



State Approaches to Developing Educational Leaders

Julie Fitz, Marjorie E. Wechsler, and Stephanie Levin

Acknowledgments

The authors thank the staff of the many state leadership development initiatives included in this report, who have generously shared their time and provided information about their programming, and our Learning Policy Institute (LPI) colleagues Linda Darling-Hammond, Michael DiNapoli, Tara Kini, and Jennifer McCombs for their thought partnership and reviews. In addition, we thank the members of the LPI Communications team for their invaluable support in editing, designing, and disseminating this report. Without their generosity of time and spirit, this work would not have been possible.

Core operating support for LPI is provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Heising-Simons Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Raikes Foundation, Sandler Foundation, Skyline Foundation, and MacKenzie Scott. We are grateful to them for their generous support. The ideas voiced here are those of the authors and not those of our funders.

External Reviewers

This report benefited from the insights and expertise of two external reviewers: Paul Manna, Hyman Professor of Government and Director of the Public Policy Program at the College of William & Mary, and Daniella Molle, Research Director of the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research at University of Wisconsin–Madison. We thank them for the care and attention they gave the report.

Suggested citation: Fitz, J., Wechsler, M. E., & Levin, S. (2024). *State approaches to developing educational leaders*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/795.572>

This report can be found online at <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/state-approaches-developing-educational-leaders>.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>.



Document last revised May 22, 2024

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	iii
Introduction	1
Overview of State Leadership Development Initiatives	2
Functions of Leadership Development Initiatives.....	5
Role-Specific Professional Learning	7
Induction for Early-Career Leaders.....	9
Career Advancement for Aspiring Leaders.....	12
Support for Leadership Teams	14
Differentiated Assistance for School Improvement.....	17
Training for Supervisors.....	18
Funding Sources for Statewide Leadership Development	19
Conclusion	21
Appendix: Leadership Initiatives by State.....	22
Endnotes	25
About the Authors	30

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1. States Supporting Statewide Leadership Development Initiatives in 2022–23	2
Table 1. Roles Served by State Leadership Development Initiatives	4
Table 2. Statewide Professional Learning Initiatives Addressing Key Leadership Functions	6
Table 3. Funding Sources for Statewide Leadership Initiatives	20

Executive Summary

It is well established that effective educational leaders are important for student and teacher success. High-quality professional learning can support in-service leaders' effectiveness by developing the skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary for addressing their full range of leadership responsibilities. However, recent data show that leaders' access to professional learning varies across states and communities and that leaders in high-poverty schools are less likely than those in low-poverty schools to have high-quality learning opportunities. States can expand access to leadership development and make access more equitable by investing in ongoing statewide initiatives, such as leadership academies or institutes. Building the infrastructure for leadership-relevant professional learning can allow for long-term capacity building of a state's leadership workforce and create opportunities for leaders to access a continuum of support over the course of their career.

The purpose of this study was to understand the infrastructure that states have built for leadership-relevant professional learning by identifying the long-term leadership development initiatives supported by states and analyzing their purposes, target audiences, and scope. We conducted a scan between March and May of 2023 using search engines, state department of education websites, and other web-based documents. We found that at least 26 states support ongoing statewide leadership development initiatives to build the knowledge and skills of in-service leaders. In addition to generally enhancing leaders' skills, many initiatives fulfill more specific leadership development functions:

- providing **role-specific professional learning** opportunities,
- facilitating **career advancement for aspiring leaders**,
- supporting the **induction of early-career leaders** into the profession,
- providing **support for leadership teams**,
- providing **differentiated assistance for school improvement**, and
- facilitating **training for supervisors**.

This report provides examples of different states' initiatives related to each of these functions. It also briefly addresses the federal, state, and local funding sources that states draw on to develop and sustain these initiatives.

The considerable variability in program function and design suggests many ways that states can build infrastructure to support leadership development and meet the professional learning needs of their educational leaders. For states interested in developing new, or improving existing, leadership development initiatives, the examples in this report can inform program design or suggest future opportunities for programmatic refinement and expansion.

Introduction

It is well established that effective educational leaders are important for student and teacher success.¹ High-quality professional learning for education leaders—district administrators, principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders—can develop their leadership competencies across the full range of their responsibilities, enabling them to foster school environments in which adults and students thrive.² Research shows that high-quality learning opportunities include content focused on key areas of leaders' practice, including leading instruction, managing change, shaping positive teaching and learning conditions, developing people, and meeting the needs of all learners. They also incorporate powerful learning strategies such as authentic and applied leadership activities, including field-based internships and problem-based approaches (e.g., case studies and action research projects); expert support, such as coaching and mentoring; and networks of peers who share and solve problems of practice together.³

Research shows that high-quality learning opportunities include content focused on key areas of leaders' practice, including leading instruction, managing change, shaping positive teaching and learning conditions, developing people, and meeting the needs of all learners.

However, recent data show that leaders' access to high-quality professional learning varies across states and districts and that leaders in high-poverty schools are less likely than those in low-poverty schools to have access to important content and impactful learning strategies.⁴ States can expand access to leadership development and make access more equitable by investing in ongoing statewide initiatives, such as leadership academies or institutes.⁵ Building the infrastructure for leadership-relevant professional learning can support the long-term capacity building of a state's leadership workforce⁶ and create opportunities for leaders to access a continuum of support over the course of their career.⁷

The purpose of this study was to understand the infrastructure that states have built for leadership-relevant professional learning by identifying the long-term leadership development initiatives supported by states and analyzing their purposes, target audiences, and scope. We conducted a scan between March and May of 2023 that revealed that at least 26 states support ongoing statewide leadership development initiatives. (See Appendix for a list of leadership development initiatives included in this review.) For this scan, we used search engines, state department of education websites, and other web-based documents to identify state-supported and leadership-oriented professional learning initiatives. Specifically, we looked for state-supported initiatives that established ongoing professional learning programs that were available to leaders statewide.

After identifying initiatives, we collected descriptive information from publicly available web resources and documents and reached out to each initiative's leader(s) to confirm and supplement publicly available information. Although we have made efforts to include all existing statewide leadership development initiatives, we may have missed some. Nonetheless, the findings we present demonstrate the range of approaches states have taken to support educational leadership development.

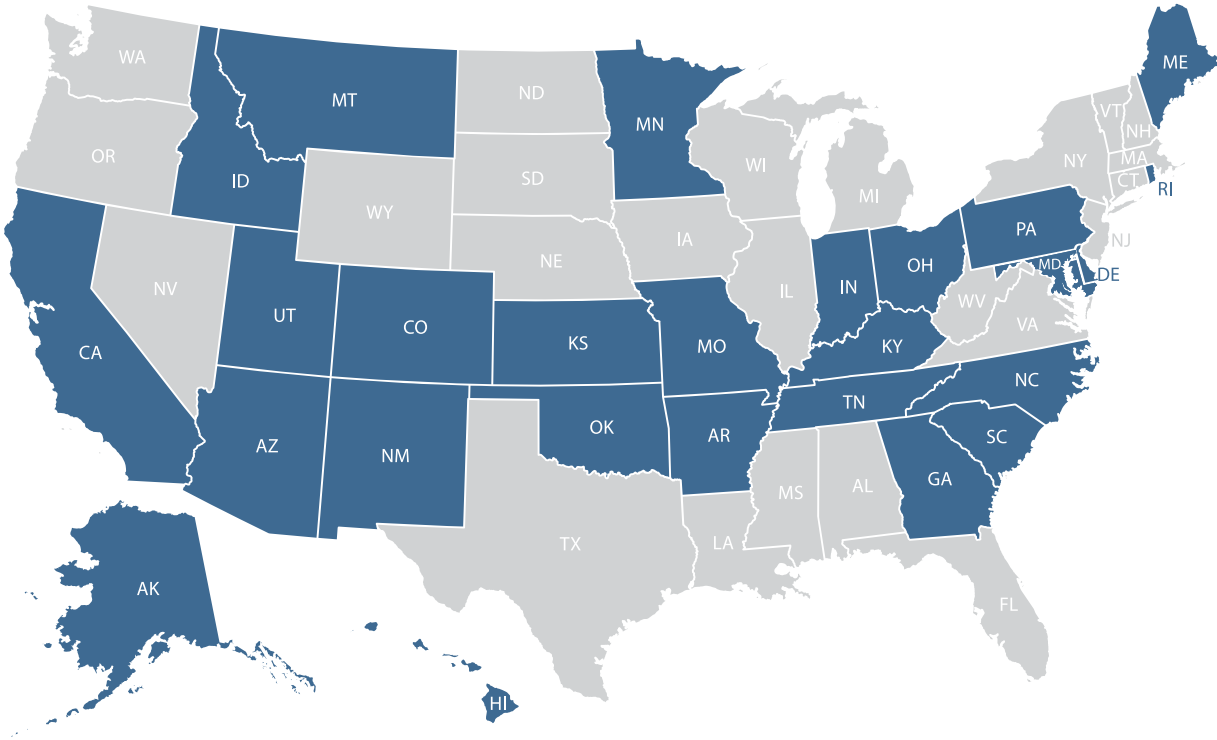
In this report, we first provide an overview of state leadership development initiatives and the types of leaders they serve. Next, we describe the different ways that states use these initiatives to support the ongoing professional learning of their educational leaders and provide examples of the programming

offered in different states. Our intention is not to evaluate program quality or outcomes. Instead, we aim to provide a resource that can inform program design in states looking to develop, expand, or refine a statewide leadership development initiative. The included programs, particularly those that include features of high-quality professional learning, can serve as models for other states looking to create or enhance professional learning for educational leaders. To give a sense of size and scope, we have included the number of participants served each year by initiatives, when this data is available. At the end of the report, we briefly describe the federal, state, and local funding sources that states draw on to develop and sustain these initiatives.

