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Teacher Retention: Principal Effectiveness

Principal Minimum Salaries			
Principal Position	Responsibility Factor	FY22 Minimum Salary	FY23 Minimum Salary
Elementary Assistant	1.10	\$66,000	\$77,000
Middle School Assistant	1.15	\$69,000	\$80,500
High School Assistant	1.25	\$75,000	\$87,500
Elementary School	1.20	\$72,000	\$84,000
Middle School	1.40	\$84,000	\$98,000
High School	1.60	\$96,000	\$112,000

Source: LESC Files

National research finds teachers indicate a multitude of factors result in their leaving the profession, significant among them being pay and working conditions. Working conditions have become an even bigger factor in their decision since the Covid-19 pandemic. New Mexico, like many other states, has responded to teachers leaving the profession by increasing teacher pay. While this is a key strategy to stabilizing the educator workforce, [working conditions are also important](#). Principals are a primary stakeholder in shaping a teacher's

professional experience and can establish collaborative environments. Studies have found that principal turnover can lead to higher teacher turnover, which in turn negatively impacts student achievement. Research from the Learning Policy Institute finds the relationship between principal turnover and teacher turnover is stronger in high-poverty schools. Factors influencing principal turnover include working conditions, compensation, decision-making authority, and professional learning.

New Mexico Legislative Investments in School Leadership

Raising Minimum Salaries. During the 2022 legislative session, the Legislature increase to minimum teacher salaries for teachers also impacted the minimum salaries for principals and assistant principals. While a high school principal minimum salary is approximately 45 percent higher than minimum level 3 teacher salaries, it is important to consider the different responsibilities and time commitments. Anecdotal data indicates high school principal contracts are on average 250 days compared to the statewide average teacher contract of 190 days.

Principal Professional Development. During the 2022 legislative session, the Legislature appropriated \$2.5 million to the Public Education Department (PED) to support principal professional development. Currently, PED provides principal professional development through three selective programs: RISE, a two-year program focused on developing leadership competencies; Thrive, a one-year program focused on observation and feedback cycles; and Lead, a one-year program for administrators with less than three years of administrative experience. In addition to PED-provided professional development, statewide organizations, school districts, charter schools, and universities provide opportunities for principal development. For example, Cooperative Educational Services, a nonprofit educational service agency, provides a year of leadership development to new administrators.

Future Investments. Policymakers could consider investments that strengthen the principal pipeline. Principal pipelines- the systems used to train, hire, and support principals - have been shown to prepare and retain highly effective school leaders, which in turn positively influences teacher retention. National research examines [best practices](#) for high-quality principal preparation and support.