

Professional Certifications:  
K12 Principal, Level 1 and 2  
Supervisor of Instruction, Level 1 and 2  
Director of Special Education, Level 1 and 2  
Superintendent

August 6, 2025

The University of Louisville's education leadership program is built on the foundation of continuous improvement. As a systems-thinking based program, the education leadership faculty are keenly aware of the need to remain nimble to better respond to the needs of the education professionals with whom we work and serve.

To that end, we recognize the market requires us to reinvent what we offer our students. It is a highly competitive marketplace with the power of the dollar driving choice, rather than program quality. In our attempt to remain competitive, we are endeavoring to be more practitioner friendly in program design. We serve not only the Jefferson County Public Schools, but also 13 additional member school districts surrounding the Louisville metro area in the Ohio Valley Education Cooperative (OVEC) for a total of 14 school districts.

Candidates in our program must have at least Level I certification in order to pursue positions as assistant principals and principals in school districts in this region. With an estimated 265 schools in OVEC, that translates to 265 principals and a minimum of 265 assistant principals. That number increases when considering larger schools employ more than one assistant principal. This number does not include additional district level leadership positions, and we offer certification pathways for those positions, as well. Dr. Kathy House, Chief of Educator Success at OVEC shared with us that of the 92 principal positions across the OVEC member districts excluding those in JCPS, 23 of those positions overturned in 2024-2025, which is approximately 25% of the principal workforce. Additionally, over the last three academic years, eight of the 14 superintendents leading OVEC districts were new to their role. She said, "We need to build our pipeline of administrators as much as our pipeline of teachers."

A Kentucky Department of Education survey indicated 64 vacant school-level administrative positions during the 2023-2024 school year, meaning the position was filled by an interim or duties covered by other administrators. National data provided in part by the Wallace Foundation indicates that approximately 18% of principals are no longer in the same position one year later with this rate higher in high-poverty schools (21%) and for principals with 10+ years of experience (14.7%). A recent survey found that half of school leaders are considering leaving their roles due to stress, with 14% planning to leave in the next year. The data suggests increasing turnover in administrative positions in Kentucky schools, potentially due to retirement and a lack of qualified applicants to fill the necessary positions.

Looking specifically at JCPS data, the following data table indicates district estimates for vacancies due to retirement only. That does not take into account promotions or leaving the district for other opportunities.

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Year (As of September 1st)	Anticipating AP Vacancies: Retirement only (27 years service and/ or 55 years of age)	Anticipated Principal Vacancies: Retirement only (27 years service and/or 55 years of age)
25-26	<b>11</b> (ES-2 , MS-3, HS-5 ,SP-1)	<b>13</b> (ES-4 , MS-2 HS-6)
26-27	<b>14</b> (ES-5 , MS-5 HS-4 ,SP-)	<b>6</b> (ES-3 , MS-1 HS-1 ,SP-1)
27-28	<b>14</b> (ES-6 , MS-5 HS-3 ,SP)	<b>10</b> (ES-6 , MS-1 HS-2 ,SP-1)
28-29	<b>20</b> (ES-8 , MS-7 HS-5 ,SP)	<b>8</b> (ES-6 , MS-1 HS-1)
20-30 *Significant Increase in AP vacancies	<b>27*</b> (ES-7, MS-7, HS-12, SP-1)	<b>11</b> (ES-8 , MS-2 HS-1)

We have determined that a stackable credential model may be the best option for our programming now to help us establish a foothold in this marketplace. We have created the following pathway for students--mission critical is the approval of the master's in education leadership. While an initial Level I principal certification may be obtained with the newly imagined graduate certificate, a student **must** complete the master's program to be eligible for full certification as a principal. Adding the supervisor of instruction certification through the master's program allows candidates to pursue central office positions requiring supervisory duties. Reimagining our Ed.S. now as advanced district level certification allows candidates a clear pathway for licensure leading up to and including superintendent certification.

Our program is high-quality requiring collaborative work with our partner districts. We incorporate district specific instructional leadership in our program and include district personnel as guest lecturers ensuring that no matter the district, our candidates are "day one ready" for leadership positions. We are also proud to report we have a 100% pass rate on the required School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) 6990 in each of the last four years.

We have reimagined the certification progression for students desiring to pursue education administrative positions to include stackable credentials while not jeopardizing the high-quality programming or the collaborative partnerships with the districts we serve. We have vetted this new design with both JCPS and OVEC and both are supportive of this design.

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### Education Leadership Stackable Credential Pathway-Advanced Certifications

\*KY EPSB (Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board) is the professional certifying agency in Kentucky. Candidates are recommended by the university for certification which is then awarded by EPSB for those who qualify.

\*\*Benefits the student in terms of a salary increase in their respective school districts

\*\*\*Indicates a new pathway for candidates

UofL Program/Degree	# Hours Above Previous Credential	Total # Hours Above Baccalaureate Degree	*KY EPSB Certification	**School District Rank for Salary Increase
***Graduate Certificate	15-21 with electives	15-21 with electives	Level I Principalship Certification	Rank III +15 hours (Bachelors +15)
***Master's Degree	15-21 with electives	30-42 with electives	Level II Principalship Certification  Supervisor of Instruction Certification	30 hours above a Bachelors  Rank II
EdS Degree	15-21 with electives	42-54 with electives	Superintendent Certification  Director of Special Education Certification	Rank II +15
EdD Degree	45-60 with electives	60-X with electives		Rank I (30 hours above a Master's)  Additional salary increase at the discretion of the school district for the EdD designation