

Bridge Project: Central Office Support

Frequently Asked Questions

Why focus on Illinois central office supports for current and future principals?

The Bridge Project focuses on Illinois central office supports for principal hiring and retention. We're focusing Illinois central office supports because:

- About 50 percent of Illinois superintendents report principal positions are hard-to-staff, though we have an oversupply of administratively-certified educators in our state;
- District central offices create conditions for principal success and retention through policies, programs and supervision;
- State and regional systems sustain principal talent.

Our state can't develop and retain principals if district central offices aren't engaged in designing the solutions.

What is the Bridge Project: Central Office Initiative?

The Bridge Central Office Initiative is a year-long, voluntary opportunity for school district leaders to support the acceleration of all aspiring principals, specifically those who identify as women and people of color, in their systems. Focus will be on aligning systems, removing barriers, and creating conditions for the development, recruitment and retention of principals.

The Bridge Project offers free professional development and coaching to district central office teams.

The Bridge Project is supported by the Illinois ROE Lead Hubs and WestEd through a grant from the US Department of Education. The Illinois ROE Lead Hubs are a collaborative among Illinois regional offices of education. WestEd is a national non-profit with a ten-year history of working with the Illinois ROE Lead Hubs. Both organizations collaboratively designed the learning program to meet the needs of Illinois school districts.

What are the benefits of participating in the Bridge Central Office program?

The Bridge Central Office program provides:

- Superintendents and district central office teams have the opportunity to engage in a state-wide network of superintendents and district leaders in Illinois.
- Participants will have the opportunity to increase the quality of their principal pipeline systems and practices, setting the foundation for change in principal hiring practices, retention and performance in Illinois.
- Central office teams will identify a problem of practice regarding the development, recruitment and/or retention of principals, and to jointly develop a plan for improvement.
- Monthly professional development and coaching provided to the superintendent and/or their leadership team.

Who should join central office teams?

It typically takes a team to grow and support principals in a coordinated way. We would like superintendents to work on a team with their in-district colleagues. The team should include people who are committed to learning through inquiry, sharing best practices, and responsibilities for key principal supports in the district. We anticipate district teams will include 5 to 10 people. Superintendents choose team members, which may include:

- Superintendent
- Assistant superintendent
- Human resource director
- Director of schools
- Principal supervisors
- Principals
- Board members

What is the end-goal of participation?

The superintendent and other district leaders will have created a model of support for aspiring and existing principals in their districts, by examining their current status and developing strategies to remove barriers, create supports, and align initiatives and expectations throughout their districts in support of the hire and retention of a diverse cadre of principals to lead their schools.

What is our time commitment?

The networked learning will be tailored to the network. The time commitment will include:

- Three (3) in-person Institutes with other district central office teams in September, January, and June.
- Five (5), two-hour professional development sessions (Central Office Team)
- Eight (8), 90-minute coaching sessions for the superintendent and potential key district leaders

How do I learn more?

Connect with your Illinois ROE coordinator or the Bridge Project.

- ROE 1: Michaela Fray
- ROE 17: Erika Hunt
- ROE 19: Debbie Doyle
- ROE 21: Dee Ann Schnautz
- ROE 28: Scott Kuffel
- ROE 50: Martha Weld
- The Bridge Project: thebridgeproject@wested.org

How do we join?

Connect with your ROE coordinator to join and complete the [interest form](#). Then, complete the memorandum of understanding (MOU) and plan to meet your coach
