

## Do Principals Matter?

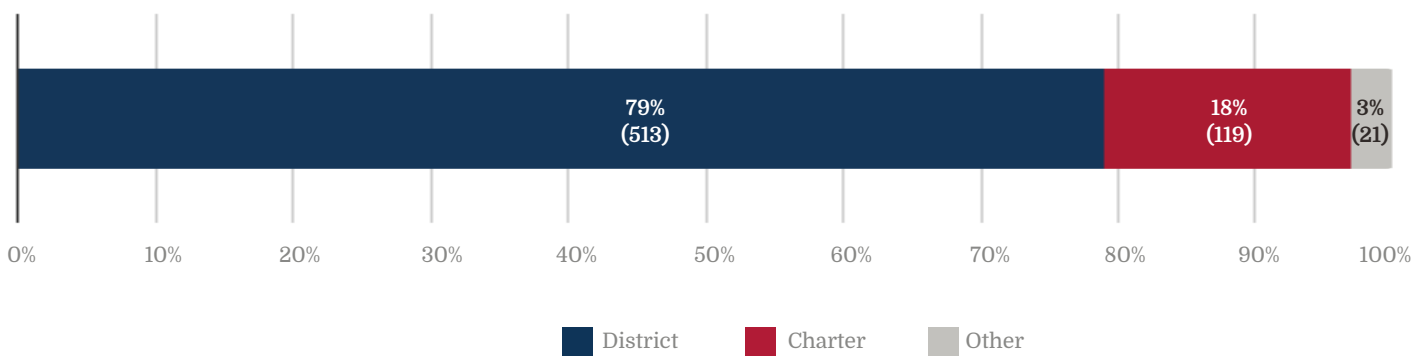
No great school exists without great school leadership. National research suggests that a top principal produces student gains between two and seven months of additional learning in one academic year.<sup>i</sup> More effective principals are both more likely to retain their best teachers and less likely to retain their lowest performing teachers.<sup>ii</sup> In fact, “there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader. Many other factors may contribute to such turnarounds, but leadership is the catalyst.”<sup>iii</sup>

In Chicago, principals are particularly important because they have unique authority to impact their schools and drive student outcomes. Indeed, there may be “no better place to see the difference that principals can make than Chicago.”<sup>iv</sup>

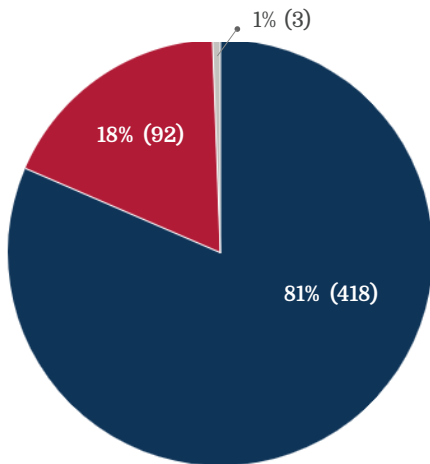
## Who are Chicago’s Principals?

Principals lead in 653 schools and impact 360,000 Chicago students.<sup>v</sup> A vast majority (513) of these schools are district-operated while another 119 are charter schools.<sup>vi</sup> The remaining 21 are other public schools, including Alternative Learning Opportunity Programs (ALOP)<sup>vii</sup> and SAFE schools<sup>viii</sup> that offer students options to receive credits for their studies through alternative educational placements.

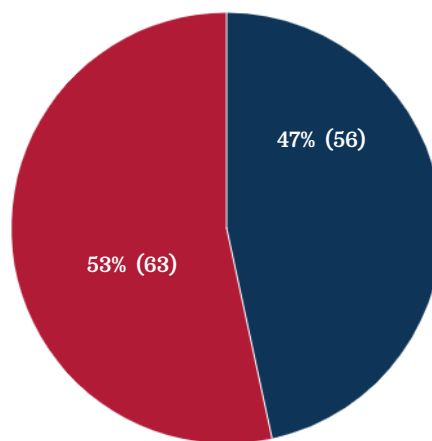
Principals Serving in Chicago’s 653 Public Schools: 2018-19



