

# Massachusetts School Leader Workforce

2025-26 SNAPSHOT (SY26)

Key facts and figures about principals and assistant principals (APs) in public school districts in SY2026

## WORKFORCE

1,756 PRINCIPALS

1,913 ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

## SUPPLY/DEMAND

177

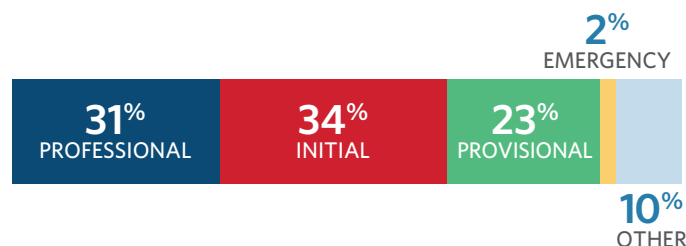
Newly-hired principals

1,353

individuals who held a principal or assistant principal (AP) license but were not serving in a principal or AP role.

## PREPARATION, LICENSURE, & PRIOR EXPERIENCE

### NEWLY-HIRED PRINCIPALS BY LICENSE TYPE



"Other" includes school leaders with a temporary Principal/AP license and individuals with no Principal/AP license.

1 OUT OF 3

principals has held a special education teaching license



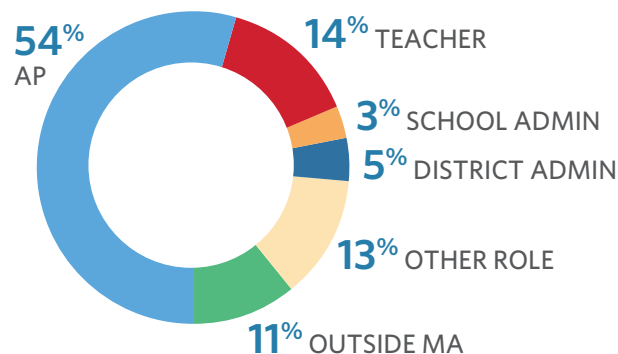
46% of newly-hired principals completed an in-state approved Principal/AP preparation program in or before their first year of employment as a school leader (SY2026)

46% of principals have less than 5 years experience

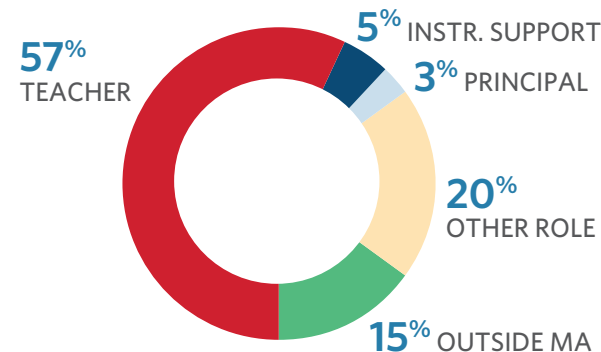
NINE YEARS  
Average from preparation program to principalship

### PREVIOUS ROLE OF NEWLY-HIRED SCHOOL LEADERS, SY24-SY26

#### PRINCIPALS



#### ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS



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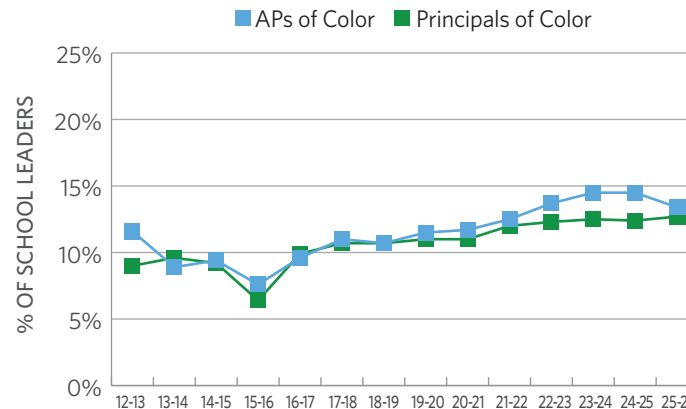
## RETENTION

**18%** of principals left their positions between SY2025 and SY2026. Those who transferred schools tended to move into schools with:

- LOWER  shares of low-income students
- LOWER  shares of Black and Hispanic students
- HIGHER  average MCAS test scores

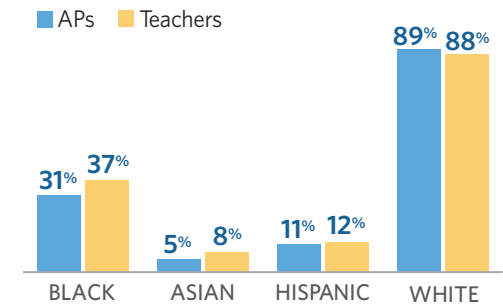
## DIVERSITY

### SCHOOL LEADERS OF COLOR OVER TIME



### SAME-RACE/ETHNICITY PRINCIPAL

APs and teachers who have a principal with the same race/ethnicity (SY24-SY26)



