

# Principal Preparation Best Practices:

The University of Illinois & Chicago Public Schools

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# Why school leadership?

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Evidence demonstrates improving school leadership...

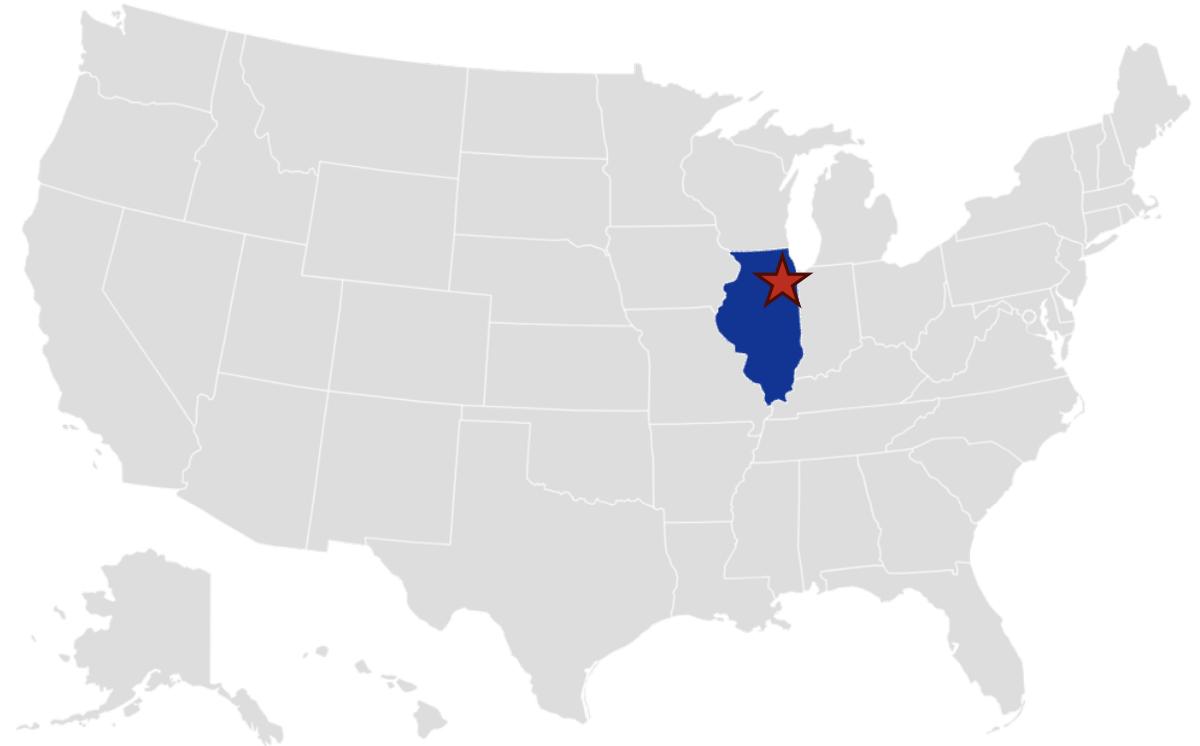
- Improves student outcomes
  - Proficiency
  - Attendance
  - Graduation
- Improves teacher retention
- Necessary for turning around failing schools
- Cost effective

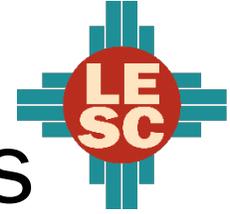
Sources: Learning Policy Institute, Wallace Foundation, RAND

# Principal quality in Chicago, Illinois

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- Illinois has received national recognition for school leader improvement
- Chicago Public Schools has been at the forefront of this work in Illinois
- LESC staff visited Chicago Public Schools and the University of Chicago - Illinois
- Ongoing work in New Mexico is closely aligned with many of these best practices



