work outlined in the log and the summary. Each mentor shall submit the verification to the provider with which he or she is enrolled, and the provider shall compile for the State Superintendent a list of the mentors who have provided the required services under the program and for whom payment is due.

**Section 35.40 Eligibility of Mentors**

Pursuant to Section 2-3.53a of the School Code, eligibility for service as mentors under this Part shall be limited to individuals who have served as principals in Illinois for at least three years, who have demonstrated success as instructional leaders, and who have completed the training required pursuant to Section 35.50 of this Part.

- a) For purposes of this Part, “at least three years” means no fewer than three full school years, provided that a principal need not have accrued all three years’ service in the same school or district.
- b) For purposes of this Part, an experienced principal shall be considered to have demonstrated success as an instructional leader if he or she holds an Illinois administrative certificate and submits to the State Superintendent of Education or designee three letters of professional reference in accordance with this subsection (b).
  - 1) Each principal shall submit one letter from a certified staff member who is not an administrator and has served for at least one full school year under the principal’s supervision.
  - 2) Each principal shall submit one letter from another principal who has knowledge of the individual’s work.
  - 3) Each principal shall submit one letter from a district superintendent or assistant superintendent under whose supervision the principal has served for at least one full school year, or from a regional superintendent who has knowledge of the principal’s work.
  - 4) Each required letter of reference shall include:
    - A) the nature of the working relationship between the letter-writer and the principal in question;
    - B) the letter-writer’s reasons for believing that the principal in question is of ethical character and possesses strong interpersonal skills; and
    - C) one or more specific examples of the principal’s accomplishments related to particular aspects of the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards set forth at 23 Ill. Adm. Code 29.100.

- c) No individual shall serve as a mentor if more than five years have elapsed since his or her last date of service as a principal in an Illinois school or service in some other educational capacity that routinely requires interaction with principals and familiarity with the issues and challenges they face. Evidence of the latter type of service shall be a contract, job description, or other document generated by the employing entity.

**Section 35.50 Training for Mentors**

- a) Prior to beginning his or her first assignment as a mentor under this Part, each experienced principal shall be required to complete a standardized training program prescribed by the State Superintendent of Education. This training program shall be made available at no cost to the participating mentors and shall focus on equipping the participants to perform the functions outlined in Section 35.30 of this Part. The training program shall address areas of expertise including, but not limited to:
  - 1) the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards (see 23 Ill. Adm. Code 29.100);
  - 2) ethics;
  - 3) principles of adult learning;
  - 4) establishing a mentoring relationship; and
  - 5) mentoring skills and techniques.
- b) In admitting individuals to the required training, providers shall give first priority to those who intend to be included in the pool of available mentors for the program as described in Section 35.20(d) of this Part. Other individuals may be accommodated if space permits.
- c) Each entity approved under Section 35.60 of this Part shall provide to the State Superintendent or designee a list identifying the individuals who have completed the required training sequence.
- d) Each mentor who intends to continue providing service under this Part shall participate in annual “refresher” training.

**Section 35.60 Approval and Role of Providers**

The State Superintendent of Education shall approve one or more organizations representing Illinois principals, institutions of higher education, community colleges, regional offices of education, school districts, or other educational entities to administer and implement the new principal mentoring program according to the requirements stated in Section 35.30 of this Part, including delivering the training program for mentors that is required under Section 35.50 of this Part.

- a) Any entity seeking approval under this Section shall submit to the State Superintendent an application, in a format prescribed by the State Superintendent, outlining the organization's qualifications for providing professional development to educators, including information specific to the organization's experience with serving potential mentors and recipients of mentoring.
- b) The State Superintendent shall approve as providers one or more entities whose applications:
  - 1) provide evidence of an overall commitment to professionalizing education and school improvement efforts;
  - 2) demonstrate capacity to meet the needs of an identified geographic area or set of districts; and
  - 3) indicate that the applicants have staff or access to other presenters who:
    - A) have been employed in roles requiring mastery of the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards; and
    - B) have experience in providing professional development to educators.
- c) Each approved provider shall, with respect to each mentor who enrolls with that provider:
  - 1) provide the initial training required under Section 35.50 of this Part if the individual has not already completed it;
  - 2) to the extent necessitated by the level of demand, facilitate the individual's assignment to one or more new principals based on the factors set forth in Section 2-3.53a of the School Code;

- 3) provide support and professional resources to the mentor in the course of his or her mentoring relationships;
  - 4) provide quarterly networking sessions to enhance the mentor's skills and provide structured opportunities for problem-solving;
  - 5) guide the mentor in the compilation of information that will contribute to the evaluation of individual mentoring relationships and of the mentoring program as a whole;
  - 6) receive and distribute payments to mentors as delineated in Section 35.20(e) of this Part; and
  - 7) provide annual "refresher" training.
- d) Approval of training entities shall be valid for three years. To request renewal, a provider shall, no later than March 1 of the year of expiration, submit an application in a format specified by the State Superintendent of Education, containing:
- 1) a description of any significant changes in the material submitted as part of its approved application; or
  - 2) a statement that no significant changes have occurred.
- e) A provider's approval shall be renewed if the application conforms to the requirements of subsection (d) of this Section, provided that the State Superintendent has received no evidence of the provider's failure to provide the required services under the program.
- f) The State Superintendent of Education may evaluate any approved provider at any time to ensure the consistent quality of the mentoring program. Upon request by the State Superintendent, a provider shall supply information regarding its activities in conjunction with the mentoring program, which the State Superintendent may monitor at any time. In the event an evaluation indicates that a provider is not furnishing services in keeping with subsection (c) of this Section, the State Superintendent may withdraw approval of the provider.

**Section 35.70 Alternate Arrangements**

In cases where an assigned mentor becomes unavailable after a mentoring assignment has been initiated, the approved training entity that facilitated the mentor's assignment shall be responsible for identifying a replacement to complete the assignment and for determining the appropriate allocation of the payment to the individuals involved.