
Education Administrators

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Significant Points

- Many jobs require a master's or doctoral degree and experience in a related occupation, such as teaching or admissions counseling.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills are essential because much of an administrator's job involves working and collaborating with others.
- Excellent opportunities are expected since a large proportion of education administrators is expected to retire over the next 10 years.

Nature of the Work

Successful operation of an educational institution requires competent administrators. Education administrators provide instructional leadership and manage the day-to-day activities in schools, preschools, day care centers, and colleges and universities. They also direct the educational programs of businesses, correctional institutions, museums, and job training and community service organizations. (College presidents and school superintendents are covered in the *Handbook* statement on general managers and top executives.)

Education administrators set educational standards and goals and establish the policies and procedures to achieve them. They also supervise managers, support staff, teachers, counselors, librarians, coaches, and other employees. They develop academic programs, monitor students' educational progress, train and motivate teachers and other staff, manage career counseling and other student services, administer recordkeeping, prepare budgets, and perform many other duties. They also handle relations with parents, prospective and current students, employers, and the community. In an organization such as a small day care center, one administrator may handle all these functions. In universities or large school systems, responsibilities are divided among many administrators, each with a specific function.

Educational administrators who manage elementary, middle, and secondary schools are called *principals*. They set the academic tone and actively work with teachers to develop and maintain high curriculum standards, develop mission statements, and set performance goals and objectives. Principals confer with staff to advise, explain, or answer procedural questions. They hire, evaluate, and help improve the skills of teachers and other staff. They visit classrooms, observe teaching methods, review instructional objectives, and examine learning materials. Principals must use clear, objective guidelines for teacher appraisals, because pay often is based on performance ratings.

Principals also meet and interact with other administrators, students, parents, and representatives of community organizations. Decision-making authority has increasingly shifted from school district central offices to individual schools. School principals have greater flexibility in setting school policies and goals, but when making administrative decisions they must pay attention to the concerns of parents, teachers, and other members of the community.

Preparing budgets and reports on various subjects, including finances and attendance, and overseeing the requisition and allocation of supplies also is an important responsibility of principals. As school budgets become tighter, many principals have become more involved in public relations and fundraising to secure financial support for their schools from local businesses and the community.

Principals must take an active role to ensure that students meet national, State, and local academic standards. Many principals develop partnerships with local businesses and school-to-work transition programs for students. Increasingly, principals must be sensitive to the needs of the rising number of non-English speaking and culturally diverse student body. In some areas, growing enrollments also are a cause for concern because they lead to overcrowding at many schools. When addressing problems of inadequate resources, administrators serve as advocates for the building of new schools or the repair of existing ones. During summer months, principals are responsible for planning for the upcoming year, overseeing summer school, participating in workshops for teachers and administrators, supervising building repairs and improvements, and working to make sure the school has adequate staff for the school year.

Schools continue to be involved with students' emotional welfare as well as their academic achievement. As a result, principals face responsibilities outside the academic realm. For example, many schools have growing numbers of students from dual-income and single-parent families or students who are themselves teenage parents. To support these students and their families, some schools have established before- and after-school childcare programs or family resource centers, which also may offer parenting classes and social service referrals. With the help of community organizations, some principals have established programs to combat increases in crime, drug and alcohol abuse, and sexually transmitted diseases among students.

Assistant principals aid the principal in the overall administration of the school. Some assistant principals hold this position for several years, during which time they prepare for advancement to principal; others are assistant principals throughout their careers. They are primarily responsible for scheduling student classes, ordering textbooks and supplies, and coordinating transportation, custodial, cafeteria, and other support services. They usually handle student discipline and attendance problems, social and recreational programs, and health and safety matters. They also may counsel students on personal, educational, or vocational matters. With the advent of site-based management, assistant principals are playing a greater role in ensuring the academic success of students by helping to develop new curriculums, evaluating teachers, and dealing with school-community relations—responsibilities previously assumed solely by the principal. The number of assistant principals that a school employs may vary, depending on the number of students.

Administrators in school district central offices oversee public schools under their jurisdiction. This group includes those who direct subject-area programs such as English, music, vocational education, special education, and mathematics. They supervise instructional coordinators and curriculum specialists, and work with them to evaluate curriculums and teaching techniques and improve them. (Instructional coordinators are covered elsewhere in the *Handbook*.) Administrators also may

oversee career counseling programs and testing that measures students' abilities and helps to place them in appropriate classes. Others may also direct programs such as school psychology, athletics, curriculum and instruction, and professional development. With site-based management, administrators have transferred primary responsibility for many of these programs to the principals, assistant principals, teachers, instructional coordinators, and other staff in the schools.

