

Framework and Guidelines for Principal Preparation Programs



Inspiring productive, fulfilled, life-long learners

THE FRAMEWORK FOR PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAM GUIDELINES
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Framework and Guidelines for Principal Preparation Programs

Purpose

Of all the educational research conducted over the last 30 years in the search to improve student achievement in America’s schools, the most conclusive finding has been the imperative to put a highly qualified and effective teacher in every classroom. This single conclusion has rallied action at all levels and significant progress has been achieved across the country. Immediately on the heels of this finding came another, one with a similar logic and reasoned argument, one carrying the same level of imperative: school leaders are also critical to the success of schools and the educational system. The need for “instructional leadership” in addition to effective management practice is essential for student success at both the school and district levels. This Framework and Guidelines for Principal Preparation Programs is designed to establish highly effective preparation programs within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to meet the increasing need for highly qualified instructional leaders in our schools and educational systems.

Program Standards

There are considerable efforts underway nationally to improve the skills of school leaders and the professional programs that prepare and develop them. Universities, colleges, school districts and non-profit organizations across the nation have developed educational leadership programs. Unfortunately, very few of these have demonstrated a direct effect on increased student achievement. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that there are commonalities in the leadership programs that have correlated program design to higher student outcomes, some promising practices worthy of incorporation into a cohesive set of principles. These practices are presented below along with programmatic guidelines. It is expected that principal preparation programs will incorporate these promising practices into their program design.

Best Practice	Evidence
Clearly articulated standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide evidence that the program’s goals and objectives, curriculum, instruction and assessment are explicitly aligned with the PA Core and Corollary Leadership Standards.
Leadership clearly focused on student achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See Guidelines for Core and Corollary Standards.
Focus on school improvement and the role of the Principal as an agent of school reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide evidence that candidates demonstrate knowledge and abilities to carry out this role.
Formal, operational partnership with one or more school districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a document signed by both parties defining the parameters of the partnerships with each school district; e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describe how school district partner(s) are involved in the candidate screening process. ○ Identify formal levels of involvement, customized to meet the needs of the PK-12 community. ○ Clearly define expectations/outcomes relative to individual needs of the higher education institution, the school district, and the candidate.

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Best Practice	Evidence
Extensive field-based work with well-guided internship requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe how the college or university selected the field-based experiences in collaboration with school district partners. ▪ Describe how the field-based experiences are part of a cohesive program to prepare PA's school and district leaders. ▪ Describe how the quality, appropriateness and relevance of each field experience are assessed. ▪ Describe how mentors are selected for the field experience/internship. ▪ Identify requirements for mentors and supervisors. ▪ Show how project required of candidate has the potential for substantial improvement in teaching and learning in the school district.
Coherently sequenced, comprehensive curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide rationale for sequence. ▪ Provide evidence that curriculum addresses the standards.
Uses problem-based learning to connect theory and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide authentic engagement in problems of practice throughout the program. ▪ Provide examples of authentic assessments that ensure a candidate's competency in applying theory in practice. ▪ Describe the strong linkages between content and methods and how this enables candidates to understand and practice what they are learning.
Blended faculty of academics and practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See Faculty Qualifications guidelines. ▪ Describe how the college/university selects, trains, supports and assesses cooperating administrators and supervisors ▪ Provide evidence of regular review to ensure qualifications are current. ▪ Provide evidence that program is administered effectively
Careful selection of highly qualified, promising participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate that admission criteria includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recommendations from partner school districts ○ Portfolio ○ Essay of how principals shape learning in their schools ○ Problem based learning activity (given at orientation session) ○ Compliance with state requirements (experience) ○ Evidence of leadership potential (other leadership roles) ○ Ability to give an oral presentation ○ Educational philosophy ○ Assessment of candidate potential from outside the education department
Emphasis on the principal's role as an instructional leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See Guidelines for Core and Corollary Standards.
Includes an internship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimum of 360 hours of participation. ▪ Minimum of 180 hours must be completed while the school is in session. ▪ Completion of identified role expectations and competencies.

