

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING AMENDMENT (Franken-Bennet)

Effective principals are essential to improving student achievement at high-need schools.

There is virtually no documented instance of a struggling school that has been turned around without an effective principal. This should come as no surprise; it's a matter of common sense to expect a school or any organization that has overcome great challenges to have a strong leader. Moreover, research shows that school leadership is second only to teacher quality in its impact on student achievement. And while teacher quality has the greatest impact, several studies show that principal quality determines whether schools can attract and retain effective teachers.

Too few principals are prepared to lead high-need and rural schools. Attracting and retaining quality principals is challenging for high-need and rural schools across the country. In fact, research confirms that schools serving minority, low-income, and low-achieving students tend to be led by the least qualified principals. While there are a few outstanding programs in some areas of the country that train principals to lead high-need and rural schools, these programs are the exception rather than the rule.

The amendment will address the shortage of skilled principals in high-need and rural schools by investing in proven strategies for recruiting and preparing effective principals. The amendment includes the following elements:

- **Competitive Grants.** The amendment will provide competitive grants to recruit and prepare principals to lead low-income, rural, persistently low-achieving, and achievement gap schools.
- **A Focus on Instructional Leadership and Data Usage.** In contrast to typical principal preparation programs, programs funded under this amendment will focus on training current and aspiring principals to become instructional leaders and to use student data to inform school improvement efforts.
- **A Year-Long Residency and Two Years of Follow-Up Support.** The programs for aspiring principals will combine coursework with hands-on learning through a year-long residency at a school under the wing of a mentor principal. These programs will also provide their graduates with additional professional development and support for at least two years after they begin their work as principals.
- **A School Turnaround Leadership Academy.** The amendment will fund an academy that will disseminate research on school turnaround leadership, and train experienced principals to turn around persistently low-achieving schools.
- **Accountability for Results.** Grantees will compete to renew their grants or scale up their efforts based on their performance. The primary determinant of each grantee's performance will be the extent to which principals trained by the grantee's program have improved student achievement at their schools.
- **Research and Evaluation.** The amendment will fund an evaluation of the grantees' programs and the dissemination of the best practices of effective programs.