

## Fact Sheet 2010



# SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS: JUST THE FACTS

### **The Numbers**

- In 2008, there were 445,400 education administrators. Fifty-eight thousand nine hundred were preschool or child care administrators, 230,600 were elementary or secondary school administrators and 124,600 were postsecondary administrators.<sup>1</sup>
- The Department of Labor projects that employment for education administrators will increase from 445,400 in 2008 to 482,500 workers in 2018. This projection is lower than the previous projection from 2006–16 (443,000 to 496,000).<sup>2</sup>
- Employment is projected to increase by 9% for elementary and secondary school administrators, 2% for postsecondary administrators, 12% for preschool and child care centers and programs, and 24% for all other education administrators.<sup>3</sup>

### **Employment**

- In 2008, over 81% of administrators worked for private or public education institutions. The rest worked in child daycare centers, religious organizations, job training centers, and businesses and other organizations that provided training for their employees.<sup>4</sup>

### **Education: Supply of Teachers Grows as Enrollment Varies**

- In many public schools, principals, assistant principals, and school district administrators need a master's degree in education administration or educational leadership. Some principals and central office administrators have a doctorate or specialized degree in education administration.
- Administrators generally have teaching experience prior to moving into the role of education administrator. Most states require principals to be licensed as school administrators. Academic deans and chairpersons generally have a doctorate in their specialty.
- Many administrators who started out as teachers were required by institutions to get advanced degrees. The Department of Education reports that more people complete a Master's degree in Education than any other degree. In 2004–05, 167,000 people received this degree, which is a 10% increase from 2003–04 and a 22% increase from 2002–03.<sup>5</sup>
- Public school enrollment is expected to vary across the nation and increase in the Western region. Between 2005 and 2017, public elementary and secondary school enrollment is projected to increase 15% in the West and 19% in the South and increase 1% in the Midwest. Over the same period, in the Northeast enrollment is projected to decrease 3%.<sup>6</sup>
- Between 2005 and 2017, public school enrollment in pre-K through eighth grade will increase by 12%. However, for the same period, public school enrollment in grades nine to 12 is projected to increase by 4%.<sup>7</sup>

## **Despite the Increase in Education-Related Occupations, Conditions Can Be Difficult**

- The Department of Labor predicts that as the school-age population increases, more institutions will increase their flexibility in dealing with financial matters and changing student interests. These kinds of executive decisions will further increase the importance of school administrators.<sup>8</sup>
- As of 2010, 49 states and the District of Columbia reported teacher shortages in core curriculum areas to the Department of Education.<sup>9</sup> Government regulations, overcrowded classrooms, safety issues, budgetary concerns, and teacher shortages in some areas have recently caused more stress for administrators. Many teachers feel the higher pay of administrators is not high enough to compensate for the greater responsibilities and choose not to become administrators.
- Student misconduct and school violence challenge school administrators. One Government Accountability Office (GAO) study finds that 47% of public school administrators feel they give undue attention and time to students who misbehave, which hinders their ability to meet state and district learning standards and makes hiring substitute teachers more difficult.<sup>10</sup> In 2004, a case-study of an urban elementary school found that administrators spent 160 hours on disciplinary referrals and suspensions that year.<sup>11</sup>
- According to school principals, 78% of public elementary and secondary schools experienced at least one violent incident during the 2005–06 school year. Seventeen percent of public schools experienced one or more serious violent incidents (including rape, sexual battery other than rape, physical attack with a weapon, and robbery with and without a weapon). Primary schools were less likely to experience a violent incident than middle or high schools: 67% of primary schools experienced a violent incident, compared with 94% of middle schools and 95% of high schools.<sup>12</sup>
- In general, the percentage of principals reporting discipline problems was higher in large schools than in small schools. For example, 35% of principals at schools with 1,000 or more students reported that student acts of disrespect for teachers occurred at least once a week, whereas 12% of principals at schools with less than 300 students reported this discipline problem.<sup>13</sup>