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PA Leadership Standards

Core Standards

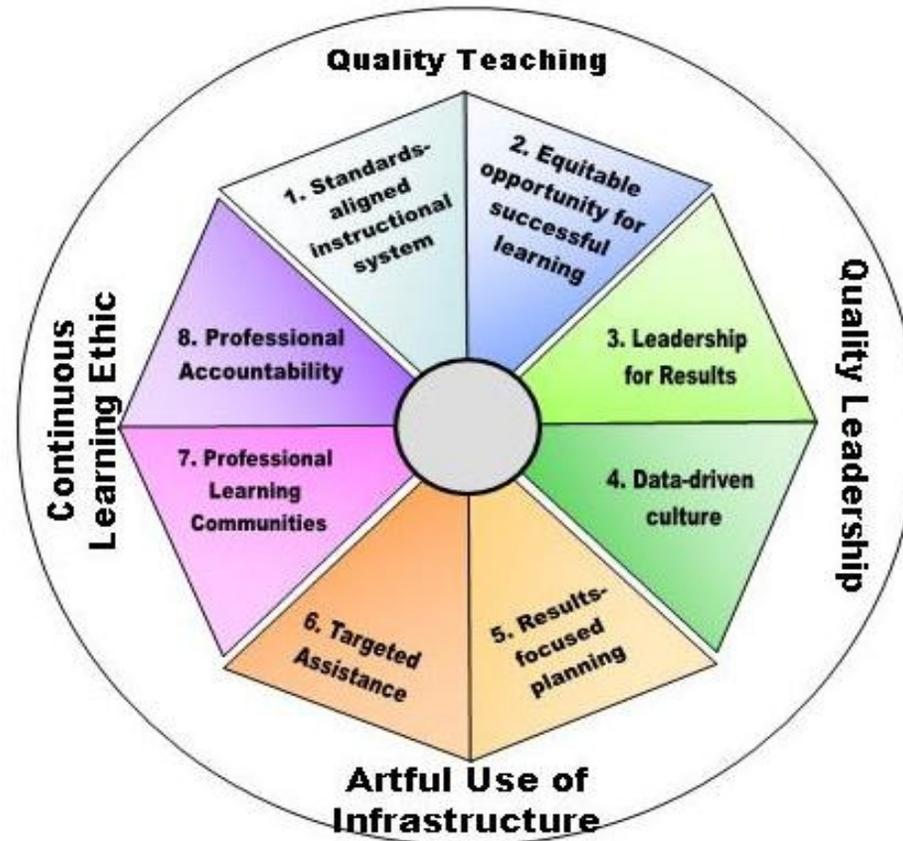
- I. Knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically creating an organizational vision around personalized student success.
- II. An understanding of standards-based systems theory and design and the ability to transfer that knowledge to the leader's job as an architect of standards based reform in the school.
- III. The ability to access and use appropriate data to inform decision-making at all levels of the system.

Corollary Standards

- I. Creating a culture of teaching and learning with an emphasis on learning.
- II. Managing resources for effective results.
- III. Collaborating, communicating, engaging and empowering others inside and outside the organization to pursue excellence in learning.
- IV. Operating in a fair and equitable manner with personal and professional integrity.
- V. Advocating for children and public education in the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.
- VI. Supporting professional growth of self and others through practice and inquiry.

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As demonstrated in the graphic below, the context for the preparation of school and system leaders is an aligned education system for improved student achievement. The PA Leadership Standards focus preparation and continuing professional education on the key elements of that system. Quality leadership and a continuous learning ethic are the pillars that support a successful education system. Approved preparation programs will be designed to help leaders develop the knowledge and understanding required to create and continuously improve standards-aligned instructional systems, equitable learning opportunities, leadership for results, data-driven cultures, results-focused planning, targeted assistance, professional learning communities and professional accountability.



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Candidate Competencies (Principal Preparation Programs)

Candidate assessment includes performance based ongoing projects designed to measure and document knowledge, skills and dispositions. Required assessments should span multiple standards and efficiently document completion of requirements using a portfolio. Rubrics and explicit criteria differentiating levels of performance are required to assess quality of candidate knowledge, skills and disposition. Five common assessment activities are presented below. The Department of Education recommends that the following five (5) performance-based assessment vehicles be used to assess and document candidates' successful attainment of knowledge, skills and competencies found in the core and corollary standards. These five (5) vehicles are cross-referenced in the Evidence/Measure column on the Standards charts presented in the following pages. If alternative assessments are used, their efficacy and relevance must be demonstrated by the institution.