Overview of State Leadership Development Initiatives

As of the 2022–23 academic year, at least 26 states supported ongoing statewide leadership development initiatives (see Figure 1). State leadership development initiatives are frequently administered through the state department of education, but in some cases they are funded by the state and administered by institutions of higher education, nonprofits, regional educational service agencies, the governor’s office, or by partnerships between multiple entities.

Figure 1. States Supporting Statewide Leadership Development Initiatives in 2022–23



Note: Blue indicates states that support statewide leadership development initiatives.
Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis. (2024). See Appendix for a list of included initiatives.

State leadership initiatives tend to take the form of a leadership academy and/or leadership institute, terms that typically refer to a cohort-based program in which educational leaders convene for a series of professional learning and networking opportunities that take place over an extended period of time. Several states operate programs with a similar structure, although they do not refer to them as academies or institutes. Less commonly, states support stand-alone professional networks that bring together school and/or district leaders as a professional learning community or offer services to local education agencies (LEAs) as part of their leadership development initiative. Leaders commonly participate in programs over the course of a single school year, although eight states offer programs that last for 2 years.⁸

The roles that initiatives serve vary by state (see Table 1). The vast majority of state-supported leadership development initiatives provide programming oriented toward principals (24 states), though few states focus on this role exclusively. Some state initiatives also make professional learning available to other site-based leaders, including assistant principals (14 states) and teacher leaders (14 states), and to district leaders, including superintendents (7 states), and/or other district administrators (8 states). A subset of states operate programs that bring together teams of leaders representing different role types for collaborative professional learning. In some cases, these programs target school-based teams of leaders, typically site leaders and teacher leaders, for collaborative professional learning (7 states), whereas other state initiatives bring together teams composed of school and district leaders (4 states). See “Support for Leadership Teams” for more details.

Table 1. Roles Served by State Leadership Development Initiatives

State	School Leaders			District Leaders		Leadership Teams	
	Principals	Assistant principals	Teacher leaders	Super-intendents	Other district administrators	Teams of school leaders	Teams of school and district leaders
Alaska	X						
Arizona	X	X	X	X	X		
Arkansas	X	X	X	X	X		X
California ^a	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Colorado	X						
Delaware	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Georgia	X	X	X		X		
Hawaii	X		X				
Idaho	X			X		X	
Indiana	X						
Kansas	X	X		X			
Kentucky	X						
Maine	X		X			X	
Maryland		X	X		X		
Minnesota	X		X				
Missouri	X	X					
Montana	X		X				
New Mexico	X		X				
North Carolina						X	X
Ohio	X	X	X		X	X	X
Oklahoma	X	X					
Pennsylvania	X	X		X			
Rhode Island	X						
South Carolina	X	X	X		X	X	
Tennessee	X	X	X				
Utah	X	X					
Total states	24	14	14	7	8	7	4

^a The 21st Century California School Leadership Academy has a regionalized structure, and “regional academies” independently determine programming. All professional learning is open to district, site, and teacher leaders, but not all regional academies provide professional learning that accommodates school leadership teams.

Source: See Appendix for links to state sources. Publicly available data have been supplemented by communications with initiative leaders, when possible.

Functions of Leadership Development Initiatives

While all initiatives enhance leaders' general skills, many states support initiatives that address specific leadership needs. In other words, their initiatives perform particular "functions." The most frequent functions of the initiatives reviewed for this study are:

- providing **role-specific professional learning**,
- supporting the **induction of early-career leaders** into the profession,
- facilitating **career advancement for aspiring leaders**,
- providing **support for leadership teams**,
- providing **differentiated assistance for school improvement**, and
- facilitating **training for supervisors**.

These different functions reflect the fact that the needs of educational leaders can vary significantly across different roles, career stages, and schooling contexts. In some cases, programs serve a single function, whereas in other cases they serve multiple, often overlapping, functions. Nonetheless, these categories provide a useful heuristic for understanding important points of variation across states' leadership development initiatives.

Table 2 summarizes the functions performed by each state's leadership development initiative. Following the table, we provide examples of state initiatives that perform each function and briefly describe their approach to delivering professional learning.

Table 2. Statewide Professional Learning Initiatives Addressing Key Leadership Functions

State	Role-specific professional learning	Induction of early-career leaders	Career advancement for aspiring leaders	Support for leadership teams	Differentiated assistance for school improvement	Training for supervisors
Alaska	X	X				
Arizona			X			X
Arkansas	X		X	X		
California ^a	X			X	X	
Colorado	X					
Delaware	X		X	X		X
Georgia	X		X	X	X	
Hawaii	X	X				
Idaho	X	X		X	X	
Indiana	X					
Kansas	X	X				
Kentucky	X			X	X	
Maine	X			X		
Maryland			X			
Minnesota	X					
Missouri ^b						
Montana	X					
New Mexico	X	X				X
North Carolina				X	X	
Ohio				X		X
Oklahoma	X	X	X			
Pennsylvania	X	X				
Rhode Island	X					
South Carolina	X	X	X	X		
Tennessee	X	X				X
Utah	X					
Total states	21	9	7	10	5	5

^a The 21st Century California School Leadership Academy has a regionalized structure, and “regional academies” independently determine programming. As a result, the functions served by programming vary regionally.

^b While the Missouri Leadership Development System provides support for general leadership skills development, it did not, as of 2022–23, address any of the specific functions recorded in this chart.

Source: See Appendix for links to state sources. Publicly available data have been supplemented by communications with initiative leaders, when possible.

Role-Specific Professional Learning

Initiatives frequently provide role-specific professional learning designed for particular leadership roles. Important and substantive distinctions exist between the responsibilities of educational leaders who inhabit different roles.⁹ Consequently, leaders in a particular role may have specific professional learning needs that are not necessarily shared by their colleagues in different roles. Role-specific professional learning can address these specific needs, while also creating opportunities for leaders to connect with role-alike colleagues.

Role-specific professional learning can address these specific needs, while also creating opportunities for leaders to connect with role-alike colleagues.

We highlight three initiatives that support the role-specific needs of different groups of educational leaders: the Arkansas Leadership Academy, the Delaware Academy for School Leadership, and the leadership initiatives of South Carolina’s Office of Educator Effectiveness and Leadership Development. The initiatives’ programs frequently include features of high-quality professional learning, most notably by bringing together role-alike professionals in communities of practice, offering mentorship or coaching, and creating opportunities for participants to apply their learning at their school or district sites.

The **Arkansas Leadership Academy** operates a suite of programs for leaders in different roles and with different levels of experience. Through its offerings, the Academy provides a continuum of support for leaders across the span of their careers. Academy programs include the Teacher Leader Program, the Instructional Leader Empowerment program, the Master Principal Program, and the Executive & Policy Leader Empowerment program, among others.

- The **Teacher Leader Program** provides professional learning for teachers who occupy or are interested in taking on leadership roles, specifically those who wish to remain in the classroom. These leadership roles can include, among other roles, instructional or curriculum specialists, grade-level or department chairs, instructional coaches, and mentors. Participants engage in 6 days of face-to-face professional learning and apply their learning through job-embedded assignments that are completed between sessions. In 2022–23, the Teacher Leader Program served 54 participants.¹⁰
- The **Instructional Leader Empowerment program** supports the professional learning of leaders who support teachers and classroom instruction, including “principals, assistant principals, deans and directors, instructional facilitators, curriculum and instructional coaches, and district instructional leaders.”¹¹ Participants engage in three 2-day and one single-day on-site sessions, during which they develop skills and knowledge that they use to develop a plan “to impact and support classroom teachers and instruction in the classroom.”¹² In 2022–23, this program served 51 participants.¹³
- The **Master Principal Program** is a three-phase professional learning program for experienced principals. The program unfolds over the course of 3 school years, although participants are not required to complete the phases in consecutive years. Across each phase, participants engage in multiday professional development sessions, apply their learning at their school site, and collect evidence to demonstrate the efficacy of their interventions. Upon completion of the program and attendant requirements, participants are awarded the designation “Master Principal” and become

eligible for sizeable yearly bonuses (\$25,000 annually for up to 5 years for master principals working in state-designated high-need schools; \$9,000 annually for master principals working in non-high-need schools).¹⁴ In 2022–23, the program served 60 participants across the three phases.¹⁵

- The **Executive & Policy Leader Empowerment program** provides opportunities for ongoing learning for individuals in senior leadership positions. Over three 2-day on-site sessions, participants develop relationships with other executive leaders and nurture “a plan and process ... to impact and support a positive school culture, building principals, classroom teachers, classified staff, and instruction in the classroom.”¹⁶ In 2022–23, this program served 27 participants.¹⁷