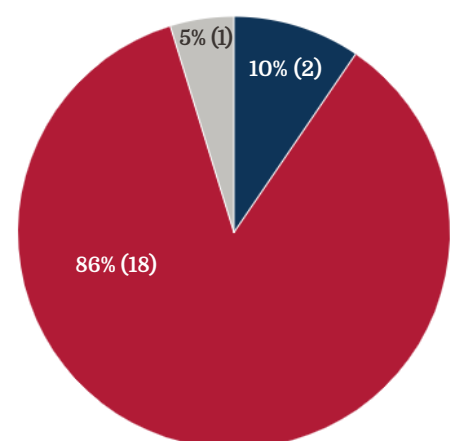
District Schools



Charter Schools



Other Schools



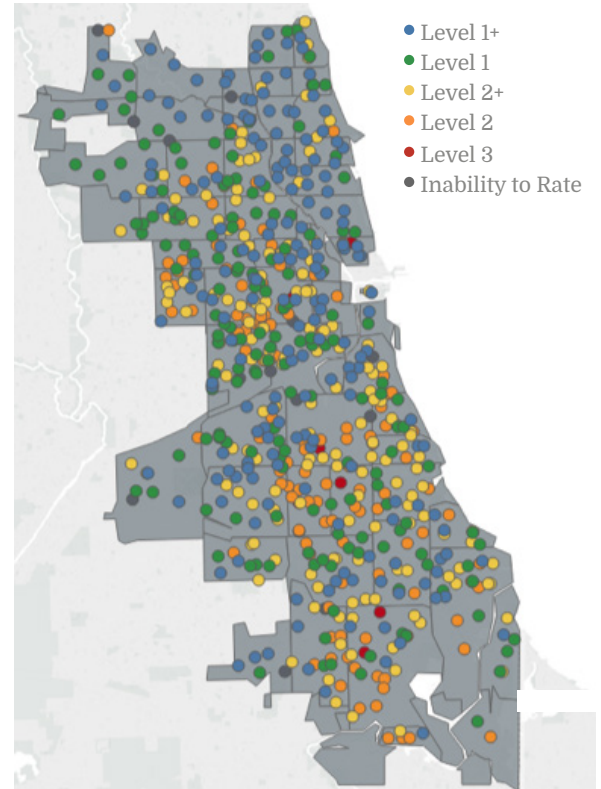
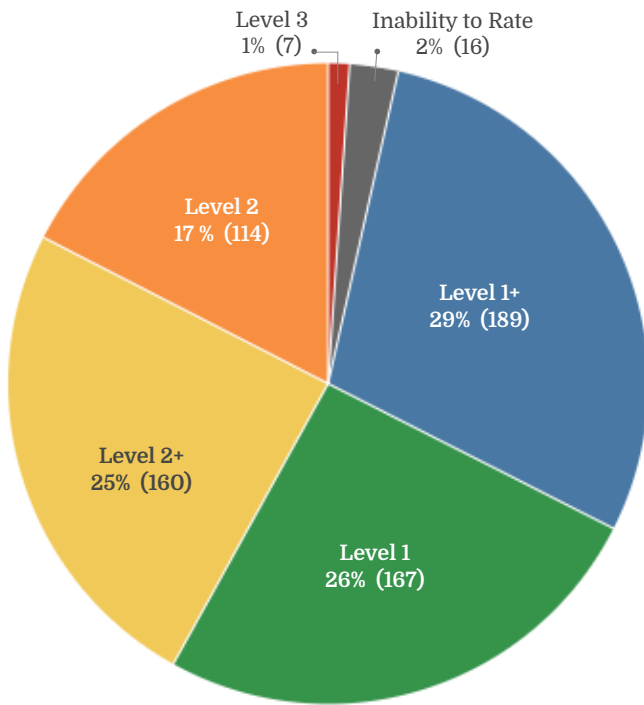
Elementary School  
High School  
Combination School

