



# Education Administrator, Director and Principal Careers, Jobs, and Employment Information

## Career and Job Highlights for Education Administrators

- Qualifications such as a master's or doctoral degree and experience in an occupation of your field—an academic counselor or teacher, are requirements for many jobs
- Administrators work and collaborate with others, consequently strong interpersonal and communication skills are necessary
- Job openings are expected to increase as education administrators retire during the next 10 years

## Education Administrator, Director and Principal Career Overview

Education administrators are employed in universities and colleges, school, preschools, and daycare centers. They manage routine activities and provide instructional leadership at these institutions. They may also be employed at businesses, museums, correctional facilities, and community service organizations to direct their educational programs. Making policies and procedures and setting educational aims and standards is the responsibility of education administrators. They act as supervisor for managers and support other faculty, such as librarians, coaches, teachers, and aids. They have many other responsibilities in addition to these such as: handling relations with parents, students—both current and future, employers, and the community; preparing budgets; overseeing recordkeeping; managing student services such as guidance programs; training and motivating faculty including teachers and auxiliary staff; and performing many other duties. In small organizations, such as a daycare, there may be only one administrator in charge of all these duties. At larger institutions, such as universities or large school systems, several administrators share the work load, each having a specific responsibility.

Principals manage secondary, middle, and elementary schools. They oversee the hiring process, work with current teachers and other staff by completing evaluations to helping them improve their skills, and overall setting the academic tone of the school. They observe teaching techniques, evaluate learning materials, assess instructional objectives, and visit classrooms. Principals meet with staff to answer, inform, or clarify questions regarding procedures. Together the principal and teachers work as a team to develop and maintain curriculum with high standards, create mission statements, and establish short-term objectives and long-term goals for

performance. Teachers' salaries often depend on their performance ratings given by the principal, thus it is very important for principals to use clear objective guidelines when completing teacher appraisals.

The authority to make decisions has been increasingly shifting from the school district central offices to individual schools. Thus, community members, such as parents and teachers, have a significant part in setting school policies and goals. These community members influence local principals, and the principals must remember their concerns when making administrative decisions. Principals hold forums to facilitate communication between students, parents, other administrators, and representatives of local organizations.

As principals oversee the financial aspects of the school, they often prepare budgets and reports, supervise the requisition and allocation of supplies, and may even be involved in public relations and fundraising. Tighter school budgets have caused many principals to turn to local businesses and the community to obtain financial support.

It is important that principals do whatever they can to make sure the students in their school meet local, State, and national academic standards. Many principals create partnerships with local businesses and establish school-to-work transition programs at their school. With increasing numbers of culturally diverse non-English speaking students, principals must be very careful to be perceptive to the needs of these students. Another concern for principals are overcrowding at schools caused by growing enrollments. Principals promote building new schools or repairing existing schools as solutions to overcrowding problems, or other issues concerning insufficient resources. Principals plan for the next school year, supervise building maintenance and improvements, attend workshops for administrators and teachers, oversee summer school, and attend to hiring issues during the summer months.

Schools focus not only on a student's academic success, but their emotional well-being as well. Consequently principals attend to matters outside of the academic arena. For example, schools established family resource centers and before- and after-school childcare programs in response to the need for increasing need of childcare for children from teenage parent, single-parent, and dual-income families. Some principals, with help from the community, have established programs to fight against increases in substance abuse, criminal activity, and sexually transmitted diseases among students.

The principal receives support with the overall administration of the school from assistant principals. Some assistant principals choose the position as a career, while others stay to prepare to advance to principal jobs. Assistant Principals are mainly responsible for ordering supplies such as textbooks and paper, scheduling student classes, and coordinating support services such as the school lunch program, custodial, bussing, and other support services. Typically student attendance and discipline issues, recreational and social programs, and matters related to health and safety are handled by the assistant principal. They may advise students on occupational, educational, and personal matters. The introduction of site-based management has allowed assistant principals to work in areas that were traditionally run only by the principal, such as helping to develop new curriculum to guarantee student learning, completing teacher evaluations, and dealing with school-community relations. The number of assistant principals at

each school depends on the student population.

The director or supervisor is the education administrator at preschools and childcare centers. Similar to other school administrators, they manage the daily routines and operation of the school, hire and train staff, and make sure that the school meets the necessary regulations.