Evidence/Measurement Processes

1. Action-based research project designed to improve student achievement
 - Design of a standards based instructional systems model
 - Design of a performance-based teacher evaluation system
2. Development and implementation of a curriculum project focused on improving student achievement
 - Integrate federal, state and district requirements and policies
 - Include scheduling, budgeting
3. Tools project (application of current tools endorsed by and made available by PDE)
 - Focus on student achievement
 - Use of tools (current tools provided by PDE)
 - Link to classroom practice
4. Multiple measures of data project focusing on student achievement
 - Integrate other measures beyond the student test data
 - Link to improved or enhanced student achievement
 - Link to school reform
5. Case study focusing on improving student achievement
 - Choose a school district; research all relevant information about the district; identify strengths and weaknesses of school district; then present a 5-year plan to improve the student achievement in that district.
 - Research district strategic plan focusing on ways to increase student achievement.
 - Include a plan for collaborating, communicating, and engaging others inside and outside the organization to improve student achievement.

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CORE STANDARD ONE: *the leader has knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically, creating an organizational vision around personalized student success.*

[Major concepts: Challenges, change, strategic thinking, vision and mission]

	Knowledge and Understanding	Competence	Performance/Demonstration	Evidence/Measure
A	Understands major challenges that schools face as they enable students to reach high standards to be successful adults in the new world economy.	Able to research the curriculum, learning and skill needs for students in the changing world and incorporate findings into school vision.	Develops an action plan that describes the challenges schools face and how these challenges are being met.	1/2
B	Understands how to lead and motivate a school or district in creating a vision and strategic plan focused on higher student achievement.	Able to lead the development of a consensus vision and strategies that are focused on student achievement	Vision and strategy reflect the social and economic forces that are shaping new educational environments.	3
C	Understands the process of change in order to improve student achievement.	Able to plan and execute a change process designed to improve student learning.	Analyze a change that occurred in a school district, review the actions taken, identify strengths and weaknesses of the plan, and recommend steps to improve the plan.	4/5
D	Understands the concepts of vision, mission, and strategy.	Able to clearly define and incorporate vision, mission and strategies into improvement efforts.	Plan and implement an improvement initiative that is consistent with district vision and mission.	2/5
E	Understands the conceptual framework for thinking strategically.	Able to analyze the economic, social, and political context of a school to determine strategic framework for planning.	Analyze school context and how that context should impact on strategic plans.	1/2/4/5

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CORE STANDARD TWO: *The leader is grounded in standards-based systems theory and design and is able to transfer knowledge to his/her job as an architect of standards-based reform in the school.*

[Major concepts: Standards-aligned systems, federal & state guidelines, theory, design, architect]

	Knowledge and Understanding	Competence	Performance/Demonstration	Evidence/Measure
A	Understands historical and contemporary issues in the development of national, state and local PK-12 academic standards.	Able to interpret external effects related to local academic standards	Analyze local standards in relation to national, state and district issues.	2/4/5
B	Understands current Federal, state and district standards and requirements for demonstrating and reporting student performance data.	Able to accurately report student performance data	Analyze and report student performance results.	2/5
C	Understands standards-based systems theory and design, including the elements of a standards-based school system, which are aligned and focused on strong results for students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear standards (content vs. performance) • Fair assessments (formative and summative) • Curriculum and instruction • Resources & materials for instruction 	Able to describe how each element of the standards-based education system relates to the other elements	Create a strategic plan to address curriculum alignment, school organization, teacher assignments, and class scheduling.	1/2/5
D	Understands the implications of communicating assessment results to students, teachers, parents, government and the community-at-large.	Able to effectively communicate assessment results to various audiences	Analyze and report student performance results.	2/4
E	Understands current research and strategies on school reform and	Able to apply research-based information and strategies	Plan and implement an improvement initiative consistent	1/2/5

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	school design models.		with district vision and mission.	
F	Understands the importance of a coherent curriculum and effective instruction as key strategies for improving student performance.	Able to adjust curriculum and instruction strategies to improve student performance	Plan and implement an improvement initiative that is consistent with district vision and mission.	1/2/5

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CORE STANDARD THREE: *The leader knows how to access and use appropriate data to inform decision-making at all levels of the system.*

[Major concepts: Technology & tools, multiple measures of data, interpretation, use of data]