Elementary School  
High School

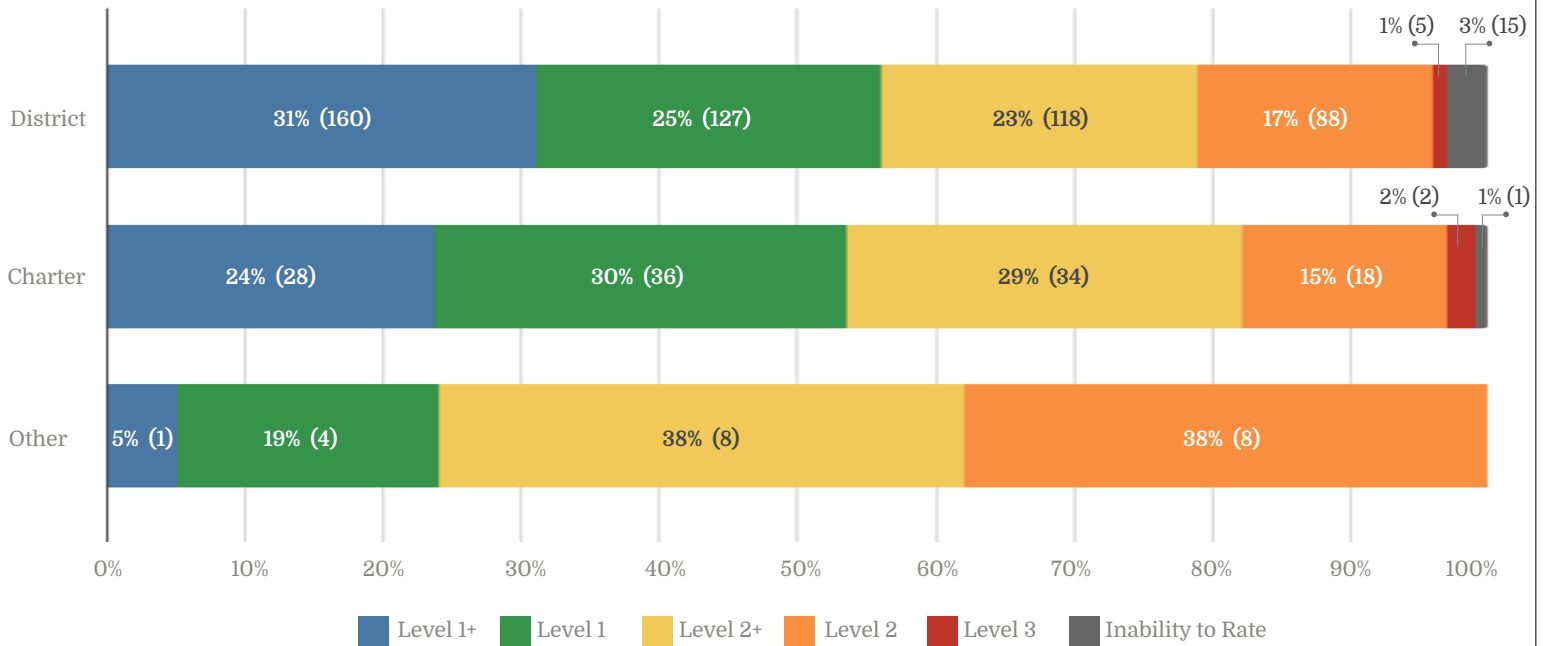
Elementary School  
High School  
Combination School

All principals aim to drive school improvement and to provide Chicago's students with a quality education. Over 300,000 of the city's students are served in schools that meet the district's performance standard (a Level 1+, Level 1 or Level 2+ rating).<sup>ix</sup> As in prior years, it's clear that while many of the highest-performing (Level 1+) schools are in the northern part of the city, there are principals leading high-performing schools throughout Chicago.