## **Demographic Data**

- In 2009, 20.5% of all school administrators were minorities: 10.7% were Black or African American, 2.6% were Asian, and 7.2% were Hispanic or Latino.<sup>14</sup>
- In 2009, the majority of school administrators—62.6%—were female.<sup>15</sup> Despite this preponderance of women in the profession, median weekly earnings for women are \$1,093 and median weekly earnings for men are \$1,432.<sup>16</sup>
- While an upward trend exists for females in the field, research suggests that barriers to entry may still exist in public schools in situations where a female teacher wants to become an administrator. A study performed by RAND in three states found that from 1987–2000, men in Illinois were 2.5 times more likely than women to leave teaching to become assistant principals, and men in North Carolina were over three times more likely to do so. Yet, once promoted to assistant principal, women in Illinois were more likely than men to advance further up the administrative ladder, and women in North Carolina were just as likely as men to do so. In New York, men were 30% more likely than women to be certified for an administrative position; but once certified, women were equally as likely as men to become a principal.<sup>17</sup>

- RAND also found that the public school gender gap is larger in primary schools than in secondary schools. In all three states, women constitute an overwhelming majority of elementary teachers and a smaller majority of secondary school teachers. In 2000, 94% of North Carolina's elementary teachers were female, compared with 63% of high school teachers. At the same time, 58% of elementary school principals were female, compared with 24% of high school principals. However, the difference in the probability of promotion for men versus women was found to be the largest for elementary school teachers and the smallest for high school teachers.
- Average mean salaries for minority female and male school administrators are often more than those of their white counterparts because minority school administrators tend to work in urban areas where salaries are higher. White male and female school administrators are more likely to work in rural areas where wages tend to be lower.<sup>18</sup> According to a study from the Educational Research Service, African American superintendents make an average of \$143,706 annually, while Hispanic superintendents make \$139,354 and white superintendents make \$115,356.<sup>19</sup> White male superintendents make an average of \$113,937 annually, while minority males make \$124,283 on average. White female superintendents make \$121,065 on average, while minority females make \$155,574 on average.<sup>20</sup>

### **Wages and Benefits**

- In 2008, elementary and secondary school administrators had mean annual wages of \$83,880. The same year, post secondary school administrators had mean annual wages of \$80,670 and preschool and childcare administrators earned a mean of \$39,940 per year.<sup>21</sup>
- For the 2007–08 school year, the Educational Research Service conducted a survey and found that the average salary for principals is \$97,486 for senior high schools and \$91,334 for junior high schools. For assistant principals, the average salary is \$79,391 for senior high schools and \$76,053 for junior high schools.<sup>22</sup>
- School administrators generally receive very good benefits. Many get good health and pension packages and four or five weeks vacation every year. In addition, several colleges and universities offer free tuition to employees and their families.<sup>23</sup>
- There is a strong correlation between district size and salary for senior administrators. Principals in districts with more than 2,500 students make more than \$100,000, on average, while those in districts smaller than 2,500 students make about 20% less. Also, districts which spent more than \$10,000 per student pay higher salaries than districts that spend less.<sup>24</sup>
- However, wages and benefits vary by location, job category, and by national region. Demand for school administrators, large school size, and challenging work environments often lead to higher wages in urban areas. Rural areas also have a large demand for rural school administrators, but they often do not have the resources to pay higher wages. Suburban areas have less demand for school administrators due in part to higher pay and often greater school resources.<sup>25</sup>

<b>Mean of Average Salaries Paid in Public School Systems by Region, 2005–06<sup>26</sup></b>		
<b>Region</b>	<b>Superintendent</b>	<b>Senior High School</b>
New England	\$129,251	\$102,341
Southwest	\$105,345	\$69,258
Rocky Mountains	\$100,802	\$73,299
Mid-East	\$136,231	\$101,645
Southeast	\$121,143	\$78,736
Great Lakes	\$110,599	\$84,857
Plains	\$102,109	\$78,740
Far West	\$128,425	\$93,234

<b>Annual Median Wage by Area and Type of Administrator<sup>27</sup></b>				
<b>Area</b>	<b>Preschool/Child Care Center/ Program</b>	<b>Elementary and Secondary School</b>	<b>Postsecondary</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>CA</b>	\$42,550	\$93,070	\$75,930	\$59,600
<b>DC</b>	\$32,310	\$97,710	\$68,030	\$109,100
<b>IL</b>	\$38,320	\$83,270	\$56,710	\$72,540
<b>NY</b>	\$50,820	\$92,410	\$85,220	\$81,500