The **Delaware Academy for School Leaders (DASL)**, in partnership with the **Governor’s Institute for School Leadership**, provides programming designed to meet the professional learning needs of leaders in different roles and supports their networking with role-alike peers. Furthermore, the Academy partners with schools and districts to customize professional learning and support services; for example, through DASL’s coaching and Executive Leadership Services. DASL reports that, in 2021, 19 Delaware districts and 6 charter networks had leaders who participated in DASL programming.¹⁸ Among other programs, DASL offers the following:

- The **Superintendent Study Council**, operated through the Governor’s Institute for School Leadership, is a leadership network that aims to support Delaware superintendents and other central office administrators as they navigate “complex and evolving challenges in education.”¹⁹ The network meets on a monthly basis for conversation, collaboration, and ongoing professional learning on topics such as “school improvement, equity, and improving outcomes for all students.”²⁰
- The **Assistant Principal Academy** is a selective 12-month program that supports assistant principals looking to transition into principalship. Participants learn from instructional modules aligned to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders and participate in leadership coaching and a practice-based mentorship with a current school principal.
- Individual or group **coaching** for school and district leaders is delivered in person or virtually at a negotiable frequency. Coaching is customized to the needs and priorities of the participants and aims to help them identify and address challenges and professional priorities. DASL reports that 60 school leaders and 30 aspiring leaders received coaching in 2021.²¹
- **Executive Leadership Services** supports district leaders with tailored services related to a number of district processes. For example, DASL provides assistance for districts negotiating superintendent and head of school searches by helping school boards “clarify their needs and expectations for a new superintendent” and also providing support with “screening applicants, negotiating a final contract agreement, collaborating to set goals, [and] assisting with performance evaluation and performance reviews.”²² Other available executive leadership services include support with strategic planning, school board governance, school board and superintendent relationships, and executive coaching.

Through the **Office of Educator Effectiveness and Leadership Development**, the South Carolina Department of Education facilitates a number of cohort-based professional learning opportunities for school and district leaders.²³ These learning opportunities develop leadership skills and knowledge,

encourage networking, and, in most cases, require participants to implement this learning at their school or district site as part of the program. Examples include the School Leadership Executive Institute and the Institute for District Administrators, and numerous other South Carolina programs are highlighted in other sections of this brief.

- The **School Leadership Executive Institute** is “designed to equip principals from districts across the state with the insight, knowledge, and competencies necessary to lead innovative and successful schools.”²⁴ Over the course of 7 months, participants meet for three 1-day sessions and two 2-day sessions for collaborative learning that focuses on instructional leadership, leading change, and engagement and motivational strategies. As part of the Institute, participants utilize instructional and equity tools to identify and work on areas of school improvement, and they collect and reflect on data about school culture. Each year the Institute serves up to 24 leaders.²⁵
- The **Institute for District Administrators** provides professional learning focused on personalization, equity, and access to effective instruction for district administrators, including “superintendents’ designees, assistant superintendents, directors, coordinators, supervisors, and other district staff.”²⁶ Over the course of 7 months, participants meet for four 2-day sessions and engage in collaborative learning and networking, which is supplemented by job-embedded fieldwork between meetings.

Induction for Early-Career Leaders

As early-career leaders acclimate to their new roles, they have professional learning needs that are unique from those of their more experienced colleagues. Numerous states—23 as of 2021—require that early-career principals participate in formal induction programs, which are designed to build on leaders’ experience in administrator preparation programs while also addressing key leadership competencies and skills, developing policy knowledge, building professional networks, and helping new leaders cope with role-related stress.²⁷

The efficacy of providing induction services is supported by research indicating that early-career principals experience greater benefits from professional learning than their more experienced peers.²⁸ Furthermore, research suggests that induction support for principals can influence teacher effectiveness, teacher retention, and student achievement outcomes, with the strongest relationships concentrated among the most economically and academically disadvantaged schools.²⁹ As such, investing in professional learning specifically tailored to the needs of early-career leaders may be a high-leverage practice for states to prioritize.

Induction programs are commonly provided at the district level, which allows districts to tailor support to the local context.³⁰ However, leaders can also benefit from induction-oriented professional learning that is offered on a statewide basis. In states without induction requirements, state-operated or -funded programs can provide important early-career support to early-career leaders who work in districts that do not provide formal induction or who would like to engage in further professional learning and networking. Even in states where principals complete formal induction programs, state initiatives can provide voluntary opportunities for mentorship, networking, and ongoing professional learning that extend beyond the requirements of state induction programs.

Ten states, including several without formal induction requirements, operate initiatives that specifically target professional learning toward early-career leaders. Of these, six focus on early-career principals, and four include individuals starting in other leadership roles, most frequently the assistant principalship.

The six states that have initiatives that focus exclusively on induction into the principalship are Hawaii, Idaho, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.

- **Hawaii’s New Principal Academy** provides 2 years of cohort-based professional learning for new principals. The state does not have an induction requirement, so participation is voluntary. In the program’s first year, principals participate in monthly seminars and weekly coaching that aim to provide new leaders with “knowledge and support in redesigning highly effective schools to promote student achievement.”³¹ In the second year, principals engage in monthly “collaborative inquiry groups,” through which they provide mutual support to members of their cohort and “delve deeply into the group’s inquiry focus.”³²
- The **Idaho Principal Mentoring Project** pairs first- and second-year principals with a mentor who supports their development in “critical areas of school-level leadership,” including “interpersonal and facilitation skills, teacher observation and feedback, effective school-level and classroom-level practices, and using data to improve instruction.”³³ Participants engage with their mentors through twice-monthly phone calls and two site visits per quarter. Participants have additional opportunities to attend professional learning events at three leadership institutes. The state does not have an induction requirement, so participation is voluntary.
- **New Mexico Priority Schools Bureau’s LEAD program** supports “new principals with less than three years of experience who wish to learn more about developing best practices.”³⁴ The program focuses on helping early-career leaders develop “effective coaching/mentoring, instructional infrastructure, data-driven instruction, [and] effective school culture.”³⁵ In 2022–23, LEAD served 50 participants.³⁶ While the state does have an induction requirement, LEAD provides a voluntary supplement to required induction programs.
- **Oklahoma’s Principal Induction Academy** provides 2 years of professional development to early-career principals, which they define as those within their first 3 years as a principal. The state does not have an induction requirement, so participation is voluntary. Participants meet as a cohort multiple times each year for learning experiences that emphasize instructional coaching, school climate, professional learning communities, and personnel and resource management. Each year, the Academy serves approximately 50 principals.³⁷
- The **Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Program** is a statewide professional learning initiative that includes a Principal’s Induction Program. School leaders are required to complete the program within their first 5 years in the role of principal or assistant principal. The program includes two courses based on the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) curriculum and Pennsylvania leadership standards. For each course, participants meet in person with a cohort, asynchronously complete reading and online work, and conduct “follow-up job-application activities” to reinforce their learning.³⁸

- **South Carolina's Principal Induction Program** provides first-year principals with professional learning to support their transition into their new leadership roles. Over a series of four 2-day sessions, the program delivers content and facilitates activities on topics such as “legal updates, evaluation best practices, team capacity building, and instructional leadership strategies.”³⁹ Each cohort serves a maximum of 30 leaders. Program completion is required for participants to move from a Tier 1 (initial) to Tier 2 (regular) principal certification.

The four states that have initiatives that support induction into additional roles are Alaska, Kansas, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

- The **Alaska School Leadership Academy** is a 2-year professional development program for early-career principals and assistant principals that aims to build the “dispositions and tools early-career principals need for success” and “connect participants to a network of new principals across the state.”⁴⁰ The state does not have an induction requirement, so participation is voluntary. The Academy provides participants with an experienced mentor whom they meet with twice monthly, organizes multiple in-person and online professional learning opportunities, and facilitates monthly book study discussion groups. The Academy supports a cohort of 25–30 new K–12 principals and assistant principals each year.⁴¹
- The **Kansas Educational Leadership Institute** provides mentoring and induction services for first-year leaders across a variety of roles: principals and assistant principals; superintendents and assistant superintendents; and special education directors, assistant directors, and coordinators. Each program pairs participants with a mentor in a similar role, although potentially from a different district, whom they communicate with regularly. The mentor makes at least four visits to the mentee’s school site over the course of the program year, and mentees are expected to visit the mentor’s school site at least once. Mentees also complete at least two performance demonstrations, observed by the mentor, on which they receive feedback. In addition to mentoring, participants attend professional learning sessions that provide opportunities for professional networking and ongoing learning. During the 2022–23 school year, the institute served 132 principals and assistant principals; 38 superintendents and assistant superintendents; and 16 special education directors, assistant directors, and coordinators.⁴² Institute completers earn credits toward the renewal of their Kansas administrative license.
- **South Carolina's Instructional Leadership Academy for Assistant Principals** provides support for first- and second-year assistant principals during their transition into leadership. Over a period of 6 months, participants engage in “a blend of face-to-face, synchronous, and asynchronous virtual instruction” that focuses on instructional leadership and building instructional capacity at participants’ school sites.⁴³ The state does have an induction requirement, so participation is voluntary.
- The **Tennessee Academy for School Leaders** operates an Academy for Beginning Principals and Assistant Principals that serves principals and assistant principals in the first 3 years of their career. Participants attend in-person professional learning and networking meetings, learn from asynchronous modules, and complete a case study of their site. The state does have an induction requirement, and participation is mandatory.⁴⁴

Career Advancement for Aspiring Leaders

Principal turnover can undermine school progress.⁴⁵ Identifying and preparing aspiring leaders for leadership and creating career advancement pathways helps ensure that school systems will have a pool of well-prepared candidates to draw upon when vacancies emerge. Evidence from district-level initiatives to develop leadership pipelines indicates that investing in school leaders' preservice professional learning can contribute to improved outcomes and retention in their first placements as principals.⁴⁶ These findings suggest that preservice talent development for aspiring leaders can be a lever for improving in-service effectiveness. States can provide needed investments and policy leadership to help launch and sustain these local pathway initiatives and also bring them to more localities.⁴⁷

Preservice talent development for aspiring leaders can be a lever for improving in-service effectiveness.

