

Choosing Your Next Educational Leader

A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by:

- Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
- Advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional development.
- Ensuring management of the organization, operations and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.
- Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- Acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.
- Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.

The Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL)

School Administrators of Iowa
12199 Stratford Drive
Clive, IA 50325-8146



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Your
Next**



**Building
Principal**



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The mission of the School Administrators of Iowa is to support, encourage, and develop Iowa's educational leaders and learners.

Hiring a new principal is the first vital link in creating a successful learning environment for both your staff and your student body. Here are some important points to remember during the hiring process.

Developing Hiring Criteria

Managerial skills should be considered entry-level prerequisites, not the total picture of what you're looking for.

Choose people to interview who are:

- Knowledgeable about student behavior strategies
- Skilled in budgeting and school building management
- Knowledgeable about the legal requirements of the principalship
- Effective in communicating with a variety of audiences
- Lifelong learners
- Personally and professionally ethical

To promote student success, your principal must be highly versed in:

- Accountability systems designed to improve achievement for all students
- Effective professional development strategies that help staff learn and grow
- Equity issues and ways to close the achievement gap
- Ways to engage others in a vision for school improvement and implementing improvement plans
- Coaching and evaluating staff to high levels of performance

- Facilitating group decision-making opportunities
- Involving parents and other patrons in providing opportunities for all students to achieve

Tips for Conducting Powerful Interviews

- Focus on having the candidate provide concrete examples of how he or she has excelled at the priorities you've listed in your hiring criteria.
- Upon request, SAI has a list of sample principal interview questions and a selection process to use as a guide.
- Keep the goals in your comprehensive school improvement plan and the buildings initiatives in mind as you go through the interview process. Ask the candidates about their abilities and experiences in providing continuity to your goals.
- Get multiple perspectives on your candidates. Use several interview teams composed of a cross section of interest groups. Don't ask the teams to rank the candidates. Instead, ask them to provide feedback about each candidate's strengths and concerns.
- Adhere to all the parameters of what is legal and not legal to ask in an interview. Do not discriminate against candidates on the basis of age, race, gender, ethnicity, disability or marital status.
- Look for someone who will do what is best for all kids, not who is best at interviewing.

Resources that can help

School Administrators of Iowa (SAI) has developed a model principal evaluation process that is available on our Web site, www.sai-iowa.org. This resource provides helpful information that can be used in your principal search. It contains:

- A list of sample indicators that can be used as a guide for many of your interview questions.
- A sample job description for a principal.
- Sample job targets that can give you specific examples of typical principal goals.
- Examples of principal portfolios

Research shows student achievement is significantly tied to school leadership. For resources and research that gives specifics you can access the following:

- *MCREL's* Balanced Leadership: What 30 years of Research Tells Us about the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement www.mcrel.org/topics
- *NAESP's* Leading Learning Communities www.naesp.org
- *NASSP's* Breaking Ranks II publication pg. 196-200
- *The Wallace Foundation's* How Leadership Influences Student Learning www.wallacefoundation.org/leadership

If we can provide any assistance please contact us at SAI 515-267-1115.