<b>Mean of Average Salaries Paid In Public School Systems by Location, 2005–06<sup>28</sup></b>						
	<b>Large Urban</b>	<b>Medium Urban</b>	<b>Suburban</b>	<b>Small Town</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Superintendent	\$172,387	\$149,168	\$148,698	\$108,137	\$91,618	\$123,107
High School Principal	\$96,288	\$100,101	\$103,429	\$81,879	\$71,679	\$87,894

### **Unionization**

- Between 2003 and 2009, the number of administrators who were union members increased from 16.1%<sup>29</sup> to 17.3%<sup>30</sup>. The percent of members covered by a collective bargaining agreement also increased from 19.9%<sup>31</sup> to 20.3%.<sup>32</sup>
- In 2009, school administrators who belonged to unions earned a mean hourly wage of \$33.60. Non-union school administrators earned \$27.97. Overall, school administrators who belong to unions have higher salaries and better benefits than those who do not.<sup>33</sup>
- The American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA), established in 1974, provides labor relations, professional, and occupational services to public school principals, vice

principals, administrators, and supervisors. AFSA also offers insurance, member benefits, and a scholarship program.<sup>34</sup>

- AFSA offers four types of direct benefits and one group benefit. Direct benefits include automatic enrollment in an accidental death insurance plan and coverage of \$10,000 at no cost. Other direct benefits: legal action trust, granted members are not found guilty for criminal charges, occupational liability coverage of up to \$1,000,000, and disability coverage of \$1,500/month, up to \$15,000. The group benefit covers accidental death and dismemberment.
- School administrators who belong to unions can increase their skills and job potential by attending union-sponsored workshops and seminars. For example, Local 1 of AFSA, the Council of School Supervisors & Administrators in New York, offers classes on grant-writing, budgeting, conflict resolution, data technology, student discipline, and many other issues.<sup>35</sup>

### **School Administrators and Student Achievement**

Since the enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) there has been increased attention on student achievement and academic standards. Most research has been devoted to how teachers can positively impact student achievement; however, several studies indicate that school administrators, in conjunction with teachers and other staff, can positively affect student achievement.

- In 2005, EdSource conducted a large scale survey of California elementary schools serving low-income students to determine why some schools achieved higher levels of student achievement than others. In the study, researchers found that schools with good leadership were more likely to have pervasive and sustained student learning. The report identified a number of practices that made up ‘good’ school leadership.<sup>36</sup>
- School administrators at high performing schools play a crucial role in establishing high expectations for students and teachers, communicating a clear plan for student achievement and teacher cooperation, and establishing priorities and making expectations for meeting state and federal standards clear. They also work to create an environment where everyone has a stake in school improvement.<sup>37</sup>
- In high performing schools, school administrators serve as a conduit between the district and the classroom. In the most effective relationships, the district provides strong guidance on curriculum and student achievement goals, which the school administration is able to share with teachers and implement in the school.<sup>38</sup>
- Another important aspect of the school administrator to school district relationship is the sharing and use of student achievement data. Student testing provides a wealth of data to schools and school districts; however, it is the responsibility of school administrators and district officials to use this data to positively affect student achievement. By effectively analyzing data, principals can evaluate teacher practices and performance, as well as address the academic needs of students by developing strategies and goals for academic improvement.<sup>39</sup>
- Principals and other school administrators are charged with the responsibility to engage parents and the community in improving student achievement. Schools with a greater connection to their community and increased parental involvement have higher rates of student achievement.<sup>40</sup>

- Perhaps one of the most important roles of the administrator in assuring student achievement is in providing a safe and orderly environment for student learning. School climate is a basic building block for school effectiveness, particularly in high-performing, high-poverty schools. In the California study, 70% of teachers and 90% of principals in high-performing schools agreed that attendance policies, enforcement of the rules, and respect for cultural differences were effectively in place at their school.<sup>41</sup>
- Finally, principals and other school administrators in high-performing schools can improve student achievement by obtaining resources to serve students and teachers, most importantly textbooks and classroom materials.<sup>42</sup>

### **School Administrators and Teacher Retention**

A major problem for schools today is retaining and attracting high-quality teachers. This problem is most pervasive in high-poverty, urban, and rural areas where school districts receive fewer job applicants and have higher staff turnover rates. Although many factors affect teacher retention, school administrators play a large role in creating teacher satisfaction and promoting teacher retention.<sup>43</sup>