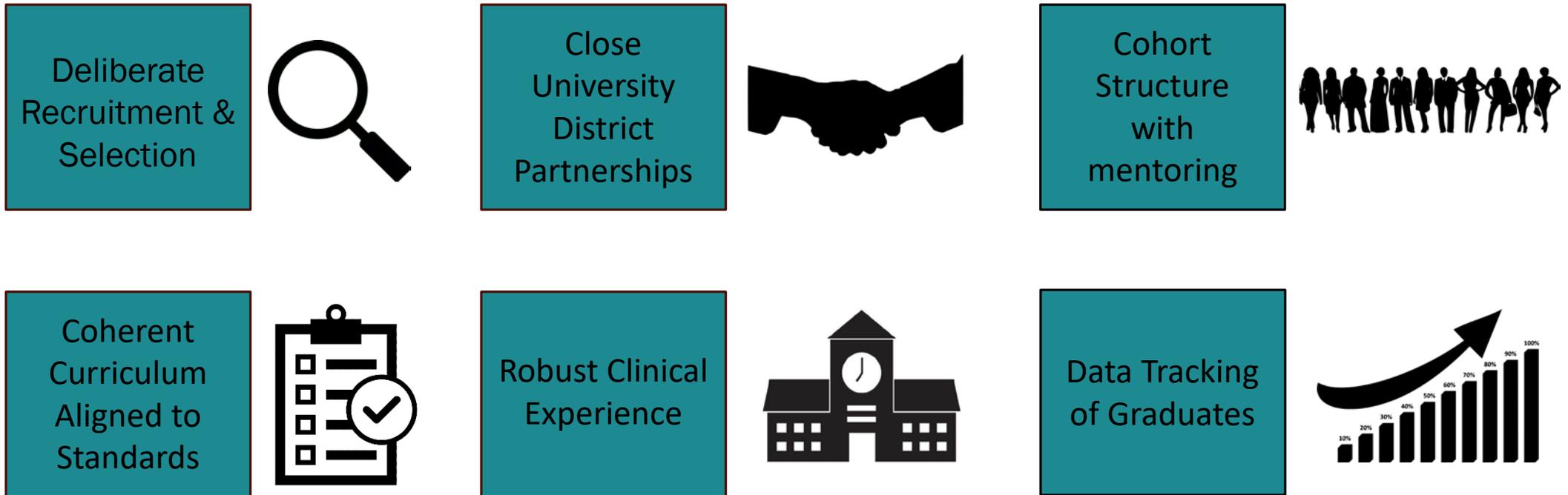


# 20 years of principal improvement in Illinois

2006	2007	2010	2011	2017	2020
Illinois commission to study school leader preparation - High principal turnover rates and quality concerns	Chicago Public Schools established Department of Principal Quality	Illinois strengthened principal licensure requirements - State agency tasked with revising prep program requirements	Chicago Leadership Collaborative created - District partnership with prep programs	Illinois began tracking educator shortage data - SEA survey had low response rate	Illinois created the Department of District and School Leadership - To strengthen school leader pipeline

# Features of **effective** principal preparation programs

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Source: Learning Policy Institute, Education Research and Development

# University of Illinois & Chicago Public Schools Partnership

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Deliberate  
Recruitment  
& Selection



Principal candidates must pass district AND principal prep program selection processes. Evidence of instructional efficacy provided by student data is part of the application process.

Coherent  
Curriculum  
Aligned to  
Standards



UIC curriculum focuses on issues faced by leaders in urban schools and is aligned with both the State of Illinois Principal Standards and national standards.

Cohort  
Structure  
with  
mentoring



Selection of mentor principals includes a comprehensive application process. Mentors are compensated. The state agency conducts accountability checks.

# Robust Clinical Experience

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- Selective recruitment
- Year-long, paid residency + rigorous and relevant principal prep program (MSA or doctorate)
- Mentors are high-performing principals
- Residents are paid at least \$90 thousand or match current salary
  - District makes substantial financial investment
- University coaches support residents and mentors - accountability
- Principals are supported 1-3 years following graduation
- Program graduates commit to serving as principal in district for 4+ years

# Data tracking

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## WHAT STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO KNOW

- Where should we focus our recruitment efforts?
- When and where will we need more principals?
- Where do our new principals go? How long do they stay there?
- Are our new principals effective?
- When principals do leave, why are they leaving?

