



CHICAGO

School Leader

OVERVIEW

2022

THE CHICAGO
PUBLIC
EDUCATION
FUND



Analyzing data. Accelerating leadership. Advancing schools.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Chicago Public Education Fund (The Fund) is a nonprofit organization that improves Chicago’s public schools by investing in the talented educators who lead them. For more than 20 years, we have worked with our educator, district, nonprofit, and philanthropic partners to elevate strong school leadership in our city.

On a yearly basis, we assemble and share basic statistics about Chicago’s public school leaders — principals and assistant principals.¹ In addition to demographic information, this overview provides insight into job histories, turnover, and retention rates.

These data illustrate the state of the principalship and the principal pipeline in Chicago. The Fund and our partners use these data regularly to advance our pipeline, in-role support, and retention efforts.

Chicago principals’ unique level of autonomy empowers them to make strategic decisions for successful school management. This includes hiring teachers and staff, developing operating budgets, and establishing schoolwide goals that meet their communities’ needs and ensure strong student outcomes.

Several Fund team members contributed to this report, including Alexis Ayala, Ashton Yurk, Chris LeSuer, Naureen Kheraj, and Patricia Mota. We would also like to thank Dr. Allison Tingwall, Dr. Michele Fernandes, and Devin Swartley in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Department of Principal Quality for their help and comments.