Seven states have initiatives that target aspiring leaders for leadership development. Of these, five provide programming designed to support aspiring leaders' transition into the principalship or other leadership roles, whereas two others allow aspiring leaders to attend professional learning alongside current leaders.

The following programs specifically support aspiring leaders' transition into new leadership roles. Programs commonly focus on preparing assistant principals to move into the principalship, indicating that assistant principals are viewed as a key lever for filling vacancies. However, multiple states also support aspiring leaders who work in other roles and, in limited cases, develop leaders for leadership roles other than the principalship. Across initiatives, programs take different approaches to ensuring that the professional learning is relevant to participants (e.g., by providing coaching or mentorship or incorporating real-world scenarios).

- The **Delaware Academy for School Leadership** (DASL) provides multiple pathways into leadership. The **Assistant Principal Academy** is a 12-month program “designed to develop distinguished assistant principals into transformational building-level principals.”⁴⁸ Participants engage with instructional modules aligned to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, participate in leadership coaching, and receive practice-based mentorship from an experienced building principal. DASL also supports educators' career advancement into other school leadership positions (e.g., teacher leader, grade or department chair, assistant principal) through a professional learning program called **ASPIRE**. ASPIRE participants engage in twice-monthly meetings over the course of 4 months. These meetings are designed to “create a community of learning where participants can ... strengthen their leadership competencies through personal growth.”⁴⁹
- **Georgia's Aspiring Principal Program** is “designed to identify, prepare, and support” participants who aspire to transition into the principalship and who currently work in assistant principal, instructional coach, district support, or teacher leader roles.⁵⁰ The yearlong, cohort-based experience includes in-person and virtual group sessions at which participants engage with “job-embedded leadership simulations” and other activities involving real-world applications.⁵¹ Participants also have the opportunity for personalized leadership coaching.

- **Maryland's Promising Principals' Academy** is a “year-long professional learning experience designed to equip participants with the skills and knowledge to successfully transition to the principalship.”⁵² The program serves assistant principals, central office staff, and teacher leaders who have been recommended by their superintendent or chief executive officer because of their strong leadership potential. Participants “gather for several multi-day convenings” at which they “gain first-hand experience tackling the real-life scenarios and challenges principals face regularly.”⁵³ This professional learning is supplemented by participation in communities of practice guided by leadership coaches.⁵⁴
- The **Oklahoma School Leadership and Talent Development initiative's Moving Up Program** provides professional learning to assistant principals who aspire to move into the principalship. The program brings together a cohort of aspiring leaders for ongoing meetings at which they focus on developing collaborative leadership skills.
- **South Carolina's Foundations in School Leadership program** supports teachers interested in transitioning into leadership. Over the program year, participants engage in professional learning designed to support the growth of leadership skills and “to explore foundational competencies that could assist in the transition to administrative positions.”⁵⁵

In Arizona and Arkansas, professional learning opportunities are not specifically tailored to the needs of aspiring leaders, but aspiring leaders are welcome to attend professional learning alongside current leaders. While the available professional learning is less tailored to the needs of aspiring leaders, participants can nonetheless develop both relationships and leadership-relevant skills and knowledge that may be important to their current and future roles.

- **Arizona's Beat the Odds School Leadership Academy** provides “executive leadership training” using the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) curriculum.⁵⁶ While the program is designed for in-service leaders, the Academy welcomes aspiring leaders to attend. The Academy takes place over 12–15 months, during which participants engage in “in-depth, inquiry-based, and job-embedded” leadership development that is delivered locally by NISL-certified trainers.⁵⁷ Each year, the program serves a cohort of 25–30 current and aspiring school leaders.
- **Arkansas Leadership Academy's Reach Program** provides virtual professional learning and on-demand resources oriented around leadership. The program welcomes the engagement of both current and aspiring education leaders. At each session of Spark!, the program's virtual professional learning network, participants focus on a case study of a particular issue that is accompanied by a mini-lesson and conversations guided by Arkansas educational leaders. Participants are encouraged to submit their own case study or problem of practice to be analyzed in upcoming sessions. Unlike many state initiatives, there is no application process to participate in Reach programming, although participants are required to register for the events they intend to attend. Close to 500 participants engage with Reach offerings each year.⁵⁸

Support for Leadership Teams

State leadership initiatives typically provide programming that is designed for individual leaders rather than leadership teams. While the strategy of serving individual leaders maximizes the number of schools and districts impacted by these initiatives, team-based professional learning acknowledges that leadership within a school or district is distributed, rather than concentrated in singular roles.⁵⁹ By creating opportunities for school- and district-based teams to learn and plan collaboratively, team-based professional learning can enhance the quality and effectiveness of team interactions and, at the same time, broaden the set of stakeholders invested in implementing new professional practices.⁶⁰ Furthermore, team-based professional learning can help leaders better understand the different dimensions of a school's operations or needs by incorporating a broader set of perspectives. As the examples in this section illustrate, team-based professional learning initiatives may be developed to help teams accomplish different aims (for instance, improving instructional practices or implementing a new policy framework). Across contexts, this type of initiative shows potential for creating broader shifts in culture and leadership practice by engaging a larger group of stakeholders in ongoing improvement work.⁶¹

Ten states currently offer statewide opportunities for school- or district-based teams to engage collaboratively in professional learning. Depending on the states, team-based professional learning may focus on general leadership development (5 states), on a specific leadership topic or skill (4 states), or on problems of practice identified by the team itself (3 states). Regardless of focus, programs frequently tailor professional learning content to teams' school or district contexts by providing coaching or encouraging teams to set goals or develop plans to implement their learning.

The five states that have initiatives that focus on general leadership development are Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, and North Carolina.

- The **Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Team Empowerment program** aims to help school-based teams grow more collaborative and nurturing relationships, with the end goal of developing more effective instructional practices. Teams are composed of five or six individuals, which may include district-level administrators, and are led by the school principal. Team members engage in four "onsite team interactions and content delivery sessions" and six virtual coaching sessions that focus on developing collective leader efficacy among the leadership team.⁶² School Team Empowerment serves five or six teams each year, for a total of approximately 30 participants.⁶³
- The **Delaware Academy for School Leadership (DASL)** offers **School Improvement** services that help school and district leaders "identify areas of focus for school improvement."⁶⁴ Program specialists, working with site leadership teams, perform an initial needs assessment by reviewing school data, conducting site walkthroughs, and performing classroom observations. Once focal areas have been identified, DASL offers professional development, coaching, and technical assistance that align with the needs of the school or district.

- **Georgia’s District Sustainability Program**, offered through the **Governor’s School Leadership Academy**, supports district-based teams in refining their own leadership development programs. Participation is by invitation only and takes place over the course of a school year. The program aims to scaffold districts’ development of a “comprehensive leadership development program based on district need.”⁶⁵
- The **LEAD-Kentucky** initiative aims to “build leadership capacity through distributed leadership, increase recruitment and retention of effective leaders, and improve school achievement” through a partnership with NISL.⁶⁶ While teams are not required, participating schools are strongly encouraged to ensure that both a school leader and a district leader attend together. Over a period of 12–13 months, participants engage with NISL’s Executive Development of School Leadership curriculum with a focus on standards-based instructional systems, data analysis, instructional leadership, and distributed leadership.
- **North Carolina’s Instructional Leadership Academy** provides a 2-year professional learning experience to teams composed of a principal, a district leader, and two other school representatives. Teams attend in-person meetings four times each year. In the first year, the focus is on “leading an equity-centered student culture and on observation and feedback.”⁶⁷ In the second year, teams build their capacity to facilitate data and planning meetings. In 2022–23, the program enrolled approximately 1,500 leaders.⁶⁸

The four states that have initiatives that provide team-based professional learning focused on a specific topic or skill are Delaware, Maine, Ohio, and South Carolina.