## HOW THEY KNOW

### ▪ Data collection

- Illinois Regional Association of Superintendents of Schools contracts with private contractor to survey [school personnel shortages](#)
  - Vacancy rates
  - Personnel movement
  - Reasons for leaving district or profession
  - District methods to address shortages
  - Staff perspective on policy solutions

### ▪ Data analysis

- Illinois Workforce Education Research Collaborative (private contractors and higher education)
  - Analyzes this and other data to produce research for districts, state agencies, and stakeholders
  - State agencies covering early childhood, K-12 public education, higher education, workforce
- Helps districts strategically recruit to ensure there is always someone “on the bench”

# Promising Outcomes in Chicago

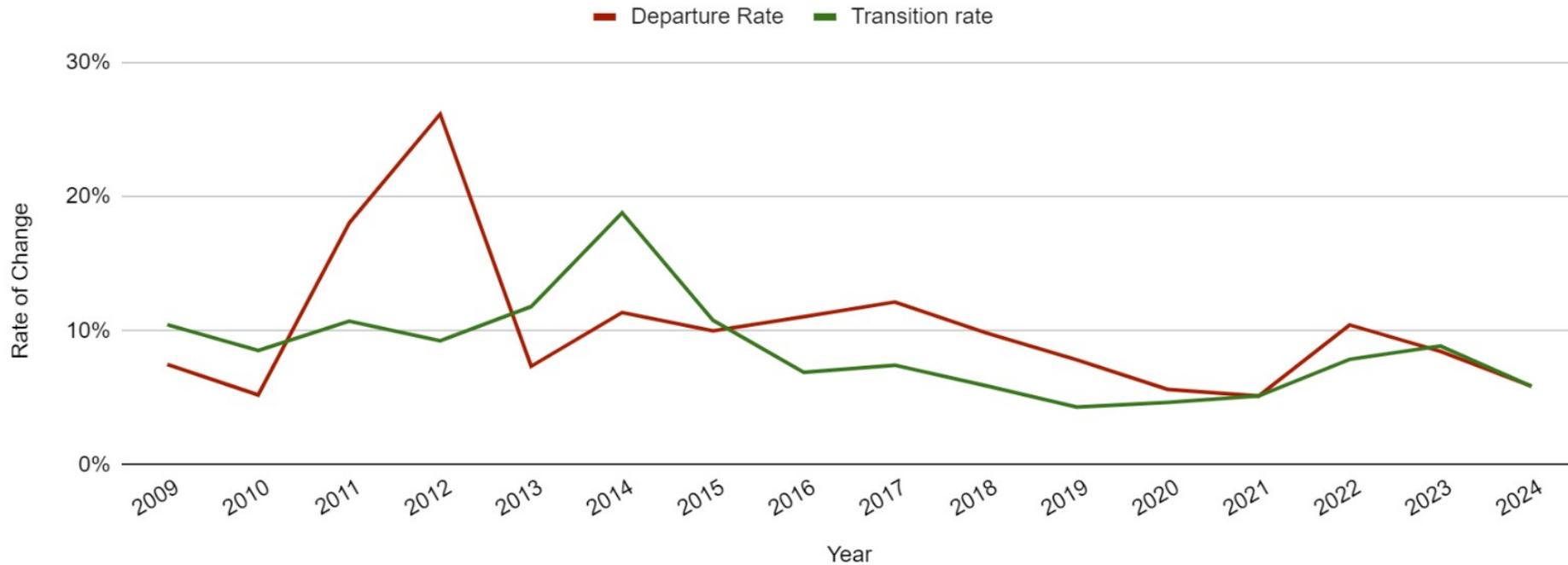
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- Principal eligibility assessment first-try pass rate
  - Program graduates: 90%
  - Non-graduates: 40%
- Compared to other schools in the district, schools led by program graduates have had:
  - Greater average student proficiency growth
  - Higher high school graduation rates
  - Lower drop-out rates
- Student growth differences emerged by end of principal's first year