	Knowledge and Understanding	Competence	Performance/Demonstration	Evidence/ Measure
A	Understands the critical role of data in informing decisions, setting targets, and interpreting results for learning.	Able to use data to inform decision making.	Analyze and use student performance results to inform planning decisions.	1/2/4
B	Understands available technologies that can be used to gather and maintain data systems.	Able to effectively apply technologies to access and use data.	Access data using various technologies and compile reports.	1/2/4
C	Understands how to access data needed to address the long-term and strategic planning needs of the school in the areas of personnel, fiscal operations, facilities, technology and other leadership initiatives.	Able to make data informed decisions to make long-term, strategic decisions.	Create a strategic plan to address curriculum alignment, school organization, teacher assignments, and class scheduling.	1/2/4
D	Understands how student achievement data are used in decisions on curriculum and instruction and how to access data from national, state and local sources.	Able to access and use student achievement data to inform curriculum and instruction decisions.	Analyze and use student performance results to inform planning decisions.	1/2/4
E	Understands how to use data from many sources reported in multiple formats to improve student achievement. Examples of various data categories would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ demographics ▪ student achievement and learning ▪ school processes ▪ perceptions 	Able to report on the use of multiple measures of data, discuss implications for student achievement; and make recommendations for changes in classroom practices and/or curricular changes, and/or a school professional development plan.	Analyze and use multiple measures to inform planning decisions.	1/2/4

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COROLLARY STANDARD ONE: *The leader creates a culture of teaching and learning with an emphasis on learning.*

[Major concepts: Research, leadership for learning]

	Knowledge and Understanding	Competence	Performance/Demonstration	Evidence/ Measure
A	Understands current research in teaching and learning.	Able to model for others in order to create a culture that is conducive to successful teaching and learning.	Shares research findings with teachers in order to help them understand the connection to student learning and effective instructional practices.	1/2/5
B	Understands the importance of taking responsibility as lead learner in his/her school environment	Able to model the attributes of a continuous learner and the expectation for others.	Creates learning communities	1/5
C	Understand the culture for learning that includes and engages families to be involved in the learning process	Able to engage families in a learning culture.	Designs learning experiences and opportunities for family involvement.	1/2/5
D	Understands how to develop teacher leaders	Able to develop leadership skills in teachers.	Identifies and supports emerging leaders.	1/2/5

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COROLLARY STANDARD TWO: *The leader manages resources for effective results.*

[Major concepts: Results-based fiscal planning, human resource management]

	Knowledge and Understanding	Competence	Performance/Demonstration	Evidence/Measure
A	Understands wide variety of resources available (time, space, facilities, financial, human, organizational, both internal/external) and how to make informed decisions using appropriate analyses (e.g., cost-benefit)	Able to effectively employ available resources to maximize benefits.	Demonstrates that spending decisions are aligned with the vision, mission and goals of the strategic plan.	1/2/3/5
B	Knows how to create a well-organized, effective, and safe learning environment linked to strategic plan and research based practice	Able to plan and implement an effective learning environment.	Fosters school environment where teachers, students and others feel physically and psychologically safe, and expectations for student behavior are clearly communicated and regularly reinforced.	1/2/3
C	Knows how to assess, hire, assign, support and retain highly qualified and effective staff consistent with district strategic plan, core beliefs, and research based practice	Able to assemble and maintain an effective staffing plan.	Creates systemic supports and assigns teachers and other staff to maximize student learning and creates systemic supports for alignment.	1/2/3

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COROLLARY STANDARD THREE: *The leader collaborates, communicates, engages, and empowers others inside and outside of the organization to pursue excellence in learning.*

[Major concepts: Organizational development; communication skills]

	Knowledge and Understanding	Competence	Performance/Demonstration	Evidence/Measure
A	Understands and accepts the role of the leader in creating and maintaining an effective learning culture.	Able to engage stakeholders in effective improvement efforts	Identifies and nurtures relationships to enhance organizational culture.	1/2/5
B	Knows how to effectively communicate including writing, speaking, listening and possesses cultural literacy to communicate across groups	Able to communicate effectively with all stakeholders	Provides examples of clear, concise communication.	1/2
C	Understands empowerment and how the formal and informal governance structures relate to satisfaction, performance, and engagement	Able to effectively engage stakeholders in the school governance process.	Documents varied involvement in policy or procedure design, review and implementation.	1/2/5

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COROLLARY STANDARD FOUR: *The leader operates in a fair and equitable manner with personal and professional integrity.*

[Major concepts: Professional ethics, diverse populations]