- In 2006, a MetLife Study of *Teacher Expectations and Experiences* found that many of the factors that contribute to teacher satisfaction are based on the teacher-principal relationship. In fact, 97% of teachers felt that it was very important for principals to treat teachers with respect, 87% said it was important for the principal to provide direction for the school, 82% felt it was important for the principal to show appreciation for teachers work and for the principal to administer student discipline fairly, and finally, 58% said it was important for the principal to make themselves available to staff during the day.<sup>44</sup>
- Teachers who were dissatisfied with their careers had less satisfying and less frequent contact with their principal.<sup>45</sup>
- Many of the factors that most strongly determine teacher satisfaction, preparation and expectations, involvement in and ability to influence decisions, and principal leadership, all can be influenced by school administrators. Teachers are more likely to stay in their profession when they feel that they have a say in policies which affect them, have strong and supportive principal leadership, and are in an environment which is safe and student discipline is enforced.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010–11 Edition*.

<sup>2</sup> Lacey, T. Alan and Benjamin Wright. “Occupational Employment Projections to 2018”, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, November 2009.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Digest of Education Statistics 2005, Degree Completion.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Projections of Education Statistics to 2017.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Dohm, Arlene and Lynn Shniper. “Occupational Employment Projections to 2016”, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, November 2007.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Education, *Teacher Shortage Areas Nationwide Listing for the years 1990-91 through 2010-11*, March 2010. Available at: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/pol/tsa.html#list>.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Student Discipline Report*, 1999.

- <sup>11</sup> Scott, T.M., and S. Barrett. “Using Cost/Benefit Analysis with School-Wide Positive Behavior Support: A Sample Evaluation of Lifestyle Change at the Systems Level”, *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 2004, 6(1), pp. 21-28.
- <sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2007.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, 2010, Table 11.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Current Population Survey, 2010, Table 39.
- <sup>17</sup> RAND Corporation Research Brief Series, “The Careers of Public School Administrators”, 2004.
- <sup>18</sup> Educational Research Service, National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools, 2005–06.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010–11 Edition*, “Education Administrators”. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos007.htm>
- <sup>22</sup> “Salaries & Wages Paid Professional and Support Personnel in Public Schools, 2007–08”, Educational Research Service. [www.ers.org](http://www.ers.org)
- <sup>23</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008–09 Edition*, “Education Administrators”.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Education Administrators”, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008–09 Edition*.
- <sup>26</sup> Educational Research Service, “Principals’ Pay Fails to Keep Pace with Cost of Living”, 2007.
- <sup>27</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Survey, May 2005.
- <sup>28</sup> Educational Research Service, National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools, 2005–06.
- <sup>29</sup> *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, Volume 56, No. 2, January 2003, pp. 349–54. (in PDF).
- <sup>30</sup> Hirsch, Barry T. and David A. MacPherson, “Union Membership Earnings Data Book”, Bureau of National Affairs, 2010 Edition. pg. 56.
- <sup>31</sup> *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, op. cit.
- <sup>32</sup> “Union Membership Earnings Data Book”, op. cit.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> American Federation of School Administrators. [www.admin.org](http://www.admin.org)
- <sup>35</sup> Council of School Supervisors and Administrators. <http://www.csa-nyc.org>
- <sup>36</sup> “Similar Students, Different Results: Why do some schools do better?”, *EdSource*, June 2006.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>43</sup> “Meeting the Challenge: Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Hard to Staff Schools”, American Federation of Teachers, 2007.
- <sup>44</sup> “MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Expectations and Experiences”, *MetLife*, 2006.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

For further information on professional workers, check out DPE’s Web site: [www.dpeaflcio.org](http://www.dpeaflcio.org).

*The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) comprises 23 AFL-CIO unions representing over four million people working in professional, technical and administrative support occupations. DPE-affiliated unions represent: teachers, college professors and school administrators; library workers; nurses, doctors and other health care professionals; engineers, scientists and IT workers; journalists and writers, broadcast technicians and communications specialists; performing and visual artists; professional athletes; professional firefighters; psychologists, social workers and many others. DPE was chartered by the AFL-CIO in 1977 in recognition of the rapidly-growing professional and technical occupations.*

Source: DPE Research Department  
815 16<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20006

Contact: Alexis Spencer Notabartolo  
(202) 638-0320, extension 119  
[anotabartolo@dpeaflcio.org](mailto:anotabartolo@dpeaflcio.org)

April 2010