- **Delaware Academy for School Leadership’s Professional Learning Network on Design Thinking Applied to Supporting Special Education** provides school-based teams with a yearlong professional learning experience focused on developing more effective leadership for **special education programs and services**. Teams are composed of up to six individuals and must include the principal and assistant principal. Over the course of a semester, team members “develop a Design Challenge focused on the needs of their special education students and create a solution which will generate sustainable change within their school or district.”⁶⁹ To support this work, teams engage in four training sessions focused on the National Association of Secondary School Principals’ Design Thinking Process and experience two site visits from a program specialist who provides personalized feedback. Each year, the network serves eight school teams, for a total of up to 48 participants.
- **Maine’s Leading Early Learning program** is a “professional learning series designed to build understanding of the components of evidence-based, high-quality **early childhood (PreK–3) learning environments**.”⁷⁰ While the program is geared toward elementary principals, principals are encouraged to attend with “a colleague in their school system who also supports early learning”; for instance, “another elementary principal, a curriculum leader, a special education director, an assistant superintendent, or teacher leader.”⁷¹ Participants engage in nearly 40 hours of professional learning over the program year, including a conference on early learning, asynchronous learning modules, and monthly professional learning communities. In 2022–23, the program served 21 leaders.⁷²

- The **Ohio Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership initiative** provides a 2-year professional learning program focused on **improving student outcomes**, especially for those from marginalized groups (e.g., students with disabilities or learning difficulties and students living in poverty). The program provides targeted professional learning and leadership coaching for “vertical teams” of leaders (e.g., teams composed of district central office and school-based staff). The initiative is designed so that “lessons learned by the vertical team are incorporated into existing leadership team structures” within the district, thus amplifying the impact of the professional learning beyond the members of the participating team.⁷³
- **South Carolina’s Collective Leadership Initiative** provides support for school leadership teams that are engaged in the voluntary implementation of the state’s **Collective Leadership Framework**. Over 2 years, teams of administrators and teacher leaders “commit to shape and sustain the collective leadership framework for their unique school setting” and are supported in doing so with technical assistance and a series of customized workshops.⁷⁴ In 2022–23, the initiative worked with teams from 27 schools.⁷⁵

The three states that organize professional learning around team-identified problems of practice are California, Idaho, and South Carolina.

- **The 21st Century California School Leadership Academy** offers team-based professional learning opportunities through a subset of its regional academies. Opportunities vary in focus and structure. For example, the SoCal Regional Academy operates the 21CSLA SoCal Leadership Collective, a yearlong program for teams of four to six leaders from a single school site.⁷⁶ Teams chose a focus area and meet with other similarly focused teams in communities of practice, receive team-based coaching, and participate in twice-yearly in-person professional learning institutes.
- The **Idaho Building Capacity program** provides schools and districts with “onsite technical assistance designed to assist schools and districts in building their own internal capacity to sustain school improvement efforts.”⁷⁷ Participating schools and districts are paired with a “Capacity Builder,” an experienced educator trained to facilitate school improvement, for up to 3 years. This person provides coaching that is informed by the school’s data and leader-identified problems of practice. Coaching is supplemented by “professional development opportunities, resources, and self-evaluation tools” for participating leadership teams.⁷⁸
- **South Carolina’s Building Instructional Capacity program** provides professional learning focused on instructional leadership. While the program serves both individual leaders and teams of leaders, preference is given to teams that include an administrator and at least one teacher leader. Participants create a personalized learning outcome that targets “a school need and a desired area of growth”⁷⁹ and attend a series of hybrid learning events where, with a cohort of peers, they develop skills and knowledge that help them accomplish their specified outcome.

Differentiated Assistance for School Improvement

The positive outcomes that high-quality school leaders can achieve—namely, improved student outcomes and decreased teacher attrition⁸⁰—are most needed in schools and districts that experience persistent performance challenges. Professional learning that builds the capacity of leaders in these schools has the potential to stabilize school environments by reducing principal and teacher turnover.⁸¹ It can also connect leaders with training, coaching, and other supports tailored to their school improvement needs and goals.

Five states target leadership programming toward individual leaders and teams of leaders working in either federally designated schools in need of improvement or schools receiving differentiated assistance from the state. The professional learning offered through these initiatives tends to focus on identifying and addressing local problems of practice as a means to drive improvement in accordance with state and local priorities.

- The **21st Century California School Leadership Academy’s NorCal Educational Leadership Consortium** facilitates **Team Level**, a yearlong professional learning and coaching opportunity for leadership teams from districts that serve Title I students or are eligible for Differentiated Assistance or Comprehensive Support and Improvement through California’s Statewide System of Support. Participating leadership teams commit to working together to address a local problem or concern related to equity. Teams attend a series of professional learning activities that include frequent meetings, webinars, and biannual multiday institutes and work through online learning modules asynchronously. In total, the program involves 32–46 hours of engagement over a single school year.
- The **Georgia Governor’s School Leadership Academy** operates a **Principal Support Program** that provides professional learning and coaching for principals in federally designated schools as they work toward school improvement. As part of a cohort, participants engage in two 2-day in-person group training sessions, monthly virtual or in-person meetings, and one-on-one and/or group coaching over the course of the program year. These activities are supplemented with job-embedded assignments that provide participants the opportunity to “practice data-driven decision making, develop cultural competence as leaders, and sharpen instructional leadership skills.”⁸² The program serves three cohorts of 25–30 participants each year.⁸³
- The **Idaho Principals Network** is a professional learning community designed to help principals whose schools are designated as “In Improvement” develop more effective instructional practices. Network participants engage in “a balance of content, professional conversation, and collegial instructional rounds related to instructional leadership, managing change, and improving the overall effectiveness of the Instructional Core.”⁸⁴ Additionally, the **Idaho Building Capacity project**, previously introduced, provides school- and district-based teams with support oriented around school improvement.
- The **LEAD-Kentucky** initiative, previously introduced, is a partnership that facilitates Kentucky leaders’ participation in NISL’s Executive Development for School Leadership program. While all Kentucky schools are welcome to participate, the Kentucky Department of Education fully funds the participation of leaders from schools designated as Focus Schools to remove barriers to participation.⁸⁵

- **North Carolina’s Instructional Leadership Academy**, previously introduced, uses accountability data from past years to determine eligibility for leadership teams’ participation in a 2-year professional learning program. In addition to the program’s standard course of professional learning, the state provides elevated levels of support—including job-embedded professional learning, coaching, and on-site support—to participants from six districts that already receive intensive support from the state. Leaders from 32 schools in these districts participated in the opportunities during the program’s 2022–23 launch year.⁸⁶

Training for Supervisors

Leaders play a role in guiding the professional development of their colleagues, particularly those under their direct supervision. Evidence that principals’ impact on student achievement occurs by way of improved teacher effectiveness suggests that focusing on cultivating leaders’ ability to develop the talent of the staff under their supervision may be a route to improved student outcomes.⁸⁷ Furthermore, principal supervisors increasingly take on the role of developing principals as instructional leaders and can benefit from training that develops their capacity to provide this kind of support.⁸⁸

One state—New Mexico—provides professional learning that develops school-based leaders specifically in their capacity as a teacher supervisor.

- **New Mexico’s Priority Schools Bureau** has developed the **THRIVE** program to support school leaders and instructional coaches in developing instructional leadership skills. This 1-year program emphasizes building leaders’ capacity to design effective observation, feedback, and coaching cycles. In 2022–23, Thrive served 113 participants.⁸⁹

School-based leaders themselves, particularly in their capacity as instructional leaders, can also benefit from quality supervision and feedback.⁹⁰ With this in mind, four states—Arizona, Delaware, Ohio, and Tennessee—provide professional learning designed to develop the capacity of district-level principal supervisors.

- Arizona’s **Supervisors of Principals’ Academy** provides professional development for principal supervisors, including superintendents or assistant superintendents, directors of schools, human resource directors, and other central office administrators. Over a period of 7 months, participants learn about research and best practices in principal supervision, leadership coaching, and performance evaluation through in-person institutes, monthly coaching sessions, and networked learning with colleagues. The program serves a cohort of 14 leaders, on average, each year.⁹¹
- The **Delaware Governor’s Institute for School Leadership** operates an Executive Leadership Academy that aims to equip principal supervisors “with the tools they need to support principals with instruction, evaluation, and operational management.”⁹² In addition to engaging in research-informed professional learning, participants have opportunities to network with colleagues in similar positions across the state.
- The **Ohio Inclusive Instructional Leadership** initiative facilitates **Central Office Inclusive Instructional Leadership**, a professional learning series designed for principal supervisors and other central office staff. Over the course of 10 months, participants engage in professional learning seminars and

leadership coaching, with the goal of preparing them to better support district priorities for inclusive teaching and learning, with a particular focus on students with disabilities, students living in poverty, and students with learning difficulties.

- The **Tennessee Academy for School Leaders** operates an Academy for Instructional Supervisors designed to help district-level supervisors more effectively develop instructional leadership in the leaders they supervise. The Academy is a 4-month online learning experience, during which participants engage in professional learning and networking.