In preschools and childcare centers, which are usually much smaller than other educational institutions, the director or supervisor of the school or center often serves as the sole administrator. Their job is similar to that of other school administrators in that they oversee daily activities and operation of the schools, hire and develop staff, and make sure that the school meets required regulations and educational standards.

In colleges and universities, *provosts*, also known as *chief academic officers*, assist presidents, make faculty appointments and tenure decisions, develop budgets, and establish academic policies and programs. With the assistance of *academic deans* and *deans of faculty*, they also direct and coordinate the activities of deans of individual colleges and chairpersons of academic departments. Fundraising is the chief responsibility of the *director of development* and also is becoming an essential part of the job for all administrators.

College or university department heads or *chairpersons* are in charge of departments that specialize in particular fields of study, such as English, biological science, or mathematics. In addition to teaching, they coordinate schedules of classes and teaching assignments; propose budgets; recruit, interview, and hire applicants for teaching positions; evaluate faculty members; encourage faculty development; serve on committees; and perform other administrative duties. In overseeing their departments, chairpersons must consider and balance the concerns of faculty, administrators, and students.

Higher education administrators also direct and coordinate the provision of student services. *Vice presidents of student affairs or student life*, *deans of students*, and *directors of student services* may direct and coordinate admissions, foreign student services, health and counseling services, career services, financial aid, and housing and residential life, as well as social, recreational, and related programs. In small colleges, they may counsel students. In larger colleges and universities, separate administrators may handle each of these services. *Registrars* are custodians of students' records. They register students, record grades, prepare student transcripts, evaluate academic records, assess and collect tuition and fees, plan and implement commencement, oversee the preparation of college catalogs and schedules of classes, and analyze enrollment and demographic statistics. *Directors of admissions* manage the process of recruiting, evaluating, and admitting students, and work closely with *financial aid directors*, who oversee scholarship, fellowship, and loan programs. Registrars and admissions officers at most institutions need computer skills because they use electronic student information systems. For example, for those whose institutions present college catalogs, schedules, and other information on the Internet, knowledge of online resources, imaging, and other computer skills is important. *Athletic directors* plan and direct intramural and intercollegiate athletic



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activities, seeing to publicity for athletic events, preparation of budgets, and supervision of coaches. Other increasingly important administrators direct public relations, distance learning, and technology.

Work environment. Education administrators hold leadership positions with significant responsibility. Most find working with students extremely rewarding, but as the responsibilities of administrators have increased in recent years, so has the stress. Coordinating and interacting with faculty, parents, students, community members, business leaders, and State and local policymakers can be fast-paced and stimulating, but also stressful and demanding. Principals and assistant principals, whose varied duties include discipline, may find working with difficult students to be challenging. They are also increasingly being held accountable for ensuring that their schools meet recently imposed State and Federal guidelines for student performance and teacher qualifications.

About 1 in 3 education administrators work more than 40 hours a week and often supervise school activities at night and on weekends. Most administrators work year round, although some work only during the academic year.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Most education administrators begin their careers as teachers and prepare for advancement into education administration by completing a master's or doctoral degree. Because of the diversity of duties and levels of responsibility, educational backgrounds and experience vary considerably among these workers.

Education and training. Principals, assistant principals, central office administrators, academic deans, and preschool directors usually have held teaching positions before moving into administration. Some teachers move directly into principal positions; others first become assistant principals, or gain experience in other administrative jobs at either the school or district level in positions such as department head, curriculum

specialist, or subject matter advisor. In some cases, administrators move up from related staff jobs such as recruiter, school counselor, librarian, residence hall director, or financial aid or admissions counselor.

In most public schools, principals, assistant principals, and school district administrators need a master's degree in education administration or educational leadership. Some principals and central office administrators have a doctorate or specialized degree in education administration. In private schools, some principals and assistant principals hold only a bachelor's degree, but the majority have a master's or doctoral degree.

Educational requirements for administrators of preschools and childcare centers vary depending on the setting of the program and the State of employment. Administrators who oversee preschool programs in public schools are often required to have at least a bachelor's degree. Child care directors who supervise private programs are usually not required to have a degree; however, most States require a preschool education credential, which often includes some postsecondary coursework.