TEAMS

69

AVG. TEAM MEMBERS



15 - 361

RANGE OF TEAM SIZES

BUDGETS

\$7M

AVG. BUDGET MANAGED



\$2M - \$40M

RANGE OF BUDGETS MANAGED

STUDENTS

502

AVG. STUDENTS IMPACTED



22 - 4,488

RANGE OF STUDENTS IMPACTED

Principals



81%
DISTRICT

18%
CHARTER

1%
OTHER

638
PRINCIPALS

serve

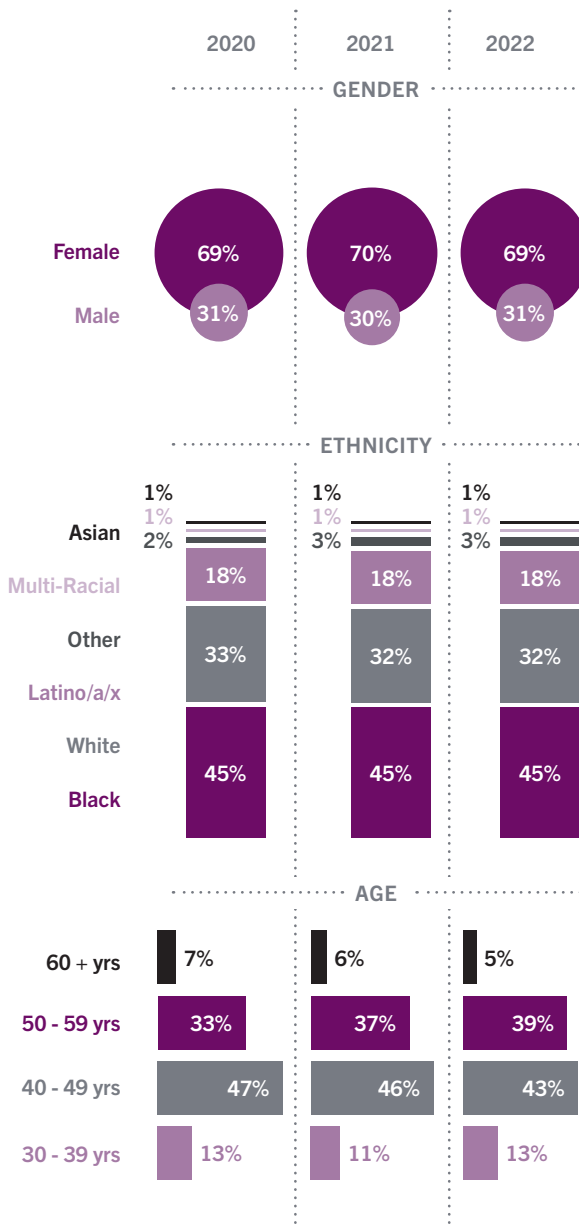
322k
STUDENTS

across

3

SCHOOL TYPES

Demographics

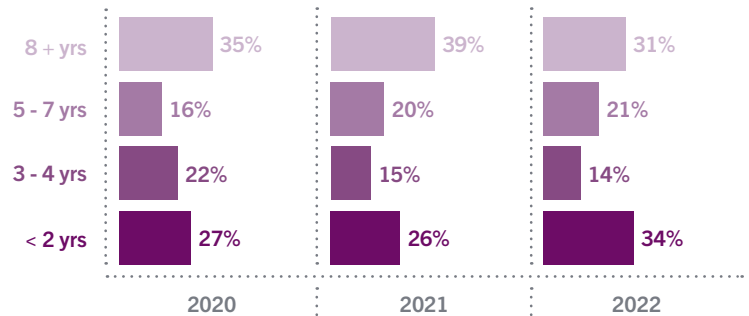


Essential to Strong Schools

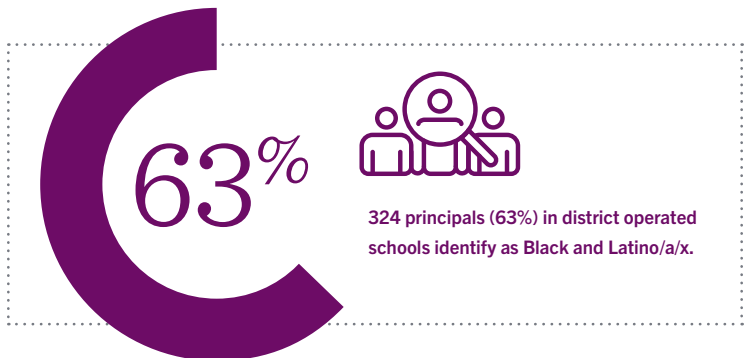
Principal leadership significantly impacts services schools provide to students and to the community. Strong principals collaborate with teachers, young people, and families. Together, they create safe, positive learning environments and foster student success.

Chicago principals are largely chosen by their school's community through Local School Councils (LSCs) or other boards. Communities focus on selecting leaders whose lived and professional experiences match the school's needs.

TENURE FOR DISTRICT PRINCIPALS



RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY HAS ROOM TO GROW

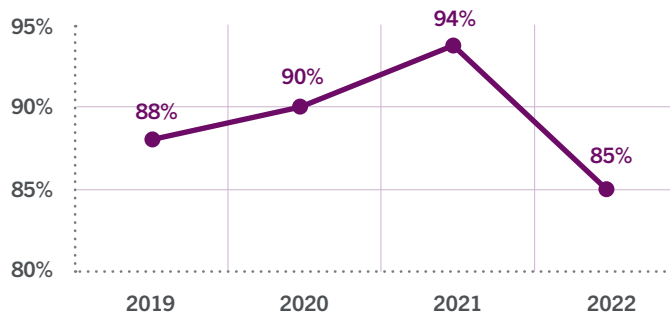


Retaining leaders, supporting impact

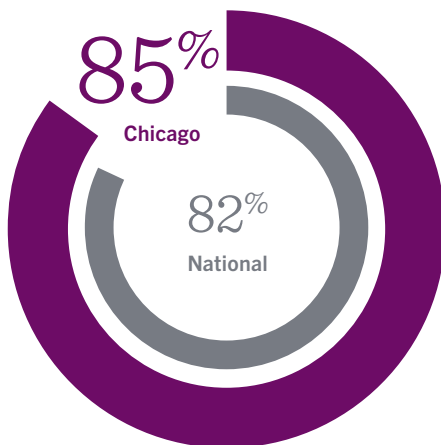
Principal Retention Decreased in 2022

Following three consecutive years of growth, principal retention reached 94% in 2021 but dropped to 85% in 2022, remaining relatively high.² Nationwide, principal retention averaged 80% per year, and was 82% in 2017.³ For example, principal retention in Philadelphia ranged from 70% to 86% between 2008 and 2016.⁴ Yet Chicago’s retention remains higher despite the decline in 2022. Since Chicago’s retention increased during 2020 and 2021, a decrease from 2021 to 2022 was expected; principals tended to “hold” planned transitions during the peak of the pandemic.

