



# Highlights

## Leadership

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### Getting Good Leaders into Hard-to-Staff Schools

By John Hancock  
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The Education Commission of the States (ECS) conducted a 50-state search that focused on statewide legislation and programs aimed at recruiting and retaining education leaders in “hard-to-staff” and “in need” primary and secondary schools. The results of that search found the following states with policies in place regarding leaders in hard-to-staff schools. For more information regarding teachers in hard-to-staff schools, please visit the ECS [Issue Site](#) on Teaching Quality, Hard-to-Staff Schools.

#### Search Findings

- Policies and programs for teachers in hard-to-staff schools are abundant, but policies and programs that specifically target principals and superintendents are very scarce. When principals and superintendents are included, they often are included simply as “staff” or “educators.”
- Teachers often are charged with the job of improving struggling schools’ academic performance; leaders often are held accountable. Programs and legislation focused on leaders occur in states that recognize leadership has a direct impact on student performance.
- Financial incentives are the most commonly used recruiting and retention methods for educators in hard-to-staff schools.

This information is based on a search of Lexis-Nexis, state legislature Web sites, and state department of education Web sites. If your state has a statewide program or legislation that addresses recruitment and retention of leaders in hard-to-staff schools that is not included in this document, please contact John Hancock at [jhancock@ecs.org](mailto:jhancock@ecs.org).

#### What’s States Are Doing

##### Arkansas

ARK. CODE ANN. § 6-17-1602

In addition to the yearly incentive bonus provided for successful completion of the Master School Principal Program, the department of education pays a salary bonus of \$25,000 for every school year, up to five years, to any building-level principal who receives a master school principal designation from the Arkansas Leadership Academy and is employed full time as a building-level principal in an Arkansas public school district that is or was designated as a public school in phase two or phase three school improvement status, or a public school located in a school district in academic distress.

##### California

[CAL. EDUC. CODE § 44511.\(A\)](#)

A Crisis Management team is assigned to struggling schools to review hiring practices and staff retention practices. County superintendents are required to review schools ranked in deciles 1 to 3 as defined by the Academic Performance Index to ensure all teachers have the appropriate certificates and credentials to teach their assigned subject matter. If not, the superintendent is responsible for providing the appropriate training for these teachers.

## [Local Education Agency](#)

This agency receives schools' requests for funding leadership institute training programs under the AB 75 law, and determines those districts and schools that are eligible. The agency also is required to give priority to "hard-to-staff" school leaders.

## **Delaware**

### [Critical Need Scholarships](#)

This program provides financial assistance to full-time employees of a Delaware school district or charter school who are employed on an Emergency or Limited Standard Certificate in a critical need area as defined by the Delaware Department of Education. The maximum reimbursement/term for the 2004-05 academic year is \$738 for undergraduate coursework, \$981 for graduate coursework. Recipients must complete courses with a 2.0 grade point average or higher on a 4.0 scale.

## **Georgia**

Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-214 ([SB. 468](#) passed 4/19/06)

Under the Quality Basic Education Act, this statute guarantees specific grant money for those principals considered to be "high performing" as defined by the legislation. These principals are given a salary incentive if they are willing to take the principalship at a school which is considered "in need of improvement" by the state.

## **Hawaii**

### [HAW. REV. STAT § 302A-703](#)

The statute provides incentives to keep exemplary principals and vice principals at the school level; encourages exemplary principals and vice principals to accept long-term assignments in hard-to-staff schools, special-needs schools and schools with high teacher turnover; and encourages exemplary teachers to become vice principals.

## **Mississippi**

### [MISS CODE ANN. § 37-17-6](#)

This act authorizes the state board of education to develop a school improvement program for "at-risk" schools. It establishes a probationary period under which the state will provide an evaluation process complete with state personnel and a training process for principals and superintendents in these schools to remedy the problems defined by the evaluation teams.

## **Oregon**

### [BELL](#)

The BELL (Building Education Leaders Locally) project began with a class examining the district's culture, operations and priorities. The class, taught by district administrators and supervisors, was followed by action-research projects, group leadership projects (such as serving on district committees), administrator internships and mentoring of new administrators. Three years later, five of the original 43 participants occupied administrative positions (three in the district); eight had gained experience by serving as administrative interns or by overseeing summer programs; and 16 were in the process of earning administrative certification.

## **South Carolina**

### [S.C. CODE § 59-18-1530](#)

This legislation calls for the Leadership Academy of the South Carolina Department of Education to develop criteria for the selection of principals which a history of exemplary student academic achievement to be deemed "principal specialists." The principal specialists will then be available to the schools which are underperforming if the district school board chooses to replace the existing principal. In order to attract outstanding principals to this program, the state will provide a salary supplement equal to 1.25 times the supplement paid to teachers to be paid for two years.

## Good Reads

American Association of School Administrators, "[The Challenge of Attracting Good Teachers and Principals to Struggling Schools,](#)" 2002.

American Association of School Administrators, "[Higher Pay in Hard to Staff Schools: The Case for Financial Incentives,](#)" 2002.

National Conference of State Legislatures, "[Principals in Colorado: An Inventory of Policy and Practices,](#)" 2002.

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