## School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) Level of Schools Led by Chicago's Principals



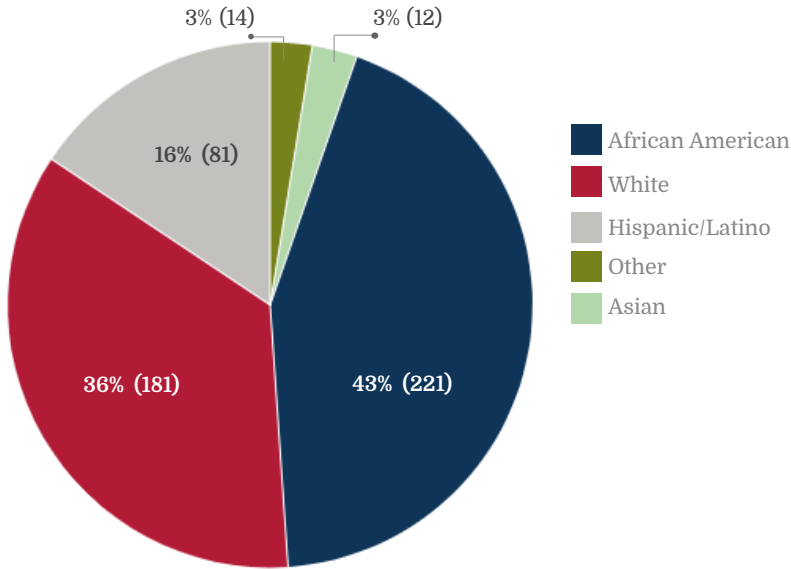
## SQRP Level by Governance



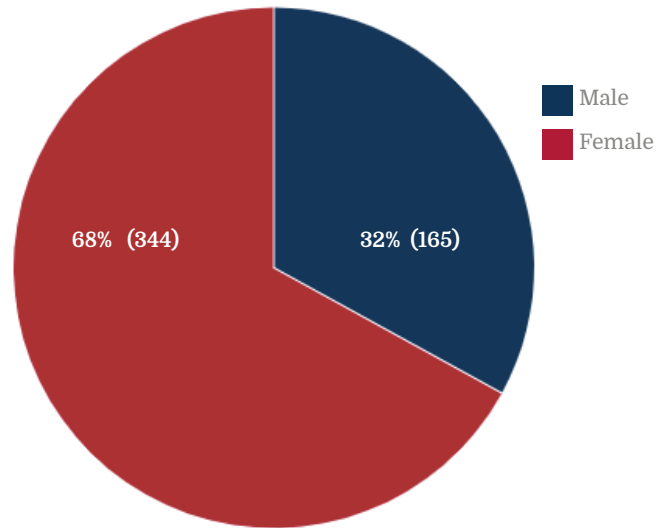
## District-Operated Schools

Below is additional detail about principals in district-operated schools.\* These leaders are a diverse set of professionals with a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Principals with four to five years of experience are less common than those in years zero to two or two to three.<sup>xi</sup> The Fund is exploring ways to support principals in these early to mid-career stages.