PRINCIPAL RETENTION



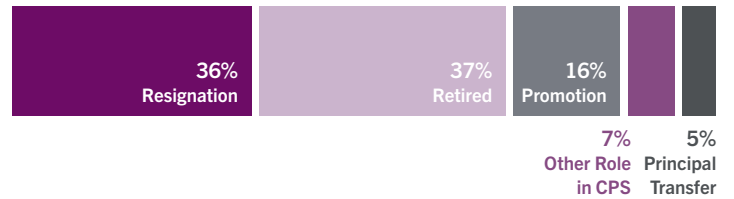
NATIONAL CONTEXT



Principals Leave for Different Reasons

Principals leave their roles most often when they retire or resign from the district. Of the 76 principals who left the role in 2022, 27 (36%) resigned and 28 (37%) retired. Only 21% of departures were retirements over 2017-2021.

TRANSITION REASONS



Many Principals who Leave their Role Remain within the District

In 2022, four principals (5%) became principal at another school and 12 (16%) received a promotion to a Central Office or Network Office leadership position. Of these, eight took positions as a Network or Deputy Chief. As with retirements, principal departures due to promotions were higher (16%) in 2022 than in 2017 through 2021 (11%). This suggests the pandemic may have delayed some of these promotions. Identifying such dynamics around turnover can help inform succession planning for principals.