	Knowledge and Understanding	Competence	Performance/Demonstration	Evidence/Measure
A	Understands the power and importance of modeling and demonstrating trustworthiness and integrity in all decisions and actions.	Able to display impartial and reasoned judgment in all decisions and actions.	Models high ethical standards in all decision-making processes, and follows through on commitments to words, values, beliefs, and organizational mission.	1/2
B	Knows code of conduct for his/her position	Able to display high quality personal and professional ethics at all times	Demonstrates integrity in his/her behavior.	1/2/5
C	Understands, and respects diverse student and staff populations and the impact on individuals, school and community	Able to embrace and utilize diversity to improve performance and learning	Designs student-centered learning environments to meet diverse student needs.	1/2/3/4/5

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COROLLARY STANDARD FIVE: *The leader advocates for children and public education in the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.*

[Major concepts: Advocacy for children, function of schools in a democratic society]

	Knowledge and Understanding	Competence	Performance/Demonstration	Evidence/Measure
A	Knows how to promote success of students by working within laws, policies, and regulations	Able to accurately interpret and apply laws, policies and regulations to promote the success of students	Provides written and oral description of influential actions	1/2/3/5
B	Understands how to communicate with and educate all decision makers inside and outside the school community in order to operate schools on behalf of students and families	Able to engage governmental and political leaders to effectively help resolve school issues.	Identifies key stakeholders, explains how they are important to achieving the vision of the school community, and describes in detail how each group is benefiting student progress	1/2/5
C	Advocates for all students	Able to promote a continuous focus on children and their learning	Insists on high expectations for all students by building the capacity for each child via the appropriate time and support.	1/2/3/4/5

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COROLLARY STANDARD SIX: *The leader supports professional growth of self and others through practice and inquiry.*

[Major concepts: Professional development, learning organizations]

	Knowledge and Understanding	Competence	Performance/Demonstration	Evidence/ Measure
A	Understands the process of aligning professional development activities with student performance goals.	Able to construct staff development activities to address student performance results.	Designs differentiated professional development options that are related to educational goals.	1/2/5
B	Understands the importance of continuous learning within the context of a learning organization	Able to engage staff and Board members in relevant professional development activities	Describes a systematic approach that he/she will use to become the lead learner including specific strategies and activities that have the power to ensure that the organization is a learning organization.	1/2/5
C	Understands the importance of motivating, mentoring and modeling to improve professional practice.	Able to generate professional growth plans based on district vision, goals, and individual professional learning needs.	Identifies and provides research-based books and articles and participates in high quality professional development to inform practice.	1/2

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Special Education Competencies for School Leaders

Principal Preparation Programs should include the following competencies as well as the knowledge, skills, and demonstration in supervising and evaluating these competencies in others.

Over-Representation of Diverse Students in Special Education

Candidates will be able to:

- Identify factors contributing to the over-representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in programs for individuals with disabilities and implement strategies for reduction of the over-representation.
- Demonstrate an understanding of over-representation of minorities in special education so as to not misinterpret behaviors that represent cultural, linguistic differences as indicative of learning problems.
- Demonstrate ability to interact and meet effectively with families.
- Distinguish between the culture of the family and the economic situation of the family and how poverty affects families.
- Identify how the family's culture and values affects how they view disabilities.
- Celebrate heritages and cultures and link directly to learning.
- Incorporate stories and resources from many cultural and ethnic traditions.
- Build on students' strengths when teaching literacy skills to language minority students.
- Directly use best, evidenced-based practices for teaching students from diverse backgrounds.
- Implement processes that successfully prevent inappropriate placement and ensure that the opportunities for educational achievement to minority students equal those offered to the majority group.

Prevention and Early Intervening

Candidates will be able to:

- Connect general education curriculum, compensatory and special education in providing high quality standards-based instruction/intervention that is matched to students' academic, social emotional and behavioral needs.
- Demonstrate high-quality instruction for all students, through scientific research and evidence-based practice to produce high rates of learning for all students.
- Implement universal screening of all students with periodic monitoring of students' progress in the curriculum
- Provide interventions for struggling learners provided at increasing levels of intensity and matched to individual student need.
- Implement an integrated system of assessment and data collection for identification of students struggling to meet academic and behavioral expectations.
- Monitor students' learning rates and levels of performance and use that information in ongoing problem solving and decision making.
- Determine which students need additional help regarding the intensity and likely duration of interventions, based on each student's response to instruction across multiple tiers of intervention.