There are administrators who work at school district central offices and supervise public schools assigned them. These administrators may direct subject-area programs such as reading, special education, extra-curricular activities, and music. They work with instructional coordinators and curriculum specialists to assess and develop curriculums and teaching methods. Administrators may work with testing and counseling programs that assess students' talents and interests and helps place them in classes where they will find success. Athletics, curriculum and instruction, teacher development, school psychology, and other programs may be coordinated by an administrator at the school district level. However site-based management has allowed administrators to give chief responsibility for many of these programs to administration, teachers, or other staff at the individual schools.

Academic deans, deans of faculty, provosts, and university deans work at the university and collegiate level. They are responsible for hiring faculty, drafting budgets, and creating academic policies and programs. In addition to these duties the activities of deans of the different colleges and chairpersons of academic departments are overseen and coordinated by academic deans. A duty that is becoming an important part of their work is fundraising.

The people in charge of departments that specialize in certain areas of study such as mathematics, physics, or English, are run by university or college department heads or chairpersons. They organize teacher assignments and class schedules; handle all staffing issues such as recruiting, interviewing, and hiring; supervise faculty by completing evaluations and encouraging development; sit on committees; and carry out other administrative obligations all in addition to teaching classes themselves. It is important for chairpersons to take into account and carefully weigh the concerns of students, faculty, and administrators while managing their departments.

Vice presidents of student affairs or student life, deans of students, and directors of student services are higher education administrators that are involved in student centered organizations. They may direct or coordinate housing and resident life; admissions; numerous service organizations centered on foreign students, health and counseling, career placement, or financial aid; and programs relating to social events and recreation. They may play a role in counseling students at smaller colleges. At large colleges and universities there may be a single administrator assigned to each of these services. Registrars keep students' records. They are responsible for registering students for enrollment and courses, recording grades, preparing academic transcripts, assessing academic records, calculating and collecting tuition fees, organizing and running commencement, supervising the preparation of college catalogs and schedules of classes, and compiling and analyzing enrollment and demographic statistics. Financial aid directors oversee financial aid options for students including scholarships, fellowships, and loan programs and work closely with directors of admissions who run process of recruiting, assessing, and admitting students. Due to their nature of work, computer skills are

necessary at most colleges for both registrars and admissions officers. For example they may use electronic student information systems such as online college catalogs and class schedules and would need the knowledge to maneuver through online resources and have some imaging skills. Athletic directors plan and direct athletic activities on both the intramural and intercollegiate level. They also oversee publicity for athletic events, prepare budgets, and supervise coaches. Other administrators direct fundraising, public relations, distance learning, and technology, which are areas that are becoming more important all the time.

### **Education Administration Career Training and Qualifications**

Having started out in related occupations most need only complete a master's or doctoral degree to pursue a career in education administration. There are many different duties and levels of responsibility in the field, so many education administrators have very different educational backgrounds and experiences. Those who worked as teachers usually move to administrative positions such as preschool directors, academic deans, central office administrators, and principals or assistant principals. Some teachers gain experience by working as assistant principals or as the department head, curriculum specialist or subject matter advisor at the school or district level all in preparation to becoming a principal. Occasionally those in related staff positions such as residence hall directors; financial aid, admissions, or guidance counselors; recruiters; or librarians move up to work on the administration level.

Employees must demonstrate proficiency in their current jobs before they can be considered for education administrator positions. Supervisors look for candidates with strong leadership skills, resolve, self-confidence, originality, and drive. It is important that they are capable of making rational decisions, organizing their time well, and working efficiently. Those in administrative positions must have strong interpersonal skills and be successful communicators and motivators as they will be heavily involved with students, parents, teachers, and the community. A familiarity of the practices and principles of leadership learned through both academic training and on-the-job experience is essential. It is necessary for principals to have computer skills as they will be required to gather information and coordinate technical resources for students and teachers in the school.

Most public school administrators including principals, assistant principals, and district level administrators, need a master's degree in educational supervision or administration. A number of central office administrators and principals hold a doctoral or other specialized degree in education administration. Because private schools do not fall under the same licensure requirements as State schools, some principals and assistant principals at private schools work with only a bachelor's degree, although most have higher education degrees. Principals are required to be licensed as school administrators in the majority of States; however license requirements differ in each State. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium has created national standards for principals, supervisors, and other school leaders. Beginning principals hoping to obtain licensure are first measured against these national standards in many states. Gradually more new school leaders are being required to work with a mentor or complete on-the-job training. Education administrators in some States are required to take continuing education classes to guarantee they have the most current knowledge and skills. The types of courses and course hours necessary to uphold your license may differ by State.

