

October 25, 2023

AMEND BOARD REPORT 21-0428-PO1
PRINCIPAL ELIGIBILITY POLICY

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:

That the Chicago Board of Education (“Board”) amend Board Report 21-0428-PO1 Principal Eligibility Policy.

PURPOSE: The Board wishes to establish and administer a rigorous, structured, and equitable eligibility system to ensure candidates for principalships in District-run Chicago Public Schools (CPS) meet high standards of competency, professionalism and preparation, and embody the qualities and characteristics the District values most in its educational leaders. This Policy is meant to ensure that candidates for a principal’s contract at a CPS school satisfy the eligibility criteria outlined in this Policy and are active members of the CPS Principal Candidate Pool maintained by the Chief Executive Officer or designee unless an enumerated exception applies.

HISTORY: Since 1997, the Board has maintained a policy that provides a system for identifying persons who are eligible for selection as a CPS principal. This policy refines the system for maintaining a pool of candidates for principalship who have been determined to have the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics necessary to be a successful CPS principal. This policy has been used to fill principal vacancies by Local School Councils and the Chief Executive Officer.

POLICY TEXT:

- I. **DEFINITIONS:** For purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:
 - A. “Acting Principal” means an appropriately-licensed individual who the CEO or designee assigns to a principal role on a temporary basis when a contract or interim principal is absent for an extended period of time.
 - B. “Administrator-in-Charge” means an appropriately-licensed, retired principal who the CEO or designee assigns to a principal role on a temporary basis when a principal position is vacant or the contract or interim principal is absent for an extended period of time.
 - C. “Applicant” means a person who is seeking membership in the CPS Principal Candidate Pool.
 - D. “Contract Principal” means a principal who has been awarded a Uniform Principals Contract to a school by a Local School Council.
 - E. “CPS Principal Candidate Pool” or “Pool” means a list of individuals who have been determined under this Policy or the prior policies to be qualified to seek or be selected for a CPS principalship on a contract, interim, or acting basis. The Pool list excludes those individuals ~~whose membership has expired or~~ who have otherwise been removed.
 - F. “District-run schools” are neighborhood, magnet, selective enrollment schools, and ~~alternative~~ options high schools that are managed by the Office of Network Supports. District-run schools are organized into 17 networks, ~~the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL),~~ and Independent Schools Principals (ISP). Charter, and contract, ~~and SAFE~~ schools are not considered District-run schools.

- G. "Incumbent Principal" means a person who is currently serving as the Contract or Interim Principal at a school.
- H. "Interim Principal" means a temporary principal assigned by the CEO or designee to a school for one (1) year, or longer, who exercises all the powers and authority of a contract principal during their interim assignment.
- I. "Leadership position" means an Assistant Principal, Principal, an individual who develops the instructional capacity of others at the Network- or District-level, or an individual who supervises these positions.
- J. "Member" means a person who is in the CPS Principal Candidate Pool, and excludes those individuals whose membership in the Pool has expired or who have been removed from the Pool.

II. POOL MEMBERSHIP:

A. **Membership Application:** Persons seeking membership in the CPS Principal Candidate Pool must apply to the Chief Executive Officer's designee. Membership in the Pool is determined under the following criteria and considerations:

1. Screening and Assessment: The Chief Executive Officer's designee must evaluate applicants using a screening process and assessments measuring requisite competencies.

a) *State and District Requirements:* Applicants must possess and maintain the certifications, endorsements and qualifications required by the Illinois State Board of Education that authorize the applicant to serve as a public-school principal in the State of Illinois. Applicants must also satisfy the Board's employment requirements set out in Board Rule 4-4 and continue to do so during the course of their employment.

b) *Standards of Conduct and Professionalism:* Applicants must satisfy a background screening to determine if they meet the high standard of conduct and professionalism expected of CPS Principals. The background screening will consider employee discipline/misconduct history and criminal and safety background checks conducted by the Office of Safety and Security. The background screening will consider the type, frequency, and circumstances of any history of misconduct, violation, or discipline. As a general principle, conduct or disciplinary history that will exclude applicants from membership includes, but is ~~are~~ not limited to:

- (1) Conduct involving serious criminal behavior (e.g., Class A misdemeanors or greater);
- (2) Conduct involving moral turpitude;
- (3) Conduct involving dishonesty or fraud;
- (4) Conduct reflecting a lack of integrity, ethics; and,
- (5) Conduct endangering the health and safety of those under the applicant's care.

