



**Principal Candidate Pool
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Screening Process Overview

1. What is the Principal Candidate Pool screening and selection process?

There are three stages to become an Omaha Public Schools (OPS) Principal: a pre-screen, a second round in-person screen, and a school-based selection process. The steps of our application process are outlined below:

Stage	Details
<p>1: Pre-Screen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Submission: Candidates submit their applications and answer key questions through Omaha Public Schools’ online application system. • Pre-Screening: Omaha Public Schools reviews candidates’ applications, including essays and paper references. Candidates who meet the eligibility requirements and whose application reflect the qualities and skills that Omaha Public Schools seeks in principals will be invited to a first round interview. • First Round Interview: Omaha Public Schools invites select candidates to participate in an interview (which may be done virtually), where candidates have the opportunity to learn more about OPS and showcase their skills and experiences. • Online Assessment: Candidates receive a link to complete an online assessment called Principal Insight.
<p>2: Second Round</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Round Interview: Candidates who successfully complete the prescreen will be invited to a half-day of in-person interviews with various OPS leaders across the district. Candidates will participate in three (3) interview exercises that simulate the work of an OPS principal and provide candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and decision-making on the job. Activities include, but are not be limited to, interviews, case studies, scenarios, data analysis, and role plays. • Background Check and Phone References: HR conducts a background check and phone references before accepting candidates into the OPS Principal Candidate Pool.
<p>3: School-Based Selection Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for School-Based Vacancies: Candidates who are accepted into the OPS Principal Candidate Pool may apply for school-specific principal vacancies. • School-Based Community Interview: Candidates may be invited to interview with school-based communities to determine fit for school-specific vacancies. • Superintendent Decision: The Superintendent makes the final selection.

2. I want to become a principal in Omaha Public Schools. How do I get started?

To apply, complete the online application, which includes three essay questions and three references. You will also need to complete a work experience section as part of the online application that includes questions about each position that you held. Omaha Public Schools will only consider applications that are completed and submitted online. We do not accept paper applications.

3. What are the selection criteria?

All candidates will be evaluated based on the OPS Principal Competencies. These competencies outline what OPS expects principals to know and be able to do. The Principal Candidate Pool process is aligned to these competencies. In addition, all candidates must meet the certification and eligibility requirements outlined in the eligibility section below.

4. When should I apply? Is there an application deadline?



Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. However, we strongly encourage candidates to apply as soon as possible to be considered for the greatest number of principal vacancies.

Who Should Apply

5. What is OPS looking for in a principal?

Omaha Public Schools is committed to preparing all of Omaha's students to excel in college, career and community leadership. It is our responsibility to build students' academic, social and emotional skills necessary to become successful and productive adults. This is an ambitious goal, and to get there, we need visionary individuals to lead our schools who can drive unprecedented levels of student achievement so that all Omaha students can achieve and succeed.

Ideal candidates will demonstrate evidence of the OPS Principal Competencies, including:

- The vision and courage to ensure every student, regardless of background, can achieve college and career success
- A demonstrated track record of increasing student achievement
- Instructional expertise in K-12 education with proven ability to support, coach, and develop teachers to improve instructional practice
- A record of success in leading adults and students
- Effective communication and interpersonal skills
- Problem-solving and strategic thinking skills

6. I applied for an OPS principal role in previous years. Do I have to reapply?

Yes. We recently updated our Principal Candidate Pool process, and therefore, all applicants who applied in prior years must submit a new application. Applicants can also take the opportunity to update other aspects of their application, including contact information, work history, and certifications. You can access the new online application [here](#).

7. I am a LAUNCH participant or alum. Do I need to apply?

Yes, every candidate (except for current OPS principals) who is interested in being considered for a principal position in OPS must apply to the Principal Candidate Pool.

8. I am an assistant principal in OPS. Do I need to apply?

Yes, every candidate (except for current OPS principals) who is interested in being considered for a principal position in OPS must apply to the Principal Candidate Pool.

9. I am a current principal in a school outside of OPS. Do I need to apply?

Yes, every external candidate must apply to the Principal Candidate Pool.

10. I am a current building principal in Omaha Public Schools. Do I need to apply?

No, sitting principals in OPS do not need to apply to the Principal Candidate Pool; they will be grandfathered in. However, if a sitting principal is interested in applying or transferring to another OPS school, s/he will need to go through the school-based selection process. Current sitting principals in OPS are the only individuals who do not need to go through the Principal Candidate Pool process.

Screening Process Specifics

11. Can I apply for a school-specific principal role before going through the central screening process?

No. You will only be eligible to apply for a school-specific principal role once you successfully complete the central screening process and are admitted into the Principal Candidate Pool.



12. Do I need to complete the Principal Candidate Pool application online?

Yes, all Principal Candidate Pool applications must be submitted through the OPS online application system. OPS will not accept paper, faxed, or scanned applications. OPS strongly encourages you to work on your application offline and then copy and paste your answers into the online application.

13. Do I need to complete the full application at one time?

No. You can work on the application over multiple days or weeks. You can enter information and select “save and continue.” You can then return to the application at any time.

14. I submitted my online application. Now what?

You should receive an email notification shortly after submitting your application. Once submitted, Omaha Public Schools will begin its review of your application, paper references, and essays. Typically, within two weeks of submitting your application, a member of the Omaha Public Schools team will notify you via email if you are invited to a first interview.

If you are invited to participate in a first round interview, a member of the OPS team will email you to schedule a convenient time. First interviews usually occur within two weeks of the invitation and last about 30 minutes.

Within about two weeks of your first interview, a member of the OPS team will notify you via email if you are invited to the second round in-person interview. Within three weeks of your in-person interview, a member of the OPS team will notify you via email if you are invited to apply for school-specific positions.

15. What happens if I am not accepted into the Principal Candidate Pool?

If you are not accepted into the Principal Candidate Pool, you may re-apply in the future. You must wait until the following school year (and at least six months between applications) before re-applying.

16. For how long do I remain in the Principal Candidate Pool once I am accepted?

Individuals may remain in the Principal Candidate Pool for three (3) years. If an individual has not secured a principal role in OPS after three (3) years, then s/he will need to reapply to the pool.

Eligibility Requirements

17. What credentials are required?

In order to apply for a principal position, applicants are required to have a Nebraska Principal Certificate or a Letter of Eligibility for Principal and a Master’s degree from an accredited college or university. The evaluation process will be delayed if an applicant does not possess state certification. We recommend all candidates to apply and acquire these certifications prior to applying to the OPS Principal Candidate Pool. Please visit the Nebraska Department of Education website for information on state certification requirements for school principals.

18. If I don’t have the certification, how do I get certified?

The State of Nebraska requires all public school principals to have a principal certification. Please apply for your principal certification directly through [the Nebraska Department of Education](#). You must be able to provide proof of certification by the upcoming year.

19. How can I transfer certifications?

We welcome out-of-state applicants who possess a valid out-of-state principal certificate and a master’s degree. Nebraska does accept recommendations from school administrator programs from state-accredited colleges and universities in other states, but all candidates must meet the specific Nebraska requirements. Cases are evaluated on an individual basis. [See the link here for more details.](#)