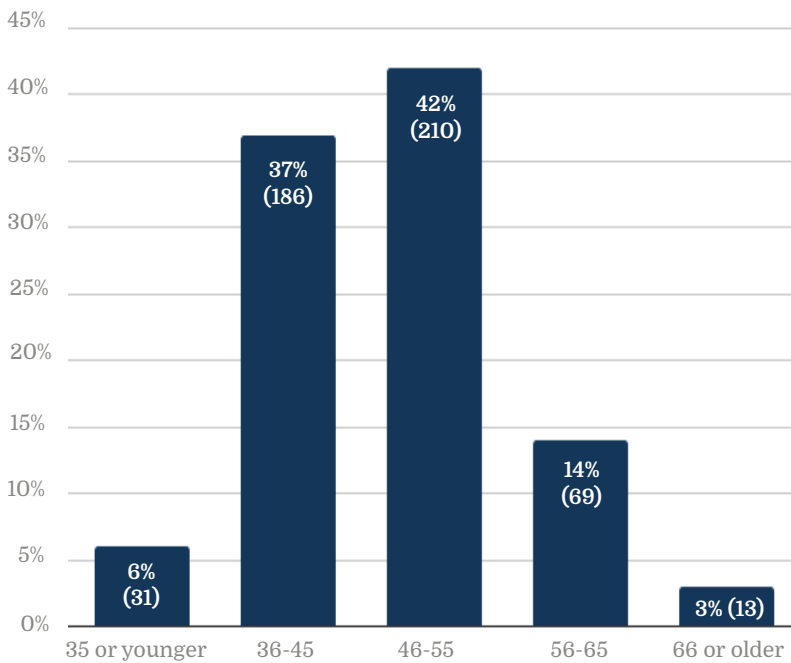
**Principal Race**



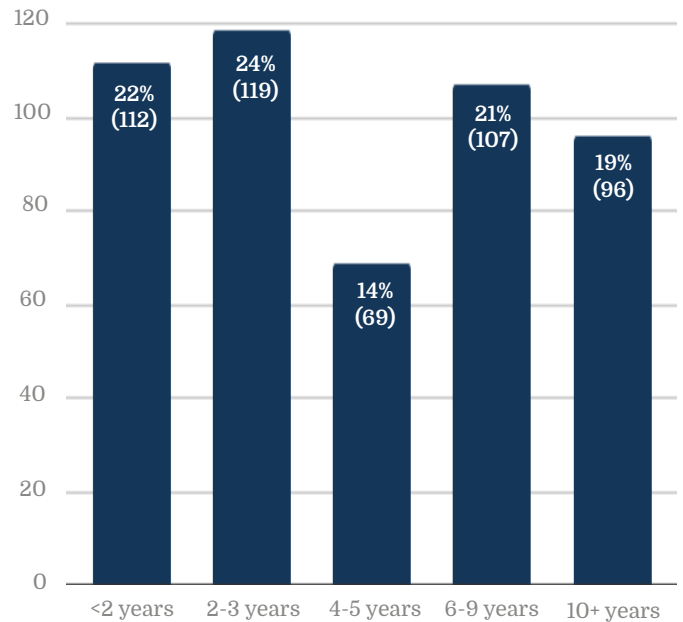
**Principal Gender**



**Principal Age**



**Principal Years in Role**



## How do Principals Impact Chicago?

All Chicago principals are leaders with significant responsibility. They manage large staffs and budgets.<sup>xii</sup> They impact over 550 students on average each year.

**48**

STAFF members managed by an average Chicago principal

**553**

STUDENTS impacted by an average Chicago principal

**\$5.7M**

BUDGET directed by an average Chicago principal



## ABOUT THIS REPORT

It takes a great leader to make a great school. When a skilled principal is in charge, students learn more, teachers stay longer and schools grow stronger. Unfortunately, many school districts across the nation struggle to attract, develop, support and keep experienced, effective principals.

This report digs deeper into the background, experience and impact of Chicago's public school principals. By analyzing who our principals are, where they work and how they transition between jobs, we can better understand how the city can prepare its principals for a challenging, and immensely rewarding, position.

## ABOUT THE FUND

The Fund is a nonprofit organization that improves public schools in Chicago by investing in the talented educators who lead them. The Fund is a catalyst for accelerating student learning in all of Chicago's public schools and has been a longstanding leader in identifying and scaling what works for educators, as well as the students they serve.

To learn more about how The Fund supports Chicago's principals, please visit [thefundchicago.org](http://thefundchicago.org).



## Notes

<sup>i</sup> Branch, G. F., Hanushek, E. A., & Rivkin, S. G. (2012, January). Estimating the Effect of Leaders on Public Sector Productivity: The Case of School Principals. Retrieved December 1, 2018, from <http://hanushek.stanford.edu/publications/estimating-effect-leaders-public-sector-productivity-caseschool-principals>

<sup>ii</sup> Grissom, J. A., & Bartanen, B. (2018, September 27). Strategic Retention: Principal Effectiveness and Teacher Turnover in Multiple-Measure Teacher Evaluation Systems. Retrieved October 1, 2018, from <https://www.aera.net/Newsroom/Strategic-Retention-Principal-Effectiveness-and-Teacher-Turnover-in-Multiple-Measure-Teacher-Evaluation-Systems>

<sup>iii</sup> Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). How Leadership Influences Student Learning [Scholarly project]. In The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved October 1, 2018, from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Leonhardt, D. (2017, March 10). Want to Fix Schools? Go to the Principal's Office. Retrieved October 1, 2018, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/10/opinion/sunday/want-to-fix-schools-go-to-theprincipals-office.html>

<sup>v</sup> The total number of CPS schools has decreased by three schools from 2017-18 because five schools closed or merged with existing schools and two schools opened for the 2018-19 school year.

<sup>vi</sup> CPS defines a "school" as an entity authorized by the Chicago Board of Education, that has one or more buildings inside the geographic boundaries of the City of Chicago, employs at least one administrator to lead the school and at least one credentialed person to provide instruction to students. The entity should also require progression toward a terminal grade level within a single school. It should also have at least one enrolled student during the school year. In this report, ALOP programs with principals who serve CPS students are included in the total number of schools.

<sup>vii</sup> The Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP) ensures that every student can graduate from high school by offering personalized re-entry options to students who have become disengaged from the school system.

<sup>viii</sup> SAFE schools allow students temporarily removed from school for behavioral violations to continue to receive credits for their studies through alternative educational placements.

<sup>ix</sup> The School Quality Rating Policy, or SQRP, serves as the accountability system for all of Chicago's public schools.

<sup>x</sup> The number of principals serving in district-operated schools does not include principals serving in ALOP or SAFE schools. Demographic data are available for principals in 509 district-operated schools. Tenure data are available for principals in 503 district-operated schools.

<sup>xi</sup> Years in role data are as of December 31, 2018.

<sup>xii</sup> Average number of teachers managed is available for principals in the 513 district-operated schools only.