INTERNAL PROMOTIONS



Assistant Principals



536

ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

serve

245k

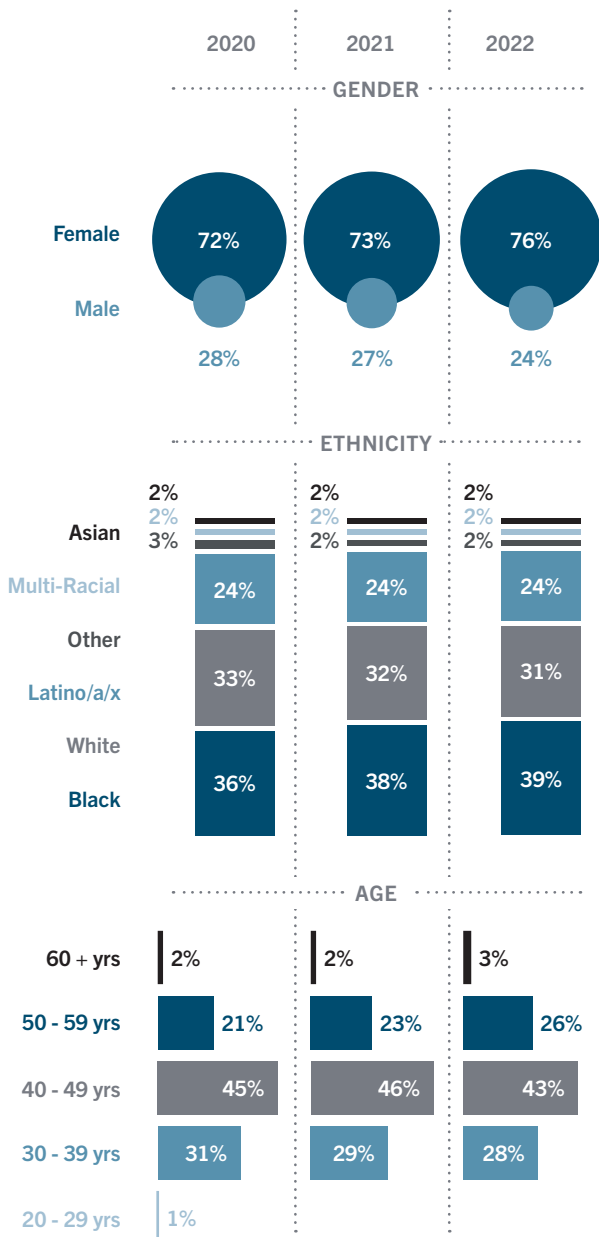
STUDENTS

across

3

SCHOOL TYPES

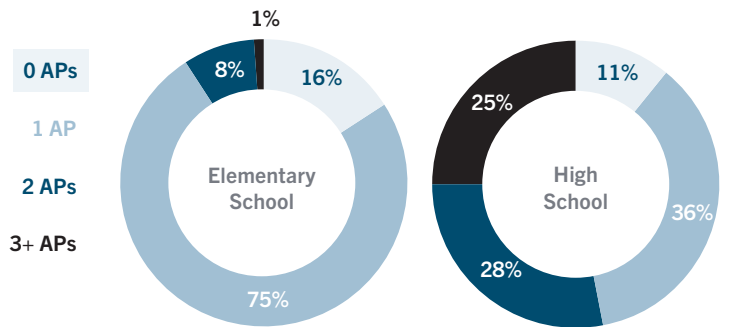
Demographics



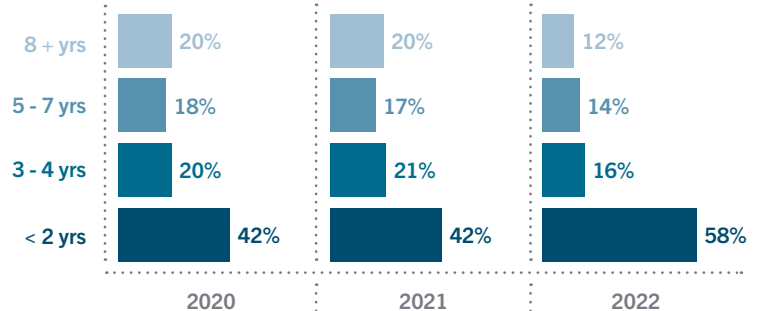
Trusted Support

There are 536 assistant principals (APs) in Chicago's district-managed schools. APs also serve in charter schools, but their data is reported and tracked differently. Principals trust their APs to implement and improve school curriculum, to support the professional growth of teachers, and to manage instructional leadership teams. Since 2020, the number of APs has increased by 22 (4.3%). At the same time, the number of schools without an AP has increased by five. In 2022-23, 68 elementary schools (16%) and nine high schools (11%) do not have an AP.

NUMBER OF APs PER SCHOOL LEVEL



TENURE FOR DISTRICT APs

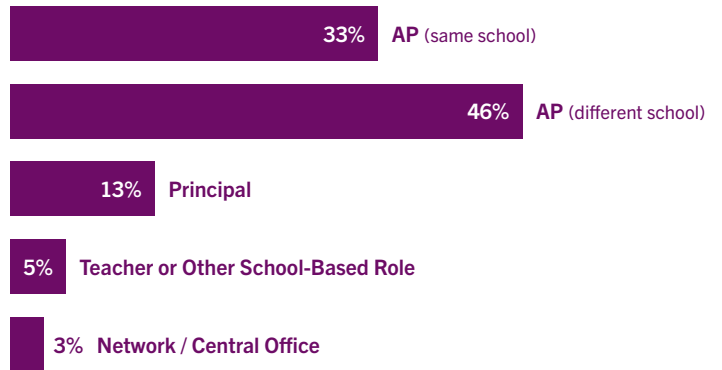


A critical next step for leadership

A Pathway to Leading

For many school leaders, the AP role is a critical stepping stone toward the principalship. The majority of current principals in district-operated schools have AP experience, often immediately prior to their current role. Of the 63 principals who started their new role from April 2022 to September 2022, 50 (79%) came to this role from an AP position. Of these former APs, 21 (33%) became the principal at the same school they were an AP. Another 29 (46%) came from an AP position at another school. In addition, eight new principals (13%) came to their role as an experienced principal from another CPS school.

PRIOR ROLES FOR NEW PRINCIPALS IN FALL 2022



Retaining Leaders. Advancing Diversity.

Chicago’s school leaders shoulder tremendous responsibilities, including managing a significant amount of resources to ensure strong student outcomes. To maximize their impact and mitigate against the challenges of leadership transition, The Fund is committed to maintaining retention rates above 85% in Chicago. We also seek to expand the diversity of the principalship, increasing the share of Black and Latino/a/x leaders from 63% in 2022.

We know that school leadership is not easy, especially in recent years, but we remain committed to providing leaders with the programs and recognition they need to succeed.

ENDNOTES

1. Staffing data, including school staff size, principal and AP demographics, principal turnover and retention, and prior roles of new principals are available for district-operated schools only.
2. We calculate principal turnover for a given school year as the total number of new principals between the dates of July 1st and June 30th of that school year. The count does not include Administrators-in-Charge (AICs) or Acting Principals with 2 months or less of service or interruptions due to leave.
3. National data on principal turnover and retention are available from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS). Most recent data are from 2016-17, reported in Table 212.30 of the 2019 Digest of Education Statistics. Available: https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/digest/d19/tables/dt19_212.30.asp
4. Steinberg, M., & Yang, H. (2019). *Principal mobility in Philadelphia traditional and charter public schools, 2007-08 through 2015-16*. Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Education Research Consortium. Available: <https://phledresearch.org/principal-mobility-in-philadelphia-traditional-and-charter-public-schools-2007-08-through-2015-16/>



TheFundChicago.org

f @thefundchicago