College and university academic deans and chairpersons usually advance from professorships in their departments, for which they need a master's or doctoral degree; further education is not typically necessary. Admissions, student affairs, and financial aid directors and registrars sometimes start in related staff jobs with bachelor's degrees—any field usually is acceptable—and obtain advanced degrees in college student affairs, counseling, or higher education administration. A Ph.D. or Ed.D. usually is necessary for top student affairs positions. Computer literacy and a background in accounting or statistics may be assets in admissions, records, and financial work.

Advanced degrees in higher education administration, educational leadership, and college student affairs are offered in many colleges and universities. Education administration degree programs include courses in school leadership, school law, school finance and budgeting, curriculum development and evaluation, research design and data analysis, community relations, politics in education, and counseling. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) accredit programs designed for elementary and secondary school administrators. Although completion of an accredited program is not required, it may assist in fulfilling licensure requirements.

Licensure and certification. Most States require principals to be licensed as school administrators. License requirements vary by State, but nearly all States require either a master's degree or some other graduate-level training. Some States also require candidates for licensure to pass a test. On-the-job training, often with a mentor, is increasingly required or recommended for new school leaders. Some States require administrators to take continuing education courses to keep their license, thus ensuring that administrators have the most up-to-date skills. The number and types of courses required to maintain licensure vary by State. Principals in private schools are not subject to State licensure requirements.

Nearly all States require child care and preschool center directors to be licensed. Licensure usually requires a number of years of experience or hours of coursework or both. Some-

times, it requires a college degree. Often, directors are also required to earn a general preschool education credential, such as the Child Development Associate credential (CDA) sponsored by the Council for Professional Recognition, or some other credential designed specifically for directors.

One credential specifically for directors is the National Administration Credential, offered by the National Child Care Association. The credential requires experience and training in child care center management.

There are usually no licensing requirements for administrators at postsecondary institutions.

Other qualifications. To be considered for education administrator positions, workers must first prove themselves in their current jobs. In evaluating candidates, supervisors look for leadership, determination, confidence, innovativeness, and motivation. The ability to make sound decisions and to organize and coordinate work efficiently is essential. Because much of an administrator's job involves interacting with others—such as students, parents, teachers, and the community—a person in such a position must have strong interpersonal skills and be an effective communicator and motivator. Knowledge of leadership principles and practices, gained through work experience and formal education, is important. A familiarity with computer technology is a necessity for principals, who are required to gather information and coordinate technical resources for their students, teachers, and classrooms.

Advancement. Education administrators advance through promotion to higher level administrative positions or by transferring to comparable positions at larger schools or systems. They also may become superintendents of school systems or presidents of educational institutions.

Employment

Education administrators held about 443,000 jobs in 2006. Of these, 56,000 were preschool or child care administrators, 226,000 were elementary or secondary school administrators, and 131,000 were postsecondary administrators. The great majority—over 80 percent—worked in public or private educational institutions. Most of the remainder worked in child daycare centers, religious organizations, job training centers, and businesses and other organizations that provided training for their employees.

Job Outlook

Employment of education administrators is projected to grow about as fast as average, as education and training take on greater importance in everyone's lives. Job opportunities for many of these positions should be excellent because a large proportion of education administrators are expected to retire over the next 10 years.

Employment change. Employment of education administrators is expected to grow by 12 percent between 2006 and 2016, about as fast as the average for all occupations, primarily due to growth in enrollments of school-age children. Enrollment of students in elementary and secondary schools is expected to grow slowly over the next decade, which will limit the growth of principals and other administrators in these schools. However, the number of administrative positions will continue to increase as more administrative responsibilities are placed on

Projections data from the National Employment Matrix

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2006	Projected employment, 2016	Change, 2006-16	
				Number	Percent
Education administrators	11-9030	443,000	496,000	53,000	12
Education administrators, preschool and child care center/ program	11-9031	56,000	69,000	13,000	24
Education administrators, elementary and secondary school	11-9032	226,000	243,000	17,000	8
Education administrators, postsecondary.....	11-9033	131,000	150,000	19,000	14
Education administrators, all other	11-9039	30,000	33,000	3,700	13

NOTE: Data in this table are rounded. See the discussion of the employment projections table in the *Handbook* introductory chapter on *Occupational Information Included in the Handbook*.

individual schools, particularly related to monitoring student achievement. Preschool and childcare center administrators are expected to experience substantial growth due to increasing enrollments in formal child care programs as fewer young children are cared for in private homes. Additionally, as more States implement or expand public preschool programs, more preschool directors will be needed.

