



Principal Residency Certification

Things to Consider When Choosing a Principal Certification Program

Washington State's Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) approves programs that lead directly to a Washington State Residency Certificate for principals. If you are interested in entering the principalship, AWSP encourages you to earn your certificate through one of these [institutions](#).

Most of these institutions offer their residency certificate program at numerous satellite locations around the region. Some institutions offer online courses and at least one university offers a complete online program.

These preparation programs share the following characteristics:

1. Meet PESB and legislative standards specifically designed to address the needs of Washington school principals.
2. Are regularly monitored and evaluated by the PESB.
3. Recruit faculty who have extensive experience as P-12 school administrators in Washington State.
4. Are required to maintain an advisory council of P-12 practitioners and must respond to recommendations made by those practitioners.

Additionally, AWSP staff members meet regularly with directors of these programs to discuss program content, concerns and issues of mutual interest.

When choosing the institution where you will pursue your Washington State Residency Certificate for principals, AWSP encourages you to ask several important questions. This is especially critical if you choose to pursue your residency certificate through a university or college not on the list approved by the PESB, whether it be online or in a traditional brick-and-mortar institution. As there are clear advantages to online degree and certificate programs, there are likewise cautions.

Questions you should ask out-of-state programs include:

1. Is this program approved for certification purposes by a state other than Washington?
 - a. If so, you may be able to obtain a Washington certificate as an out-of-state candidate. You will not be eligible to apply for the state-funded internship grant.
 - b. If the specific program is not approved for certification purposes in another state, you will not be able to obtain a Washington principal certificate. Many online educational administration programs lead to degrees but not to certification.
2. Is this program operated by an institution of higher education with regional accreditation?

3. Has this program been identified by the Washington Student Achievement Council as an [authorized institution](#) to offer degrees and field placements (internships) in the state of Washington?
4. What are the requirements of the internship in your program? (Among the requirements for programs approved by the PESB is an internship lasting at least 540 hours, with at least half of those hours completed when staff and/or students are present. Applicants for administrative jobs in Washington will, by and large, be competing against candidates who have completed internships at this level.)
5. To what degree will this program give me an understanding of issues, rules and procedures necessary for principals serving in Washington schools?
6. Who, specifically, from the out-of-state program will assist you in completing the certification process in the state the institution is located as well as in our state?

Questions you should ask of all programs you are considering:

1. Who will provide the guidance and supervision during my internship? What type of supervision will they provide? (In programs approved by the PESB, a university supervisor will provide on-site supervision and guidance. Additionally, the university supervisor will work with your building principal/mentor principal.)
2. How are the requirements of the program and internship expectations aligned with Washington's Principal & Program Administrator Standards-Based Benchmarks?
3. What is the Washington state placement rate of graduates of the program?

You may also wish to ask some questions of your district and colleagues, including:

1. How does your district's superintendent or human resources department (or other districts in which you may wish to serve as principal) feel about the administrator preparation program at this institution? Will your district approve an internship placement through this university program?
2. Do you know any administrators who have gone through this program or are familiar with it? What advice do they have?

Some other points to consider in your search:

- When it comes to professional training and certification, less is generally not better.
- In order to be eligible to apply for the Washington State Principal Internship Grant, applicants must be enrolled in a program that has been approved by the PESB.

AWSP applauds your consideration of a career in school administration. For further assistance, we invite you to explore our website (www.awsp.org) or call our office at 800.562.6100.