Funding Sources for Statewide Leadership Development

The initiatives discussed in this report rely on ongoing state investment to maintain the infrastructure through which the states' educational leaders can access ongoing professional learning. States draw on different federal, state, and even local funding sources to finance statewide leadership development initiatives (see Table 3). At least 18 states draw on federal funding, including ESSA Title II, Part A state set-aside funds (14 states), ESSA Title I school improvement funds (3 states), federal recovery funds (6 states),⁹³ IDEA Part B funds (1 state), and other federal grants (1 state).⁹⁴ While ESSA Title II, with its 3% set-aside for leadership development, is often referenced as an important funding source for developing leadership capacity, many states do not tap this funding stream for their programming, which suggests that it is potentially underutilized. At least nine states use state education funds to support their initiatives. Some states combine multiple sources of funds, including both state and federal sources.

In most cases, participation in an initiative is free of cost to participants and their local education agencies (LEAs); however, seven states require the participants' LEA or participants themselves to pay for all or a portion of travel, lodging, or meal expenses for one or more of their programs.

Table 3. Funding Sources for Statewide Leadership Initiatives

State	Federal funds					State education funds	LEA or participant contribution
	ESSA, Title II-A	ESSA, Title I	Federal recovery funds	IDEA Part B	Other federal grants		
Alaska	X						
Arizona	X						
Arkansas						X	X
California	X					X	
Colorado						X	
Delaware	X		X			X	X
Georgia						X	X
Hawaii ^a	X						
Idaho ^a	X	X					
Indiana						X	X
Kansas ^a	X						
Kentucky		X	X				
Maine	X						X
Maryland ^a	X						
Minnesota	X					X	X
Missouri	X	X	X		X		
Montana			X				
New Mexico						X	
North Carolina			X				
Ohio	X			X			
Oklahoma			X				
Pennsylvania	X					X	X
Rhode Island						X	
South Carolina ^b							
Tennessee ^a	X						
Utah ^b							
Total states	14	3	6	1	1	10	7

^a Funding sources have been identified from web resources and/or program documents but have not been confirmed by initiative representatives.

^b Funding sources were not identifiable from publicly available materials. Initiative representatives did not respond to requests for information.

Source: See Appendix for links to state sources. Publicly available data has been supplemented by communications with initiative leaders, when possible.

Conclusion

By investing in long-term leadership development initiatives, states can make high-quality professional learning more readily available to educational leaders. At the time of our state scan, more than half of U.S. states supported long-term initiatives that aimed to equip school leaders with important skills and knowledge. In addition to enhancing leaders' general knowledge and skills, these initiatives fulfill a variety of functions, including providing role-specific professional learning, supporting early-career leaders' induction, supporting leadership teams, providing differentiated assistance for school improvement, and facilitating training for supervisors. This myriad of functions suggests that there are many ways that states can build infrastructure to facilitate the ongoing growth and learning of leaders across contexts and roles. When developing or refining programming, states may benefit from identifying specific leadership needs within the state and crafting programs that address these needs in a targeted fashion. For states interested in developing new, or improving existing, leadership development initiatives, the examples contained in this report can inform program design or suggest future opportunities for programmatic refinement and expansion, particularly when strategies associated with high-quality professional learning are incorporated into design. As leadership needs emerge or change, initiatives can expand or evolve in tandem.

To support and sustain these leadership development initiatives, states draw on a variety of federal, state, and/or local funding sources. While ESSA, Title II provides essential funds for many initiatives, a significant number of states are not utilizing this funding source, which may represent a missed opportunity. Many states allocate state education funds toward programming. States also frequently braid together multiple funding sources to sustain their programming. Stable funding allows initiatives to engage in the long-term capacity building of a state's leadership workforce that can support leaders' important work of operating and improving school sites and systems.

Appendix: Leadership Initiatives by State

Table A1. Statewide Leadership Initiatives Included in This Brief

State	Leadership Development Initiative
Alaska	Alaska School Leadership Academy
Arizona	Beat the Odds School Leadership Academy Supervisors of Principals' Academy
Arkansas	Arkansas Leadership Academy (ALA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive & Policy Leader Empowerment • Instructional Leader Empowerment • Master Principal Program • Reach • School Team Empowerment • Teacher Leader Program
California	21st Century California School Leadership Academy (21CSLA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21CSLA State Center • Bay Area Regional Academy • Mid-State Regional Academy • NorCal Educational Leadership Consortium • North Bay/North Coast Regional Academy • Placer-Sacramento Regional Academy • SoCal Regional Academy • Valley to Coast Regional Academy
Colorado	Principal Leadership Institute
Delaware	Delaware Academy for School Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASPIRE • Executive Leadership Services • Professional Learning Network: Design Thinking Applied to Supporting Special Education • School and District Office Leadership Coaching • School Improvement Governor's Institute for School Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Principal Academy • Executive Leadership Academy • Superintendent Study Council

State	Leadership Development Initiative
Georgia	Governor’s School Leadership Academy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspiring Principal Program • District Sustainability Program • Principal Support Program • Teacher Leader Support Program
Hawaii	Hawaii Leadership Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Principals Academy • Teacher Leader Academy
Idaho	Idaho Building Capacity Idaho Principal Mentoring Project Idaho Principals Network Idaho Superintendents Network
Indiana	Indiana Principal Leadership Institute
Kansas	Kansas Educational Leadership Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Principal/Assistant Principal/Special Education Coordinators Mentoring/Induction • New Special Education Director/Assistant Director/Coordinator Mentoring/Induction • New Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent Mentoring/Induction
Kentucky	LEAD-Kentucky
Maine	Leading Early Learning Transformational Leaders’ Network
Maryland	Promising Principals’ Academy
Minnesota	Minnesota Principals Academy Principal Leadership Support Team
Missouri	Missouri Leadership Development System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Academy
Montana	Executive Leadership Academy Teacher Leadership Academy

State	Leadership Development Initiative
New Mexico	Priority Schools Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAUNCH • LEAD • RISE • THRIVE
North Carolina	North Carolina Instructional Leadership Academy
Ohio	Ohio Inclusive Instructional Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Office Inclusive Instructional Leadership • Ohio Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (OH-AiPL) State Initiative • Ohio Leadership for Inclusion, Implementation, and Instructional Improvement
Oklahoma	School Leadership and Talent Development Initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Institute • Moving Up • Principal Induction Academy
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Program Superintendent Academy
Rhode Island	National Institute for School Leadership Program
South Carolina	Building Instructional Capacity Collective Leadership Initiative Foundations in School Leadership Institute for District Administrators for District Level Leaders Instructional Leadership Academy for Assistant Principals Principal Induction Program School Leadership Executive Institute
Tennessee	Tennessee Academy for School Leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy for Beginning Principals and Assistant Principals • Academy for Instructional Supervisors
Utah	School Leadership Development Community of Practice The Principal Partnership Networks

Endnotes

1. Grissom, J. A., Egalite, A. J., & Lindsay, C. A. (2021). *How principals affect students and schools: A systematic synthesis of two decades of research*. The Wallace Foundation. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/how-principals-affect-students-and-schools-a-systematic-synthesis-of-two-decades-of-research.aspx>
2. Levin, S., Leung, M., Edgerton, A. K., & Scott, C. (2020). *Elementary school principals' professional learning: Current status and future needs*. Learning Policy Institute; Darling-Hammond, L., Wechsler, M. E., Levin, S., Leung-Gagne, M., & Tozer, S. (2022). *Developing effective principals: What kind of learning matters?* Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/641.201>; Wechsler, M. E., & Wojcikiewicz, S. K. (2023). *Preparing leaders for deeper learning*. Harvard Education Press.
3. Darling-Hammond, L., Wechsler, M. E., Levin, S., Leung-Gagne, M., & Tozer, S. (2022). *Developing effective principals: What kind of learning matters?* Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/641.201>
4. Darling-Hammond, L., Wechsler, M. E., Levin, S., Leung-Gagne, M., & Tozer, S. (2022). *Developing effective principals: What kind of learning matters?* Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/641.201>
5. Manna, P. (2015). *Developing excellent school principals to advance teaching and learning: Considerations for state policy*. The Wallace Foundation. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Developing-Excellent-School-Principals.pdf>; Darling-Hammond, L., Wechsler, M. E., Levin, S., Leung-Gagne, M., & Tozer, S. (2022). *Developing effective principals: What kind of learning matters?* Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/641.201>; Wechsler, M. E., & Wojcikiewicz, S. K. (2023). *Preparing leaders for deeper learning*. Harvard Education Press.
6. Manna, P. (2015). *Developing excellent school principals to advance teaching and learning: Considerations for state policy*. The Wallace Foundation. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Developing-Excellent-School-Principals.pdf>; Darling-Hammond, L., Wechsler, M. E., Levin, S., Leung-Gagne, M., & Tozer, S. (2022). *Developing effective principals: What kind of learning matters?* Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/641.201>; Wechsler, M. E., & Wojcikiewicz, S. K. (2023). *Preparing leaders for deeper learning*. Harvard Education Press.
7. Jensen, B., Downing, P., & Clark, A. (2017). *Preparing to lead: Lessons in principal development from high-performing education systems*. National Center on Education and the Economy. <https://ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/PreparingtoLeadFINAL101817.pdf>
8. [Arkansas' Master Principal Program](#) is currently the only program that runs longer than 2 years: It is a three-phase professional learning experience that unfolds over the course of 3 school years, although participants are not required to complete the phases in consecutive years.
9. Manna, P. (2015). *Developing excellent school principals to advance teaching and learning: Considerations for state policy*. The Wallace Foundation. <https://wallacefoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/Developing-Excellent-School-Principals.pdf>
10. Personal email with Kerri White, Director of the Arkansas Leadership Academy (2023, April 17).
11. Arkansas Leadership Academy. *Instructional Leader Empowerment*. https://www.arkansasleadershipacademy.org/320648_2
12. Arkansas Leadership Academy. *Instructional Leader Empowerment*. https://www.arkansasleadershipacademy.org/320648_2
13. Personal email with Kerri White, Director of the Arkansas Leadership Academy (2023, April 17).
14. Arkansas Department of Education. (2022, June 2). *Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Rules Governing Eligibility and Financial Incentives for Arkansas Leadership Academy Master Principal Program*. [https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/Master_Principal_Program_\(Effective_6-2-22\)RV_Legal.pdf](https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/Master_Principal_Program_(Effective_6-2-22)RV_Legal.pdf)
15. Personal email with Kerri White, Director of the Arkansas Leadership Academy (2023, April 17).
16. Arkansas Leadership Academy. *Executive & policy leader empowerment*. https://www.arkansasleadershipacademy.org/313711_2
17. Personal email with Kerri White, Director of the Arkansas Leadership Academy (2023, April 17).
18. Delaware Academy for School Leadership. (n.d.). *2021 annual report*. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T7VZNzKLOAAVjRlZ3rmGQV5VkDoEXd5i/view>

