



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR  
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP™

## Distinguished Principal Credential Key Information

This document provides Distinguished Principal candidates with the information they need to know about the credentialing process and what it will mean for them to be a Distinguished Principal.

### **Why Obtain a Distinguished Principal Credential?**

Given your career accomplishments so far, you are the type of person who almost never takes the easy path. That is good because this is not the easy path. We have constructed a rigorous evaluation process that you must pass through this summer before you even start. Then you will be expected to squeeze a couple days a month out of your busy schedule for the next two years to coach other principals. So why do it? Here are a few reasons that might appeal to you:

- ❖ You already make a big difference in the lives of the children in your school. You will now have a chance to leverage your expertise to help kids in other schools as well.
- ❖ You have worked hard to get here. Having a reputable organization like NISL award a credential to you is a deserving acknowledgement of that hard work and accomplishment.
- ❖ You know you are good but you know you can still get better. The Distinguished Principals on this project will be provided with nine days of high-quality training and receive eight half-days of coaching from one of NISL's national coaches.

NISL is committed to going beyond this pilot project to fully implement the credentialing system in your state and district. Our goal is to create a valuable credential that provides benefits to its holder like preferential hiring and promotions, first consideration for challenging opportunities in state and district programs, professional esteem, and additional financial compensation. Our success in making this a reality will be partly dependent on you and the other credentialed principals successfully coaching your peers.

Finally, earning your Distinguished Principal credential will make you eligible for the Master Principal credential. NISL is committed to helping you prepare for the highest tier of the credentialing process that will take place in 2018/19.

### **What are the expectations of Distinguished Principals?**

Candidates receiving the credential of Distinguished Principal are expected to serve as coaches to other principals meeting monthly for a commitment of two years. The

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recommended coaching schedule allows for a blend of face-to-face and virtual meetings to enable flexibility in scheduling. To further the success of the Distinguished Principal as coach, NISL will provide three two-day institutes and eight half-days of shoulder-to-shoulder coaching by a member of the NISL National Coaching Faculty. Although not assessed by NISL, there will be pre-work in preparation before each of the three institutes.

### **What are the next steps for me as a Distinguished Principal Candidate?**

You have qualified to attend a three-day summer institute, which will be held on the dates and locations shown below. The Distinguished Principal Candidate Institute (DPCI) will focus on strengthening your leadership vision and skills as a coach. This high quality training will be a valuable experience for all school leaders regardless of whether they are awarded a credential this year. We will be utilizing this institute for two purposes – to enhance your knowledge and skills and as an assessment tool where we will have the opportunity to see you in action.

During the institute, a NISL National staff member will observe, take notes and collect artifacts from your learning. They will review and consolidate the information and forward it to the Expert Panel for review as part of the credentialing process. Additional details including institute logistics and information regarding the evaluation process used by the Expert Panel when credentialing will be forthcoming.

### **When and where do I attend the DCPI?**

- Pennsylvania Cohort 1 – **July 12 – 14, Harrisburg**
- Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)
- Location details and a list of local hotels can be found at <http://www.pattan.net/category/About/Offices/Location/?office=1>

In preparation for the institute, you will need to complete 6-8 hours of online pre-work. The pre-work will be assessed with submission to the Expert Panel for evaluation within the credentialing process. Therefore, your online pre-work will need to be completed and submitted no later than 10 days before the start of the summer institute. In the next few days, you will receive an email providing additional information about the pre-work with log-in instructions, task details, and due dates.

### **When is my pre-work due?**

- Pennsylvania Cohort 1 – **Friday, July 1**

### **What are the criteria for being awarded a Distinguished Principal credential?**

1. Professional Experience: At least five years of experience as a school principal and completion of NISL's Executive Development Program for School Leaders.

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2. Proven Leadership Success: At least three years of achieving high-levels of student success in English language arts, mathematics, science and history as evidenced by positive trends in student performance data, including gains in student proficiency and the narrowing of achievement gaps, or demonstrated evidence of the maintenance of strong performance in already high-performing schools.

3. Capacity for Strategic Leadership: In the future, candidates for advanced credentials will be asked to provide evidence to prove that they have implemented changes at their school that are consistent with the research on world-class schools. However, for the pilot project, we are not asking for evidence but instead are looking for candidates who have the capacity to implement these types of transformative changes. Therefore, we asked superintendents to nominate principals who have the capacity to implement strategic changes like the following:

- High-quality aligned instructional systems: Learning is based on high standards for all students, and the instructional system includes well-designed curriculum frameworks, syllabi, and instructional materials based on the frameworks. Formative assessment is keyed to progressions and summative assessment is based on the curriculum.
- High-quality teachers and teaching: Teachers are selected who have strong enthusiasm for teaching, can connect with students, have subject matter mastery, and have strong teacher craft knowledge. Teachers are nurtured and provided with opportunities to build their strength in each of these areas.
- High-performance organization and management: Teachers are given opportunities to collaborate in order to improve instruction and improve their knowledge and skills, teachers are assigned progressively more demanding and varied roles to increase their expertise and leadership, and the school has a system and culture of continuous improvement and high standards for all students. For example, putting in place an early warning system that signals when students are struggling with key concepts or ideas and encouraging faculty to establish immediate interventions to get students back on track.
- Equitable distribution of school resources: A system is in place that recognizes that getting all students to high standards will require that some students receive more time in class, better teachers, and additional interventions. For example, the best teachers might be deployed to teach struggling students instead of AP classes.

### **How will the Expert Panel decide if I meet the criteria?**

The Expert Panel will review the following information in considering whether you are ready to be awarded a Distinguished Principal credential:

- ✓ Observation of your participation in the training,
- ✓ Review of the pre-work for the institute,
- ✓ Artifacts created by you during the training sessions,
- ✓ Publicly available student achievement data for the past three years, and
- ✓ Recently completed survey of teachers in the candidates' school.

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**When will I know if I will get a Distinguished Principal credential?**

The Expert Panel will meet in August. We hope to notify all candidates by late August or early September regarding their status.