Preschool and childcare center administrators have different educational qualifications depending on their program's setting and the State they work in. A bachelor's degree is required to work at school-based preschool programs. Child care directors in most States are required to have some sort of credential expressly intended for administrators, such as the Child Development Associate credential (CDA) sponsored by the Council for Professional Recognition, but are not required to hold a bachelor's degree. To become more qualified for positions as childcare center directors, recently some college graduates have opted to earn a National Administration Credential awarded by the National Child Care Association.

Typically academic chairpersons and deans have a doctorate in their field of study. Many were formally professors before they advanced into an administrative position. Sometimes bachelor degree holders of any field who work in related staff jobs can become directors of admissions, financial aid, or student affairs, by obtaining advanced degrees in disciplines such as college student affairs, counseling, or higher education administration. Top student affairs positions typically require a PhD or EdD. It may be beneficial for admissions, records, and financial aid directors to have strong computer skills and a background in accounting.

Various universities and colleges offer advanced degrees that are applicable for educational administrators including degrees such as college student affairs, educational supervision, and higher education administration. These programs are recognized by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Several classes covering a variety of fields may comprise an education administration degree school law. For example classes may be in school economics and budgeting, school leadership, a progressive curriculum, research design and information analysis, community affairs, politics in education, and counseling. Additional classes in areas such as human relations, curriculum development, supervision of teaching and curriculum, research, and advanced teaching courses are included in educational supervision degree programs.

Opportunities to advance as an education administrator come in two forms; they may become presidents of educational institutions or superintendents of school systems or take other administrative positions with more responsibility, possibly at a larger school or school system.

### **Job and Employment Opportunities**

The demand for people to administer education programs will increase as education and training become progressively more important issues to everyone. Employment projections through 2012 show the market for education administrators growing faster than the average for all other types of employment. This projection, in combination with significant proportions of current education administrators who are likely to retire within the next decade, creates a favorable job environment for upcoming education administrators.

Expansion in the for-profit and private sectors of education will account for a large portion of growth. Many of those who previously had not been able to participate in postsecondary education will have the chance as many of these schools will cater to working adults. Non-traditional students can earn a degree, receive training or update skills in job-specific areas, in a

convenient manner by attending part-time or distance learning programs offered at these schools. It will be necessary for these schools to employ more administrators as they continue to grow.

Employment for education administrators is also effected by the number of young children attending school. Projections done by the U.S. Department of Education estimates a 5 to 7 percent enrollment increase of elementary and secondary school students over the next ten years. As more and more young children attend formal child care and less and less are cared for at homes the number of administrators at preschools and childcare centers is expected to skyrocket. Furthermore additional preschool directors will be needed if mandatory preschool becomes more popular. Postsecondary administrators are expected to be in high demand due to the rapid growth at the postsecondary level compared to other student populations. Enrollments are anticipated to rise most quickly in areas of the country where there is significant growth in population, in the South and west for example, and decrease or stabilize in the Midwest and Northeast where populations will plateau or decline. In rural and urban areas where salaries are smaller than their urban counterparts administrators are in demand as well.

There should be good job prospects for principals and assistant principals. Fewer teachers have been seeking administrative jobs due to a drastic increase in the work load and job stress of these positions. Principals now must respond to increasing government regulations while also assuming full accountability for students and teachers performance. There may be additional burdens on the shoulders of some administrators in areas where teacher shortages, overcrowded classrooms, breeches in safety, and budget deficits are concerns. Often the additional pay is not enough to attract people to the field.

Many openings for college and university administration positions, especially nonacademic positions can be expected. Despite limited budgets during economic slumps, anticipated enrollment growth will call for institutions to hire more administrators in addition to the many they replace due to retirement. Although prominent positions will still create a fair amount of competition between faculty, positions such as director of admissions or student affairs and other nonacademic administrative positions will attract far fewer applicants. Additionally the high standard of education necessary for education administration applicants detour those not interested in obtaining a master's or doctoral degree, or would prefer to apply their adv