19. University of Delaware Education & Human Development School Success Center. *Governor's Institute for School Leadership*. <https://ssc.cehd.udel.edu/departments/delaware-academy-for-school-leadership/leadership-programs/governors-institute-for-school-leadership/>
20. University of Delaware Education & Human Development School Success Center. *Governor's Institute for School Leadership*. <https://ssc.cehd.udel.edu/departments/delaware-academy-for-school-leadership/leadership-programs/governors-institute-for-school-leadership/>
21. Delaware Academy for School Leadership. (n.d.). *2021 annual report*. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T7VZNzKLOAAVjRlZ3rmGQV5VkDoEXd5i/view>
22. Delaware Academy for School Leadership. *DASL Executive Leadership Services*. <https://ssc.cehd.udel.edu/departments/delaware-academy-for-school-leadership/executive-leadership-services/>
23. Except where noted otherwise, the program cohorts referenced throughout this report are formed based on participants' year of entry.
24. South Carolina Department of Education. *School Leadership Executive Institute (SLEI)*. <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/school-and-district-administrators/experienced-principals/school-leadership-executive-institute-slei/>
25. South Carolina Department of Education. *School Leadership Executive Institute (SLEI)*. <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/school-and-district-administrators/experienced-principals/school-leadership-executive-institute-slei/>
26. South Carolina Department of Education. *Institute for District Administrators (IDA) for District Level Leaders*. <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/school-and-district-administrators/district-administrators/institute-for-district-administrators-ida/>
27. Roger, L. K., & VanGronigen, B. A. (2021). Beyond preparation: State approaches to early career principal induction. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 22(3), 600–624. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2021.1977333>
28. Campoli, A. K., & Darling-Hammond, L. (with Podolsky, A., & Levin, S.). (2022). *Principal learning opportunities and school outcomes: Evidence from California*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/438.376>
29. Steinberg, M. P., & Yang, H. (2021). *Does principal professional development improve schooling outcomes? Evidence from Pennsylvania's Inspired Leadership Induction Program* [EdWorkingPaper No. 20-190]. Annenberg Institute at Brown University. <https://edworkingpapers.com/sites/default/files/ai20-190-v2.pdf>
30. Roger, L. K., & VanGronigen, B. A. (2021). Beyond preparation: State approaches to early career principal induction. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 22(3), 600–624. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2021.1977333>
31. Leadership Institute. *New Principals Academy*. https://www.leadershipinstitutehi.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=555807&type=d
32. Leadership Institute. *New Principals Academy*. https://www.leadershipinstitutehi.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=555807&type=d
33. Idaho Department of Education. *School improvement & support*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20230419195311/https://www.sde.idaho.gov/federal-programs/sis/>
34. PSB New Mexico. *LEAD supporting new principals in New Mexico*. <https://psbnmsupport.org/lead>
35. PSB New Mexico. *LEAD supporting new principals in New Mexico*. <https://psbnmsupport.org/lead>
36. Personal email with Elisabeth Peterson, Director of the Priority Schools Bureau (2023, May 9).
37. Personal conversation with Jaycie Smith, Executive Director of Teacher and Leadership Development at the Oklahoma State Department of Education (2023, April 17).
38. Pennsylvania Department of Education. *Principal Induction Program*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20231003165353/https://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20-%20Administrators/PA%20Inspired%20Leaders/Pages/Principals%27-Induction-Program.aspx>
39. South Carolina Department of Education. *Principal Induction Program (PIP)*. <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/school-and-district-administrators/first-year-principals/principal-induction-program-pip/>
40. Alaska School Leadership Academy. *Support for Alaska's early-career principals*. <https://sites.google.com/view/asla2020/home>
41. Personal email with Adrienne Schwartz, Title II-A Administrator at the Alaska Department of Education (2023, May 31).

42. Kansas Educational Leadership Institute. (n.d.). *KELI participation numbers since 2011–2023*. <https://coe.k-state.edu/collaborations/partnerships/kansas-educational-leadership-institute/documents/Participation%20numbers%20breakdown%2011-23.pdf>
43. South Carolina Department of Education. *Instructional Leadership Academy (ILA) for Assistant Principals*. <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/school-and-district-administrators/programs-for-assistant-principals/assistant-principals/#:~:text=Assistant%20principals%20enrolled%20in%20ILA,thinking%20and%20not%20a%20program>
44. Tennessee Department of Education. *Tennessee Academy for School Leaders*. <https://www.tn.gov/education/educators/teaching-in-tennessee/tasl.html>
45. Levin, S., & Bradley, K. (2019). *Understanding and addressing principal turnover: A review of the research*. National Association of Secondary School Principals. <https://www.nassp.org/2019/06/05/understanding-and-addressing-principal-turnover/>
46. Gates, S. M., Baird, M. D., Master, B. K., & Chavez-Herrerias, E. R. (2019). *Principal pipelines: A feasible, affordable, and effective way for districts to improve schools*. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2666.html
47. Manna, P. (2021). *How can state policy support local school districts as they develop comprehensive and aligned principal pipelines?* The Wallace Foundation. <https://wallacefoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/How-Can-State-Policy-Support-Local-School-Districts-Principal-Pipelines.pdf>
48. University of Delaware Education & Human Development School Success Center. *Governor's Institute for School Leadership*. <https://ssc.cehd.udel.edu/departments/delaware-academy-for-school-leadership/leadership-programs/governors-institute-for-school-leadership/>
49. Delaware Academy for School Leadership. *ASPIRE*. <https://ssc.cehd.udel.edu/departments/delaware-academy-for-school-leadership/aspire/>
50. The Governor's Office of Student Achievement. *Governor's School Leadership Academy – Aspiring Principal Program*. <https://gosa.georgia.gov/governors-school-leadership-academy/aspiring-principal-program>
51. The Governor's Office of Student Achievement. *Governor's School Leadership Academy – Aspiring Principal Program*. <https://gosa.georgia.gov/governors-school-leadership-academy/aspiring-principal-program>
52. Maryland State Department of Education. *Maryland's Promising Principals' Academy*. <https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/PromisingPrincipals/index.aspx>
53. Maryland State Department of Education. *Maryland's Promising Principals' Academy*. <https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/PromisingPrincipals/index.aspx>
54. Maryland State Department of Education. (2021). *2021–2022 Promising Principals' Academy agenda*. <https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/OTPE/2021-2022PromisingPrincipalsAcademyAgenda.pdf>
55. South Carolina Department of Education. *Foundations in School Leadership (FISL)*. <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/school-and-district-administrators/programs-for-teacher-leaders/foundations-in-school-leadership-fsl/>
56. Center for the Future of Arizona. *Beat the Odds Leadership Academy*. <https://www.arizonafuture.org/programs/education-programs/beat-the-odds-school-leadership-academy/>
57. Center for the Future of Arizona. *Beat the Odds Leadership Academy*. <https://www.arizonafuture.org/programs/education-programs/beat-the-odds-school-leadership-academy/>
58. Personal email with Kerri White, Director of the Arkansas Leadership Academy (2023, April 17).
59. Spillane, J. P. (2012). *Distributed leadership*. Wiley.
60. Witmer, J. T., & Melnick, S. A. (2006). *Team-based professional development: A process for school reform*. Rowman & Littlefield Education.
61. Witmer, J. T., & Melnick, S. A. (2007). *Team-based professional development: A process for school reform*. Rowman & Littlefield Education; Binkhorst, F., Handalzalts, A., Poortman C. L., & van Joolingen W. R. (2015). Understanding teacher design teams: A mixed methods approach to developing a descriptive framework. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 51, 213–224; Gast, I., Schildkamp, K., & van der Veen, J. T. (2017). Team-based professional development interventions in higher education: A systematic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(4), 736–767. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654317704306>; Vangrieken, K., Dochy, F., Raes, E., & Kyndt, E. (2015). Teacher collaboration: A systematic review. *Educational Research Review*, 15, 17–40.