The number of students at the postsecondary level is projected to grow more rapidly than other student populations, creating significant demand for administrators at that level. A significant portion of the growth will occur in the private and for-profit segments of higher education. Many of these schools cater to working adults who might not ordinarily participate in postsecondary education. These schools allow students to earn a degree, receive job-specific training, or update their skills in a convenient manner, such as through part-time programs or distance learning. As the number of these schools continues to grow, more administrators will be needed to oversee them.

Job prospects. Principals and assistant principals should have very favorable job prospects. A sharp increase in responsibilities in recent years has made the job more stressful and has discouraged some teachers from taking positions in administration. Principals are now being held more accountable for the performance of students and teachers, while at the same time they are required to adhere to a growing number of government regulations. In addition, overcrowded classrooms, safety issues, budgetary concerns, and teacher shortages in some areas all are creating additional stress for administrators. Many teachers feel that the increase in pay for becoming an administrator is not high enough to compensate for the greater responsibilities.

Opportunities may vary by region of the country. Enrollments are expected to increase the fastest in the West and South, where the population is growing faster, and to decline or remain stable in the Northeast and the Midwest. School administrators also are in greater demand in rural and urban areas, where pay is generally lower than in the suburbs.

Although competition among faculty for prestigious positions as academic deans and department heads is likely to remain keen, fewer applicants are expected for nonacademic administrative jobs, such as director of admissions or student affairs. Furthermore, many people are discouraged from seeking administrator jobs by the requirement that they have a master's or doctoral degree in education administration—as well as by the opportunity to earn higher salaries in other occupations.

Earnings

In May 2006, elementary and secondary school administrators had median annual earnings of \$77,740; postsecondary school administrators had median annual earnings of \$73,990, while administrators in preschool and childcare centers earned a median of \$37,740 per year. Salaries of education administrators depend on several factors, including the location and enrollment level in the school or school district.

According to a survey of public schools, conducted by the Educational Research Service, average salaries for principals and assistant principals in the 2006-07 school year were as follows:

Principals:

Senior high school.....	\$92,965
Jr. high/middle school	87,866
Elementary school.....	82,414

Assistant principals:

Senior high school.....	\$75,121
Jr. high/middle school	73,020
Elementary school.....	67,735

According to the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources, median annual salaries for selected administrators in higher education in 2006-07 were as follows:

Chief academic officer	\$140,595
Academic deans:	
Business	\$135,080
Arts and sciences	121,942
Graduate programs.....	120,120
Education	117,450
Nursing.....	112,497
Health-related professions.....	110,346
Continuing education	99,595
Occupational studies/vocational education	83,108

Other administrators:

Chief development officer	\$125,000
Dean of students.....	80,012
Director, student financial aid	68,000
Registrar	66,008
Director, student activities.....	50,000

Benefits for education administrators are generally very good. Many get 4 or 5 weeks of vacation every year and have

generous health and pension packages. Many colleges and universities offer free tuition to employees and their families.

Related Occupations

Education administrators apply organizational and leadership skills to provide services to individuals. Workers in related occupations include administrative services managers; office and administrative support worker supervisors and managers; and human resource, training, and labor relations managers and specialists. Education administrators also work with students and have backgrounds similar to those of counselors; librarians; instructional coordinators; teachers—preschool, kindergarten, elementary, middle, and secondary; and teachers—postsecondary.

Sources of Additional Information

For information on principals, contact:

► The National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1615 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314-3483.

Internet: <http://www.naesp.org>

► The National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1537.

Internet: <http://www.nassp.org>

For a list of nationally recognized programs in elementary and secondary educational administration, contact:

► The Educational Leadership Constituent Council, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191.

Internet: <http://www.npbea.org/ELCC/index.html>

For information on collegiate registrars and admissions officers, contact:

► American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, One Dupont Circle NW., Suite 520, Washington, DC 20036-1171. Internet: <http://www.aacrao.org>

For information on professional development and graduate programs for college student affairs administrators, contact:

► NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, 1875 Connecticut Ave. NW., Suite 418, Washington, DC 20009.

Internet: <http://www.naspa.org>

For information on the National Administrator Credential for child care directors, contact:

► National Child Care Association, 2025 M St NW., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20036. Internet: <http://www.nccanet.org>

For information on the Child Development Associate Credential, contact:

► Council for Professional Recognition, 2460 16th St., NW., Washington, DC 20009. Internet: <http://www.edacouncil.org>