

ABSTRACT: Illinois Partnerships Advancing Rigorous Training (IL-PART)

The Illinois Partnerships Advance Rigorous Training project represents a collaborative effort between high-need districts and universities that have come together in formal partnerships aimed at improving the way in which principals are prepared and developed in Illinois. IL-PART is comprised of 3 qualifying high-need district/university partnerships: Aurora (East) District 131/North Central College; Bloomington District 87/Illinois State University; and Quincy District 172/Western Illinois University.

This consortium of partners are collaborating in a two-fold effort aimed at: 1) enhancing the role of the district/university partnerships to create rigorous and relevant principal training programs aligned to the complexities faced by today’s principals; and 2) working collectively to improve teaching and learning and support high academic standards for students in participating high-need districts. The IL-PART project builds upon recent education reforms in Illinois that have resulted in new legislative mandates that require redesigned principal preparation programs, and new principal performance evaluations that must incorporate multiple measures of student growth. In doing so, IL-PART meets the School Leadership Program’s Invitational Priority: 1 - Building Leadership Capacity by integrating the training requirements for evaluation into our proposal and aligning the systems of support for in-service training with the new principal evaluation systems.

The purpose of the project is to inform preparation program development and continuous improvement through robust partnerships between districts and universities. Additionally, IL-PART will inform policy changes by developing a greater understanding of the factors that facilitate or inhibit change; identifying mechanisms and structures that produce effective district/university partnerships; and evaluating differences between two principal internship models in outcomes involving principals’ knowledge and behaviors as wells as their impact on student learning outcomes.