- c) *Performance Standards*: Applicants must obtain a rating of “proficient” or better on their two most recent evaluations to be considered for membership in the Pool. Applicants from outside of the District must submit two years of evaluations from their current or most recent positions. Evaluations submitted from outside of the District must demonstrate the applicant obtained the equivalent of a “proficient” rating in the District on their two most recent performance evaluations. In cases where ratings are not provided yearly, the evaluations must have been obtained within the last four years.
 - d) *Competencies and Experiences*: The Chief Executive Officer’s designee must assess an individual’s readiness to be a principal in the District. This may include a review or a measurement, or both, of an applicants’ ~~accomplishments, experiences, and competencies.~~ accomplishments and experiences explicitly aligned to the district’s school leader competencies, which are identified in the School Leadership Framework. Details on the School Leadership Framework can be found on the CPS website.
2. Exceptions for Incumbent CPS Assistant Principals: A current Assistant Principal who served in the role for at least the last five years and received Practice ratings of proficient or better in the last three years may participate in an abbreviated Screening and Assessment process described in Section II.A.1.d, in order to gain membership in the Pool.
 3. Exceptions for Incumbent CPS Principals, Chiefs of Schools, and Deputy Chiefs of Schools who are Not Current Members of the Pool: Incumbent CPS Principals, Chiefs of Schools, and Deputy Chiefs of Schools are not required to be members of the Pool to continue serving in their current position. Incumbent CPS Principals are also not required to be members of the Pool for renewal of their existing Uniform Principal’s Contract. To qualify for a principalship at a CPS school, other than where they are currently serving as principal, Incumbent Principals, Chiefs of Schools, and Deputy Chiefs of Schools must be a member of the Pool. To become a member of the Pool, Incumbent Principals, Chiefs of Schools, and Deputy Chiefs of Schools must apply under Section II.A.1. Incumbent Principals, Chiefs of Schools, and Deputy Chiefs of Schools applicants are exempt from the requirement in Section II.A.1.d after receiving one year of “proficient” or better Practice ratings.
 4. Exceptions for Principals and Principal Supervisors from Outside the District: A current Principal or Principal Supervisor from outside of the District with at least five years of experience as a Principal or Principal/Principal Supervisor may seek Chief Executive Officer or Chief Education Officer approval for participating in an abbreviated Screening and Assessment process described in Section II.A.1.d, in order to gain membership in the Pool.
 5. Exclusions: The Chief Executive Officer’s designee must exclude from consideration for membership in the Pool applicants who:
 - a) Have provided false, misleading, or inaccurate information on their application or at any time during the Pool’s application process;
 - b) Applied twice for membership in the Pool within 12 months preceding the date of the application under consideration and

were not admitted. These applicants will not be considered for membership for a period of 12 months from the date of their last application;

- c) Are, at the time of their application, subject to a corrective action plan under the Board's policy regarding the performance management and discipline of principals or are otherwise subject to a performance management plan (e.g. performance improvement plan, teacher remediation plan);
- d) Have been dismissed for cause from CPS employment or are otherwise not eligible for CPS employment; or
- e) Under a settlement agreement, have agreed not to pursue a principal position in the District.

B. **Maintaining Membership:** Individuals who are members in the CPS Principal Candidate Pool as of March 23, 2021 and individuals granted new or renewed membership in the Pool after March 23, 2021 maintain their membership status unless subject to Membership Removal as outlined in ~~paragraph~~ Section II.D.

