



Alabama's School Principal and Mentoring Act



What is the AL School Principal Leadership and Mentoring Act?

In 2023, the Alabama Legislature passed the School Principal Leadership and Mentoring Act, with the goal of improving the quality of school leadership across the state. The program seeks to increase the effectiveness of school administrators to improve academic outcomes for all students, increase compensation for school administrators, and create the Alabama Principal Leadership Development System (APLDS) to support the development of highly-effective school leaders.

How does the Act support administrators?

This law passed in 2023 supports school administrators by requiring them to complete ongoing professional learning and by increasing their compensation through annual stipends. Principals who complete the requirements will receive \$10,000, with an additional \$5,000 for those working in low-performing or high-poverty schools. Assistant principals will receive \$5,000, with an additional \$2,500 for those working in low-performing or high-poverty schools. The requirements for administrators to earn the annual stipends include:

- Beginning 2023-2024, develop a comprehensive professional learning plan to be implemented in 2024-2025 school year, and each year after
- Complete five additional days of high-quality professional learning each year
- New Principals: Complete a two year principal mentoring program beginning in 2024-2025
- Participate in the new evaluation system for principals beginning in 2027-2028
- Complete the year-long principal leadership academy by 2029-2030

In order for a school leader to be eligible for the additional stipend for high-poverty or low-performing schools, their school must meet one of the following criteria:

- At least 75% of students in poverty, defined by direct certification
- A "D" or "F" on the state's annual report card
- Designation as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement school
- Designation as a full support school under the Alabama Literacy Act or Alabama Numeracy Act

When the legislation originally passed in 2023, the requirements for a school to be considered high-poverty or low-performing were much wider. Due to a change in federal policy, leaders in 80% of Alabama's schools ended up being eligible for the additional stipend. In 2025, the legislature amended the law, narrowing the definition to the above criteria to support the most hard-to-staff schools. Now, the number of administrators eligible for the additional stipend is about 420 schools, as compared to about 1,500 eligible schools prior to the change.



How does the Act help grow Alabama's Principal Pipeline?

The Act supports principals and assistant principals first by increasing their compensation package. This incentivizes school leaders, increases retention, and further compensates leaders who choose to work in hard-to-staff schools. Additionally, the Act creates a two-year mentorship program to support newly employed and first time school leaders through the Alabama New Principal Mentoring Program run by a partnership between the ALSDE and CLAS. Mentoring programs support the principal pipeline by providing ongoing support and guidance in those critical first years, with the goal of decreasing turnover. Beyond the mentorship program, the Act requires school leaders to engage in annual professional development opportunities to support continuous learning and growth.

Learn more about the Alabama Principal Leadership Development System, on the [Alabama Principals website](#).

How is the Act Funded?

This law is funded through the Education Trust Fund in a yearly allocation to the Alabama State Department of Education. In the budget for fiscal year 2026, which funds the 2025-2026 school year, the program is funded at \$32.6 million. About \$3 million will go towards the Alabama Department of Education to maintain the APLDS system, and the rest will fund annual stipends to be distributed to principals and assistant principals who complete the requirements.