# CPS Principal Departure & Transition Rates

Principal Departure and Transition Rate, 2009-2024

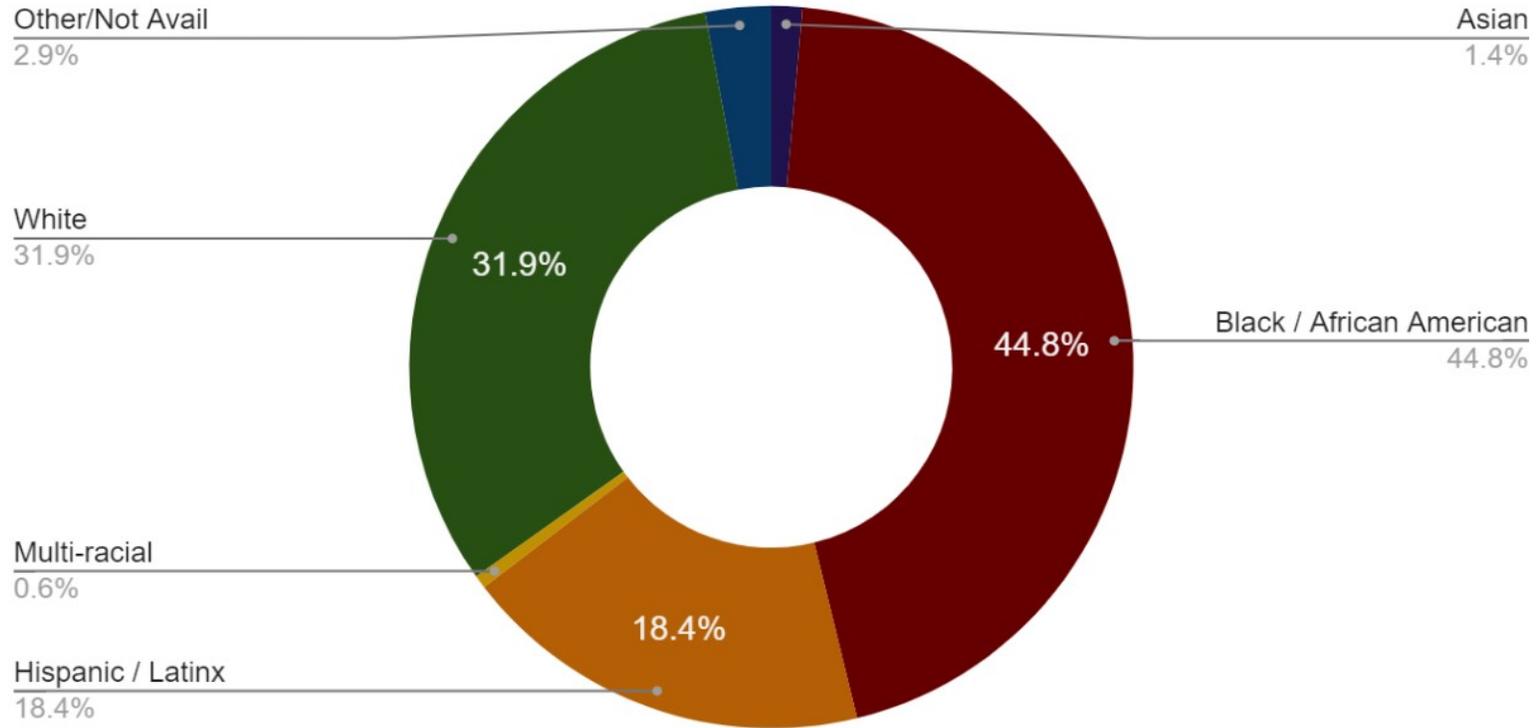


Source: Department of Principal Quality, Chicago Public Schools



# CPS Principal Demographics

## Race of Sitting Principals



Source: Department of Principal Quality, Chicago Public Schools

# Key takeaways

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- Planning, implementation, and results are a long-term process
- Close collaboration between districts and higher education programs
- Rigorous expectations and requirements
- Accountability measures
- Data collection and analysis
- Braided funding

# Thank you

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