

STATE AGENCY & LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES LAUNCHING AND SUSTAINING REGISTERED PRINCIPAL APPRENTICESHIPS

OVERVIEW

Successful principal apprenticeships require close coordination between State Education Agencies (SEAs), Local Education Agencies (LEAs), educator preparation programs, and apprenticeship partners. These partners can include State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAAs), the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (OA), apprenticeship sponsors, workforce development boards, intermediaries, and other organizations that support program registration and implementation. LEAs typically serve as the employer and primary implementation partner, providing paid on-the-job learning, mentor principals, and local program support.

This resource is intended to help partners clarify roles, identify areas for collaboration, and establish shared expectations before launching a Registered Principal Apprenticeship. The responsibilities outlined below reflect common roles across many states with the understanding that states and districts start from different places. In some states, education agencies play an active leadership role in supporting principal apprenticeships; while in others, districts, educator preparation programs, apprenticeship sponsors, or intermediary organizations may initiate the work. Regardless of where the effort begins, successful principal apprenticeships strengthen through collaboration, shared planning, and ongoing communication among partners.

While state governance structures vary, responsibilities defined below represent common roles across states and should be interpreted alongside state-specific educator preparation, certification, and apprenticeship requirements. To learn more about how some of these partnerships take shape in different contexts, refer to the [Tennessee](#) and [Rhode Island](#) apprenticeship case studies from the Pathways Alliance.

Key Principle

High-quality principal apprenticeships succeed when state agencies create the necessary conditions for implementation, and districts lead the day-to-day apprenticeship learning and workplace experience. Strong partnerships, clear communication, and shared responsibility between state agencies and districts are essential to a successful Registered Apprenticeship.

This resource focuses specifically on the complementary roles of State Education Agencies and Local Education Agencies. Additional resources from the Pathways Alliance guide the roles of educator preparation providers, apprenticeship sponsors, and other implementation partners.

TERMS

State Education Agency (SEA)

- Provides leadership on educator preparation and certification implementation, offers guidance where applicable, and supports statewide coordination of principal apprenticeship efforts.

Local Education Agency (LEA)

- Employs apprentices, provides clinical experiences, and implements the apprenticeship program locally.

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

The responsibilities below represent common areas for collaboration. Depending on state governance and local context, one partner may lead a particular activity while engaging others as implementation progresses.

Implementation Area	State Agency (SEA)	Local Education Agency (LEA)	Shared Planning & Collaboration
Assess Readiness 	Establish statewide priorities, align principal apprenticeships with workforce goals, identify funding opportunities.	Assess local and statewide demand, implementation readiness, and long-term sustainability..	Determine regional demand, implementation approach, and long-term sustainability.
Build Partnerships 	Convene statewide partners, educator preparation programs, workforce agencies, and apprenticeship offices.	Develop local partnerships with preparation providers, mentor principals, and workforce partners.	Confirm partner roles, governance, and communication structures.

Implementation Area	State Agency (SEA)	Local Education Agency (LEA)	Shared Planning & Collaboration
Program Design 	Provide guidance on certification requirements, state leadership standards, and policy alignment.	Design apprenticeship schedule, clinical experiences, staffing model, and candidate supports.	Ensure alignment with state licensure requirements and apprenticeship standards.
Registration 	Coordinate with the State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) or U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship, as appropriate.	Work with the apprenticeship sponsor to provide employer documentation, worksite information, mentor assignments, and apprentice employment information.	Determine sponsorship model and registration pathway.
Funding & Sustainability 	Identify and communicate available federal, state, and competitive funding opportunities and provide guidance on allowable uses when applicable.	Develop local budgets, braid funding streams, and allocate staffing resources.	Determine the funding strategy, identify lead applicant(s) for grant opportunities, clarify partner responsibilities for grant development and management, and establish a sustainable funding model beyond initial implementation.

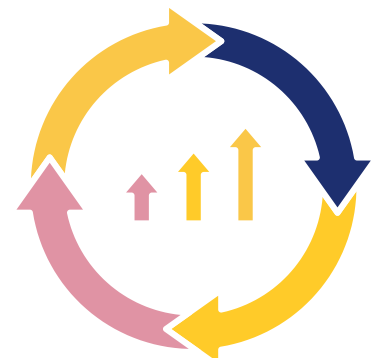
Implementation Area	State Agency (SEA)	Local Education Agency (LEA)	Shared Planning & Collaboration
Mentor Principal Development 	May provide guidance, technical assistance, or professional learning resources that support mentor principal quality.	Select, train, support, and evaluate mentor principals serving as journeyworkers.	Establish mentor expectations and quality assurance processes.
Related Instruction 	Oversee approval and accountability processes for educator preparation programs, where applicable.	Coordinate apprentice participation with preparation partners and support scheduling.	Align coursework with clinical experiences and competency development.
Data Collection & Continuous Improvement 	Support statewide data collection, reporting, and continuous improvement efforts where applicable.	Collect local implementation and apprentice outcome data.	Determine common metrics, reporting expectations, and program improvement priorities.
Sustainability & Scale 	Support replication, technical assistance, and policy refinement based on implementation lessons.	Identify additional schools and leadership pipelines for expansion.	Evaluate readiness for scaling and replication.

Implementation Area	State Agency (SEA)	Local Education Agency (LEA)	Shared Planning & Collaboration
Coordinating Demand Across Districts 	Assess principal workforce needs across districts and, where appropriate, help aggregate demand across multiple LEAs to create viable apprentice cohorts and strengthen partnerships with educator preparation programs.	Identify anticipated principal workforce needs and the number of potential apprentices, and communicate demand to state and regional partners.	Determine whether demand across multiple districts can be combined to support a sustainable cohort, including shared preparation, related instruction, and other program supports.

CRITICAL SHARED DECISIONS

Successful principal apprenticeships depend on continuous collaboration on several key decisions, despite the distinct responsibilities of State Education Agencies and Local Education Agencies.

These decisions are most effective when **discussed early, revisited throughout implementation, and informed by educator preparation programs**, apprenticeship sponsors, and workforce partners as appropriate.



SEAs and LEAs should establish a shared approach to:

- Identifying educator preparation programs that meet state certification requirements and prepare candidates for the roles and staffing needs identified by local districts.
- Aligning the apprenticeship with state certification requirements, leadership standards, and local priorities to ensure that the learning experience culminates in a relevant degree and certification.
- Developing a funding strategy that identifies available resources, clarifies partner responsibilities, and supports long-term sustainability, including the braiding and blending of federal, state, and local funding.
- Establishing expectations for mentor principals, including qualifications, preparation, coaching supports, and evaluation, with appropriate compensation.
- Defining apprentice recruitment, selection, and hiring processes.
- Coordinating clinical experiences with related instruction and aligned certification and skill competency development.
- Identifying common measures of success, data collection processes, and continuous improvement strategies to assess impact
- Planning for future expansion and determining when the model is ready to scale to additional districts or regions.

CONCLUSION

Coordinated leadership among state agencies, local education agencies, educator preparation programs, apprenticeship sponsors, and workforce partners is necessary to launch a high-quality principal apprenticeship. Successful implementation is built on shared planning, clearly defined roles, and ongoing communication, even if responsibilities vary across state and local contexts. Organizations can build sustainable principal apprenticeship programs that strengthen leadership pipelines and expand opportunities for aspiring school leaders by leveraging each partner's strengths and aligning efforts around a common vision.

What's Next?

Continue exploring the **[Pathways Alliance Principal Apprenticeship Resource Library](#)**