C. **Membership Pause:** The Chief Executive Officer or designee may temporarily pause a membership in the Pool:

1. If a member is currently under investigation for serious misconduct. As a general principle, investigations into conduct that will pause membership include but are not limited to:
 - a) Conduct involving serious criminal behavior (e.g., Class A misdemeanors or greater);
 - b) Conduct involving moral turpitude;
 - c) Conduct involving dishonesty or fraud;
 - d) Conduct reflecting a lack of integrity, ethics; and,
 - e) Conduct endangering the health and safety of those under the member's care.
2. While an Interim or Contract Principal is on a corrective action plan or performance improvement plan.

Members will be notified if their membership is paused and the reason for this action. Notification must be sent to the member's email address, if any, or last known address of record within ~~a reasonable timeframe~~ 10 days of their membership being paused.

During the membership pause, members will not be allowed to apply for Principal positions. If one's membership is paused, the employee will still be able to retain any current position. Members who have their membership paused, may file a grievance in accordance with Section II.E.

D. **Membership Removal:**

1. The Chief Executive Officer's designee must remove individuals from the Pool, who, during their membership:

- a) ~~Are found to no longer possess the certifications, endorsements and qualifications required by the Illinois State Board of Education that authorize the applicant to serve as a public school principal in the State of Illinois; Are found to no longer meet the State and District Requirements in Section II.A.1.a with the following consideration;~~
- ~~(1) Members who no longer possess the State and District Requirements will be reinstated in the Pool if they obtain the required certifications, endorsements, and qualifications within six weeks. During the time that members are working to correct their deficiencies, members will not be allowed to apply for Principal positions.~~
- b) ~~Are found to no longer meet the Board's employment requirements set out in Board Rule 4-4;~~
- c) ~~Are found to no longer meet the high standard of conduct and professionalism expected of CPS Principals. Changes to a member's employee discipline/misconduct history and/or criminal and safety history will prompt a review of membership. The type, frequency, and circumstances of any history of misconduct, violation, or discipline will be considered when making the determination to remove a member from the Pool. As a general principle, conduct or disciplinary history that will remove members from the Pool include but are not limited to: Are found to no longer meet the Standards of Conduct and Professionalism in Section II.A.1.b;~~
- ~~(1) Conduct involving serious criminal behavior (e.g., Class A misdemeanors or greater);~~
 - ~~(2) Conduct involving moral turpitude;~~
 - ~~(3) Conduct involving dishonesty or fraud;~~
 - ~~(4) Conduct reflecting a lack of integrity, ethics; and,~~
 - ~~(5) Conduct endangering the health and safety of those under the member's care.~~
- d) ~~Have not obtained a rating of "proficient" or better on their two most recent evaluations. Evaluations submitted from outside of the District must demonstrate the applicant obtained the equivalent of a "proficient" rating in the District on their two most recent performance evaluations. In cases where ratings are not provided yearly, the evaluations must have been obtained within the last four years. Are found to no longer meet the Performance Standards in Section II.A.1.c The following exceptions apply:~~
- ~~(1) Contract, Interim, and Acting CPS Principals must have their membership removed from the Pool if they receive two Practice ratings of "basic" or equivalent within seven years, or one Practice rating of "unsatisfactory" under the principal evaluation system established under Board Report 13-0123-EX5, as may be amended.~~

(a) Contract CPS Principals may maintain their membership the first time they receive an “unsatisfactory” Practice rating if they receive a “distinguished” performance evaluation from the Local School Council for the same evaluation period.