**478**

School Leaders identify as a Person of Color in SY2026 (13%)

### SCHOOL LEADERS OF COLOR BY LOCALE

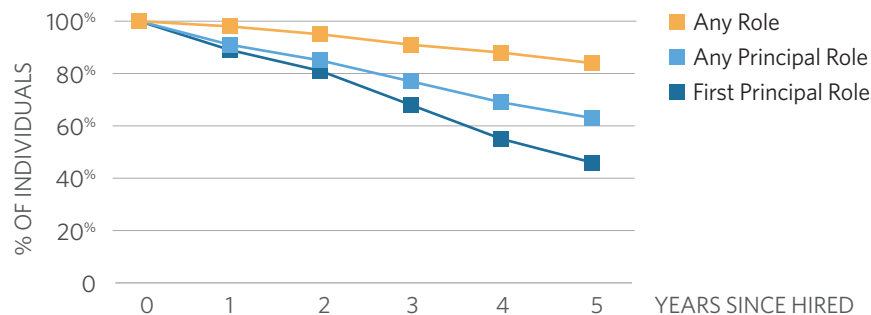
**26%** of Urban School Leaders identify as BIPOC

**<13%** of Rural, Town, & Suburban School Leaders identify as BIPOC

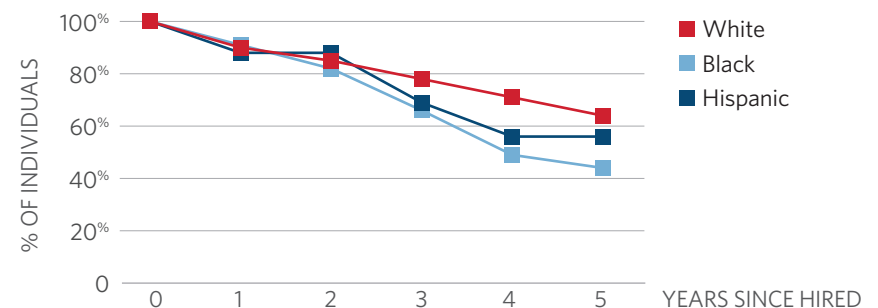
## NEWLY-HIRED PRINCIPALS OVER TIME

Includes principals who were first hired between SY19 and SY21

### RETENTION BY ROLE



### RETENTION IN ANY PRINCIPAL ROLE BY RACE/ETHNICITY



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## DEFINITIONS

### GENERAL

**School leaders:** Principals and assistant principals (APs)

**MA DESE:** Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

### PREPARATION, LICENSURE, & PRIOR EXPERIENCE

**Principal/AP license:** An Academic PreK-12 Administrator license administered by MA DESE that allows an individual to serve as a principal or AP in a MA public school district.

*A provisional principal/AP license is administered to individuals who possess a bachelor's degree, have passed all required state licensure tests except for Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL), hold a Sheltered English Immersion endorsement, and have completed either an approved principal/AP preparation program, an administrative apprenticeship/internship, or panel review.*

*A professional principal/AP license is administered to individuals who have been employed under an initial principal/AP license for at least 3 years and have completed additional advanced study.*

**Approved principal/AP preparation program:** A MA DESE-approved preparation program designed to meet the requirements for obtaining a principal/AP license. More information at [doe.mass.edu/licensure/academic-prek12/panel-review-administrator-routes.docx](https://doe.mass.edu/licensure/academic-prek12/panel-review-administrator-routes.docx).

**Administrative apprenticeship/internship:** A process for obtaining a principal/AP license, which involves field-based learning guided by a trained mentor.

**Panel review:** A process for obtaining a principal/AP license, which involves MA DESE's review and recommendation of candidates based on their formal education and professional experience.

### DIVERSITY

**School leaders of color:** School leaders who are Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, multiple, or other races/ethnicities.

**Urban, rural, town, suburban:** The National Center for Education Statistics geographic classification of the type of area where a school is located.

### RETENTION

**MCAS test scores:** Standardized scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System math and reading end-of-year tests for students in grades 3-8.

**Low-income:** MA DESE's identification of students who receive certain types of state assistance or who are homeless or in foster care. View detailed definition at [doe.mass.edu/research/2021-01tech-memo.docx](https://doe.mass.edu/research/2021-01tech-memo.docx)

**Newly-hired principals:** Employed principals who were not employed in a principal role in the prior three years.

*This report is part of a series on the Massachusetts school leader workforce. Reports from prior years can be found at [wheelockpolicycenter.org/effective-teachers/massachusetts-school-workforce-snapshots](https://wheelockpolicycenter.org/effective-teachers/massachusetts-school-workforce-snapshots).*