62. Arkansas Leadership Academy. *School team empowerment*. https://www.arkansasleadershipacademy.org/313714_2
63. Personal email with Kerri White, Director of the Arkansas Leadership Academy (2023, April 17).
64. Delaware Academy for School Leadership. *School improvement*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20230526171546/https://www.dasl.udel.edu/school-improvement/>
65. The Governor's Office of Student Achievement. *Governor's School Leadership Academy – District Sustainability Program*. <https://gosa.georgia.gov/governors-school-leadership-academy/district-sustainability-program>
66. Kentucky Department of Education. (2022, August 2). *Comprehensive support and improvement recovery: National Institute for School Leadership (NISL)* [Press release]. [https://education.ky.gov/school/prischedrecov/pages/national-institute-for-school-leadership-\(nisl\).aspx](https://education.ky.gov/school/prischedrecov/pages/national-institute-for-school-leadership-(nisl).aspx)
67. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2022, August 1). *N.C. Instructional Leadership Academy to support hundreds of principals statewide* [Press release]. <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/news/press-releases/2022/08/01/nc-instructional-leadership-academy-support-hundreds-principals-statewide>
68. Personal conversation with Cynthia Martin, Director of District and Regional Support at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and Alessandro Montanari, Assistant District and Regional Support at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2023, April 11).
69. Delaware Academy for School Leadership. *UDEL Professional Learning Network: Design thinking applied to supporting special education*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20231004201043/https://www.dasl.udel.edu/dasl-professional-learning-networks/>
70. Leading Early Learning (Pre-K-3). (2022). *A professional learning series for elementary administrators 2022–23*. <https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Leading%20Early%20Learning%20Informational%20Sheet%202022-23.pdf>
71. Leading Early Learning (Pre-K-3). (2022). *A professional learning series for elementary administrators 2022–23*. <https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Leading%20Early%20Learning%20Informational%20Sheet%202022-23.pdf>
72. Personal email with Cheryl Lang, ESEA Federal Programs Director at the Maine Department of Education (2023, April 17).
73. Ohio Inclusive Instructional Leadership. *OH-AiPL overview*. <https://ohioinclusiveinstructionalleadership.org/aip/>
74. South Carolina Department of Education. *Collective Leadership Initiative*. <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/school-and-district-administrators/collective-leadership-initiative/>
75. South Carolina Department of Education. (2022). *Collective Leadership Initiative schools and districts, 2022–2023*. <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/school-and-district-administrators/collective-leadership-initiative/collective-leadership-initiative-schools-and-districts-2022-2023/>
76. Los Angeles Education Partnership. *21st Century California School Leadership Academy*. <https://www.laep.org/collaborate-with-us/21csla/>
77. Idaho State Department of Education. *School improvement & support*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20230419195311/https://www.sde.idaho.gov/federal-programs/sis/>
78. Idaho State Department of Education. *School improvement & support*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20230419195311/https://www.sde.idaho.gov/federal-programs/sis/>
79. South Carolina Department of Education. *Building instructional capacity (BIC)*. <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/school-and-district-administrators/programs-for-assistant-principals/building-instructional-capacity-bic/>
80. Grissom, J. A., Egalite, A. J., & Lindsay, C. A. (2021). *How principals affect students and schools: A systematic synthesis of two decades of research*. The Wallace Foundation. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/how-principals-affect-students-and-schools-a-systematic-synthesis-of-two-decades-of-research.aspx>

81. Jacob, R., Goddard, R., Kim, M., Miller, R., & Goddard, Y. (2015). Exploring the causal impact of the McREL balanced leadership program on leadership, principal efficacy, instructional climate, educator turnover, and student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 37(3), 314–332; Miller, R. J., Goddard, R. D., Kim, M., Jacob, R., Goddard, Y., & Schroeder, P. (2016). Can professional development improve school leadership? Results from a randomized control trial assessing the impact of McREL's balanced leadership program on principals in rural Michigan schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 52(4), 531–566; Tekleselassie, A. A., & Villarreal, P. (2011). Career mobility and departure intentions among school principals in the United States: Incentives and disincentives. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 10(3), 251–293; Hughes, A. L., Matt, J. J., & O'Reilly, F. L. (2015). Principal support is imperative to the retention of teachers in hard-to-staff schools. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 3(1), 129–134.
82. The Governor's Office of Student Achievement. *Governor's School Leadership Academy – Principal Support Program*. <https://gosa.georgia.gov/governors-school-leadership-academy/principal-support-program>
83. Personal conversation with Stacey Lutz, Director of Strategic Programs and Evaluations for the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (2023, April 10).
84. Idaho Department of Education. *School improvement & support*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20230419195311/https://www.sde.idaho.gov/federal-programs/sis/>
85. Personal conversation with Kelly Foster, Associate Commissioner of the Office of Continuous Improvement and Support at the Kentucky Department of Education (2023, April 18).
86. Personal email with Alessandro Montanari, Assistant Director of District and Regional Support at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2023, April 13).
87. Steinberg, M. P., & Yang, H. (2021). *Does principal professional development improve schooling outcomes? Evidence from Pennsylvania's Inspired Leadership Induction Program* [EdWorkingPaper No. 20-190]. Annenberg Institute at Brown University. <https://edworkingpapers.com/sites/default/files/ai20-190-v2.pdf>
88. Goldring, E. B., Grissom, J. A., Rubin, M., Rogers, L. K., Neel, M., & Clark, M. A. (2018). *A new role emerges for principal supervisors: Evidence from six districts in the Principal Supervisor Initiative*. The Wallace Foundation. <https://wallacefoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/A-New-Role-Emerges-for-Principal-Supervisors.pdf>
89. Personal email with Elisabeth Peterson, Director of the Priority Schools Bureau (2023, May 9).
90. Honig, M. I. (2012). District central office leadership as teaching: How central office administrators support principals' instructional leadership. *Education Administration Quarterly*, 48(3), 733–774; Honig, M. I., & Rainey, L. (2014). Central office leadership in principal professional learning communities: The practice beneath the policy. *Teachers College Record*, 116(4), 733–774.
91. Personal email with Jamie Wilber, Director of Educator Recruitment and Retention at the Arizona Department of Education (2023, April 11).
92. University of Delaware Education & Human Development School Success Center. *Governor's Institute for School Leadership*. <https://ssc.cehd.udel.edu/departments/delaware-academy-for-school-leadership/leadership-programs/governors-institute-for-school-leadership/>
93. Federal recovery funds include Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) drawn from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act; the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act; or the America Rescue Plan Act.
94. In addition to ESSA Title funds, Missouri draws on a U.S. Department of Education Supporting Effective Educator Development Grant to fund the Missouri Leadership Development System.

About the Authors

Julie Fitz is a Researcher on the Learning Policy Institute's (LPI) Educator Quality team. She has previously worked at the Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy and the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, where she conducted research on a range of education policy issues. Her engagement with issues of educator quality is informed by experiences as a preservice teacher educator and an elementary and middle school mathematics teacher. Fitz received her doctorate in Educational Studies with a specialization in Education Policy from the Ohio State University; a Master of Arts in Philosophy and Education from Teachers College, Columbia University; and a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry from the University of Dayton.

Marjorie E. Wechsler is the Principal Research Manager at LPI and is co-lead of LPI's Educator Quality team. She leads mixed-methods research studies related to teacher and leader quality and early childhood learning. Her work at LPI focuses on supporting and documenting systems change to advance equity. Wechsler was the lead author of the book *On the Road to High-Quality Early Learning: Changing Children's Lives*. Wechsler received her doctorate in Education Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University, a Master of Education in Education Policy from Harvard University, and a teaching credential and bachelor's degree in Psychology from Brandeis University.

Stephanie Levin is a former Research Manager at LPI and currently serves as a Senior Researcher at American Institute for Research's Human Services Division. Her work centers on school leadership, school finance, resource equity, and educator professional learning. Levin has over 18 years of experience as a mixed-methods researcher and project manager focusing on educational equity; school finance and budgeting; the impact of federal, state, and district policies on teacher effectiveness and student outcomes; and teacher and school leader professional learning opportunities. Levin received a PhD in Education Policy from the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education, a Master of Public Policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, and a BS in Architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



1530 Page Mill Road, Suite 250
Palo Alto, CA 94304
p: 650.332.9797

1100 17th Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
p: 202.830.0079

[@LPI_Learning](#) | learningpolicyinstitute.org

The Learning Policy Institute conducts and communicates independent, high-quality research to improve education policy and practice. Working with policymakers, researchers, educators, community groups, and others, the Institute seeks to advance evidence-based policies that support empowering and equitable learning for each and every child. Nonprofit and nonpartisan, the Institute connects policymakers and stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels with the evidence, ideas, and actions needed to strengthen the education system from preschool through college and career readiness.