

Association of Washington School Principals
Pathways to Leadership:
Washington Certification for Principals and Program Administrators

Frequently Asked Questions

What certificates are available?

There are two certificates available: one for principal and one for program administrator.

Principal. The residency principal certificate entitles the holder to serve as a principal or assistant principal, and is *required* for those roles. To earn this certificate, an individual must:

- earn a master’s degree from a regionally-accredited college or university
- complete a state-approved principal preparation program **or** complete three years successful experience in the administrative role at the P-12 level while holding a regular administrator certificate issued by another state
- hold (or have held) a teaching certificate **or** ESA certificate
- verify successful school-based instructional experience in an educational setting

Program administrator. The program administrator certificate is designed for individuals who wish to serve as a manager of educational programs or services (examples include curriculum coordinator, director of special education, and director of elementary education). The program administrator certificate is not required to serve in these roles, but many districts value it. To earn this certificate, an individual must:

- complete a state-approved program administrator preparation program
- earn a master’s degree from a regionally-accredited college or university

Who offers approved preparation programs?

Completing a preparation program approved by the Professional Educator Standards Board will lead directly to a Washington residency certificate for administrators. Residency certificate programs are currently offered by the following institutions:

- Central Washington University (Principal and Program Administrator)
- City University of Seattle (Principal and Program Administrator)
- Eastern Washington University (Principal)
- Gonzaga University (Principal and Program Administrator)
- Heritage University (Principal and Program Administrator)
- Pacific Lutheran University (Principal and Program Administrator)
- St. Martin’s University (Principal and Program Administrator)
- Seattle Pacific University (Principal)
- Seattle University (Principal and Program Administrator)
- University of Washington—Seattle, Bothel and Tacoma (Principal and Program Administrator)
- Washington State University—Spokane, Wenatchee, Tri-Cities and Vancouver (Principal and Program Administrator)
- Western Governors University - Washington
- Western Washington University (Principal)
- Whitworth University (Principal)

Who offers approved preparation programs? (continued)

It is also possible to complete a program through an institution that is not approved by the Professional Educator Standards Board, as long as that institution is approved by another state to offer administrator certification. Potential candidates may apply for Washington residency certification as an out-of-state candidate.

It is important to note that because the Professional Educator Standards Board does not approve or evaluate these programs, the state is unable to offer information about their nature and quality. Also, *only candidates in a PESB-approved preparation program are eligible for state-funded internship grants (see next section).*

What kind of assistance is available?

Candidates in administrator preparation programs approved by the Professional Educator Standards Board may apply for state-funded internship grants. These competitive grants are designed to cover the cost of substitutes while the candidate is engaged in the culminating internship in the preparation program. For more information, contact Macy Bruhy at the Association of Washington School Principals at macy@awsp.org or 800.562.6100.

What happens after the certificate is earned?

Residency administrator certificates are issued without expiration dates. Once you have served two years in the role of principal or assistant principal, the certificate acquires a five-year expiration date. Thus, the residency certificate is valid for up to seven years of service as an administrator, whether you begin immediately after completing your program or wait a few years to accept a position.

Before the residency certificate expires, you will be expected to earn an administrator professional certificate. To enter a professional certificate program, you must currently hold a contract in the appropriate administrative role and must have completed two years in the role.

Administrator ProCert represents the next stage of the state's move toward performance-based educator preparation programs. Program requirements, which center on completion of a Professional Growth Plan (PGP), are aligned with state and national standards for administrators. For administrators, ProCert offers the opportunity for individualized, job-embedded professional development.

Questions about pathways to educational leadership roles in Washington state?

Contact Macy Bruhy at macy@awsp.org or 800-562-6100