

The approval of the Pathways Alliance Principal Apprenticeship National Guideline Standards (NGS) by the U.S. Department of Labor marks an important milestone in strengthening and modernizing the educator workforce pipeline. At a time when districts and states across the country continue to face educator shortages, leadership pipeline challenges, and the financial burden associated with traditional preparation pathways, high-quality principal preparation is essential to building sustainable systems for educator support and student achievement.

Research consistently shows that principals are among the most influential drivers of school outcomes. [A major synthesis of two decades of research from the Wallace Foundation¹](#) found that effective principals contribute to higher student achievement, improved attendance, reduced chronic absenteeism, and stronger teacher retention.

Just as importantly, the Principal NGS situates school leadership within a larger system of stackable workforce credentials and educator career advancement. Rather than treating a tutor, teacher assistant, teacher, and school leadership as isolated roles with separate entry points, apprenticeship creates an integrated career pathway that enables educators to build expertise, experience, credentials, and leadership capacity over time.

THE PRINCIPAL NGS SUPPORTS STATES AND DISTRICTS TO:



Launch principal apprenticeships



Align to leadership standards



Structure competency-based mentorship and on-the-job learning



Support succession planning



Access workforce/apprenticeship funding

FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE NOW

SEED, TQP, Comprehensive Centers, RELs, and Content Centers can support:

- Principal apprenticeship implementation
- Strategic staffing and succession planning
- Workforce-aligned educator preparation
- Mentorship and competency-based learning
- Research, evaluation, and continuous improvement

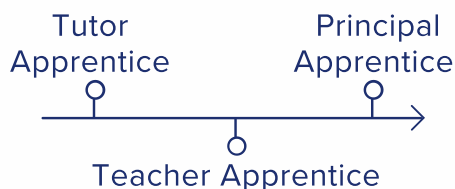


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Federal funding opportunities are available now to build and scale strategic staffing and apprenticeship programs.

Principal apprenticeships are not a standalone initiative; they are part of a broader educator workforce strategy connected to tutoring, teaching, and leadership pathways.

EDUCATOR WORKFORCE PIPELINE



+2.9 months of learning in math



+2.7 months of learning in reading

Impact of replacing below-average principal with above-average principal on student achievement

[Wallace Foundation](#)