~~(2)~~ Contract, Interim, and Acting CPS Principals in their first ~~year two years~~ in role ~~or at a new school assignment~~ may maintain membership with a “basic” ~~or equivalent practice Practice~~ rating under the ~~new~~ principal evaluation system established under Board Report 13-0123-EX5, as may be amended. These Principals may maintain membership in their second year in-role ~~or at a new school assignment~~ with a “basic” Practice rating, if the Practice score demonstrates improvement. Principals demonstrate improvement in their Practice ratings if they have:

(a) increased the numerical rating on at least one Competency score; and

(b) maintained the numerical rating on all other Competency scores.

~~(3)~~ CPS Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, and Executive Directors at the Network- or District-level will not be removed from the Pool based on their performance ratings.

e) Are Interim or Contract Principals who either do not successfully complete a corrective action plan or performance improvement plan or leave the District while the plan is pending;

f) Are dismissed for cause from CPS employment;

g) Under a current settlement agreement, have agreed not to pursue a principal position in the District; or

h) Employed in a non-administrative or non-leadership position for more than two of the last five school years.

2. If a member is removed from the Pool, notification of removal and the reason(s) for the removal must be sent to the email address, if any, or last known address of record within ~~a reasonable timeframe~~ 10 days of being removed. Notification does not need to be sent if the individual is no longer eligible for employment in the District or if the individual enters into a settlement agreement whereby they agree to be removed from the Pool.

~~3. The Chief Executive Officer’s designee will provide opportunity for members to submit evidence that they continue to meet qualifications to retain their membership, including a timeline for meeting such requirements. During the time that members are working to correct their deficiencies, members will not be allowed to apply for Principal positions.~~

~~If members do not submit evidence or evidence does not satisfy the deficiency, the member will be removed from the Pool and Members may seek readmission by applying under the requirements in Section II.A.1.~~

4. Incumbent CPS pPrincipals ~~who are working to correct a deficiency~~ or who have been removed from the Pool are not required to become a member of the Pool for renewal of their existing Uniform Principals Contract or to remain the pPrincipal at the same school. Incumbent CPS Principals, whose membership has been removed based on performance evaluations, will have their membership restored when the principal receives a proficient or better Practice rating, provided the Principal meets all other criteria for eligibility in alignment with Section II.A.3.

E. Grievance and Hearing Procedure:

1. The Chief Executive Officer's designee, in cooperation with the organization that represents CPS principals and assistant principals, must establish a grievance and hearing procedure for those candidates deemed ineligible for membership in the Pool, whose membership has been slated for removal, or whose membership has been paused. Protocols and procedures for effective implementation shall be established.
2. Members who have filed a grievance within the established protocols and procedures will maintain their membership in the Pool until the process is over and a determination has been made. Members who are removed from the Pool may seek readmission only by applying under the requirements in Section II.A.1.
3. If a member who has filed a grievance applies for a Principal position, LSCs will be notified of any pending grievance.

F. Pool Audits and Membership Reviews:

1. Pool Audits: The Chief Executive Officer's designee must conduct audits of membership.
 - a) Membership will be removed for those who no longer meet the following qualifications:
 - (1) Are found to no longer meet the State and District Requirements in Section II.A.1.a;
 - (2) Are found to no longer meet the Standards of Conduct and Professionalism in Section II.A.1.b;
 - (3) Are found to no longer meet the Performance Standards in Section II.A.1.c; or
 - (4) Are employed in a non-administrative or non-leadership position for more than two of the last five school years.
 - b) The audit will not include individuals in a CPS Principal role at the time of audit.
 - c) After the adoption of this policy, a full audit of all members will be conducted. Thereafter subsequent audits will be conducted in three-year increments from the time of the member's Pool admission.
 - d) If a member is removed from the Pool, notification of removal and the reason(s) for the removal must be sent to the email address, if any, or last known address of record within a reasonable timeframe 10 days of being removed.

e) The Chief Executive Officer's designee will provide opportunity for members to submit evidence that they continue to meet qualifications to retain their membership, including a timeline for meeting such requirements. During the time that members are working to correct their deficiencies, members will not be allowed to apply for Principal positions. If members do not submit evidence or evidence does not satisfy the deficiency, the member will be removed from the Pool and may seek readmission only by applying under the requirements in Section II.A.1.