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- Participate in school wide approaches to intervention and effective instruction.
- Demonstrate evidenced-based practices for use in both the special and regular education settings in the school.

Effective Instructional Strategies for Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings

Candidates will be able to:

- Identify effective instructional strategies to address areas of need.
- Scaffold instruction to maximize instructional access to all students.
- Monitor student progress to provide mediated scaffolding and increase academic rigor when appropriate.
- Provide feedback to students at all levels to increase awareness in areas of strength, as well as areas of concern.
- Strategically align standard based curriculum with effective instructional practices.
- Identify and implement instructional adaptations based on evidence-based practices (demonstrated to be effective with students with disabilities) to provide curriculum content in a variety of ways without compromising curriculum intent.
- Analyze performance of all learners and make appropriate modifications.
- Design and implement programs that reflect knowledge, awareness and responsiveness to diverse needs of students with disabilities.
- Use research supported methods for academic and non-academic instruction for students with disabilities.
- Develop and implement universally designed instruction.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the range and the appropriate use of assistive technology (i.e., no tech, low tech, high tech).
- Demonstrate efficient differentiated instruction and an understanding of efficient planning, coordination, and delivery for effective instruction required for inclusive settings.

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Program Delivery

The Department of Education believes that Principal Preparation Programs should be comprehensive and delivered through a combination of university classroom and school settings. While some online courses may be a component of the program, programs that are delivered completely online will not be approved.

Curriculum, Instructional Strategies and Interventions

Program review guidelines will require evidence that the courses offered in the Principal Preparation Program cover all the required knowledge, skills and dispositions of principals. Institutions will be asked to provide course descriptions and syllabi that detail how each standard is addressed.

Table 1: Alignment with Standards

Using the follow table format, demonstrate how each of the standards is substantially addressed through the required coursework and field experiences.

Table 1. Alignment of Courses with Standards

Course Number	Course Title	Core Std I	Core Std II	Core Std III	Cor. Std I	Cor. Std II	Cor. Std. III	Cor. Std. IV	Cor. Std. V	Cor. Std. VI
1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.										

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Faculty Qualifications

Research documents that teaching matters and that teachers are the most important reason why students learn important knowledge and skills; this holds true for leader preparation programs, as well.

- Describe the procedures used to document that faculty are qualified for their assignments, that is they have relevant degrees, certificates and/or teaching experiences, they are current with their content knowledge and pedagogical practices, knowledgeable about relevant instructional materials, can apply appropriate and multiple assessment techniques, are familiar with different intervention strategies that can be employed to help students and are proficient in the use and integration of instructional technology;
- Complete Table 2 to provide faculty information: leadership experiences certifications held; number who are full time; and number who are adjunct.

Table2: Faculty Qualifications and Experiences

Name	Degrees Held & Year Earned	Administrator/ Leadership Experience			Certification Held		Faculty	
		Yes (✓)	# of Years	No	Yes	No	Full Time	Part Time
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								
7.								
8.								
9.								
10.								
11.								
12.								
13.								
14.								

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Field Experiences

The field experience is the primary vehicle toward delivering the ideal “job-embedded” learning experience. Because the school lifecycle is experienced over the course of 12 months, describe how the program will require candidates to successfully experience a full year (12 month) field experience of a minimum of 360 hours that is faculty supervised and principal mentored.

Table 3: Field Experience

Course Number (from Table 1)	Number of Credits	Relevant Standard(s)	Faculty		Field Experience		
			Names of Faculty/ instructors with Relevant Administrator Experience	Names of Faculty/ instructors without Relevant Administrator Experience	Yes (✓)	Name of Field Experience or Clinical Site	Cooperative

Assessment

Describe how the Principal Preparation Program will assess student knowledge, skills and dispositions. How will the program assess the student learning outcomes and provide evidence of each candidate’s readiness to assume the professional role of Principal. Submit one copy of the assessment instruments and describe (a) how mentors/supervisors are trained to use the instrument(s), and (b) how the program uses findings to help the candidates, and to improve the program itself.

New Principal Support

Describe how each successful candidate in your Principal Preparation Program will be oriented to the Act 48 of 1999 and Act 45 of 2007 continuing education requirements and enrolled into approved professional development programs that address the nine PA leadership standards defined in Section 1217 of the PA Public School Code (the current PIL standards).

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