2. Membership Reviews: The Chief Executive Officer's designee may conduct periodic reviews of Incumbent CPS Principals, Chiefs of Schools, and Deputy Chiefs of Schools who are not currently members of the Pool to determine if these individuals qualify for an exception to Section II.A.1.d. Incumbent CPS Principals, Chiefs of Schools, and Deputy Chiefs of Schools who qualify for an exception must be granted membership in the Pool.

If an individual is granted membership in the Pool, notification must be sent to their District email address.

G. Guidelines and Uniform Standards: The Chief Executive Officer's designee must establish uniform written standards to ensure that members in the Pool satisfy, and continue to satisfy, high measures of competency, professionalism, and preparation and embody the qualities and characteristics needed to serve as an effective educational leader. The Chief Executive Officer's designee must establish guidelines for the effective implementation of this policy and related standards, as well as monitor for equitable practices.

III. PRINCIPAL SELECTION AND COVERAGE:

A. Contract and Interim Principals: The Local School Council, the Chief Executive Officer, and the Board must only select individuals who are members of the Pool to serve as a contract or interim principal, subject to the following exception:

Incumbent CPS principals who are not members of the Pool are not required to become a member of the Pool for renewal of their existing Uniform Principals Contract or to remain principal at the same school.

B. Acting Principals and Administrators-in-Charge: The Chief Executive Officer must appoint select individuals who are members of the Pool to serve as an Acting Principal or administrator-in-charge, subject to the following exception:

The Chief Executive Officer or designee may assign a licensed administrator to serve as a school's acting principal or administrator-in-charge regardless of their membership in the Pool, if the licensed administrator has a proven record of performance based on the high standards established by the Chief Executive Officer or designee and they demonstrate their ability to serve the particular needs of the school to which they will be assigned.

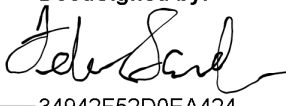
IV. OFFICE OF NETWORK SUPPORT RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. The Office of Network Support must establish and manage an objective, fair, and rigorous process to evaluate applicants to the Pool and to evaluate current members' eligibility to continue their membership in the Pool. The Office of Network Support must include provisions to ensure that no person is discriminated against on the basis of conscious or implicit biases associated with race, color, national origin, or a disability that is unrelated to the person's ability to perform the duties of a principal.

- ~~B.~~ Within ~~one month from the date of an application decision,~~ 10 days of being deemed ineligible, an applicant is entitled to, ~~upon request, evidence-based feedback on their application for membership in the Pool,~~ a written, competency-aligned score report and evidence-based rationale related to the scoring criteria for each competency area as well as remediation goals and other supportive services to assist in correcting any deficiencies.
- C. The Office of Network Support must share membership status of all persons applying for a contract principal position to the school's Local School Council.
- D. The Office of Network Support must maintain a public database that includes the names of all members of the Pool who do not choose to opt out of the database. The database must be updated within 10 days of the end of each quarter. The Office of Network Support must also provide members at least 30 days' notice of their ability to be included in the database.
- ~~D-E.~~ The Office of Network Support may establish all necessary protocols and procedures for the effective implementation of this Policy.
- V. **MONITORING AND REPORTING:** The District is committed to increasing diversity in the Pool. The CEO or designee will provide an annual report ~~at the end of each~~ by September 30th following the end of the fiscal year to the Board that includes (disaggregated by race, gender, and other demographic subgroups):

 - A. Number of applications received;
 - B. Number of applications completed;
 - C. Number of applicants who became eligible in the pool;
 - D. Number of applicants who became principals in CPS schools;
 - E. Number who lost eligibility and any other relevant data.

Approved for Consideration:


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Felicia Sanders
Chief of Schools

Approved:

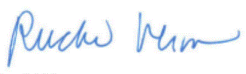
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