

Alternative Principal / Principal Authorization Guidelines



COLORADO
Department of Education

Introduction

If you're reading this, then you are a district or BOCES interested in developing a plan to support the development of a principal via an individualized alternative principal plan.

This document, together with the information and links provided on CDE's [Obtaining a Principal Authorization](#) web page, provides everything you need to know to get started with developing individualized plans for candidates seeking a principal authorization from the Colorado Department of Education.

Purpose of the Principal Authorization

The state authorizes school districts to design and implement individualized alternative principal plans to allow persons from outside the educational community to develop the skills and experiences necessary to successfully lead a public school and to qualify ultimately for licensure as principals (*C.R.S 22-60.5-305.5*). The school district may work with a governmental, non-profit or for-profit entity in designing and implementing the individualized alternative principal plan. The individualized alternative principal plan shall be subject to approval by the Colorado State Board of Education.

Important Note: The qualifying candidate must be required to hold a principal license to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the role. If a license is not required, the individual wishing to pursue principal preparation may do so through a traditional principal preparation program.

A principal authorization may be issued to a person who does not hold or may not qualify for an initial principal license, but who holds an earned bachelor's or higher degree from an accepted institution of higher education and who is completing an individual, district-based alternative principal plan that has been approved by the Colorado State Board of Education (*C.R.S. 22-60.5-111 (14)*).

A school district may employ a person who holds a principal authorization to perform the duties of a principal or assistant principal in a school only when the person who holds the authorization is under the supervision of a Colorado professional principal license-holder.

A principal authorization shall be valid for three years and may not be renewed.

Requirements for a Principal Authorization

Before a candidate may apply for a principal authorization, the following three criteria must be met:

1. There is a demonstrated need for the principal or assistant principal position in the partnering Colorado school district(s) or BOCES;
2. An employment agreement for the position exists; and
3. An individualized principal plan has been developed and vetted by CDE as meeting established quality indicators (see page 3).

Requirements of an Alternative Principal Plan

To receive a principal authorization, an applicant collaborates with a school district to submit documentation to CDE that includes:

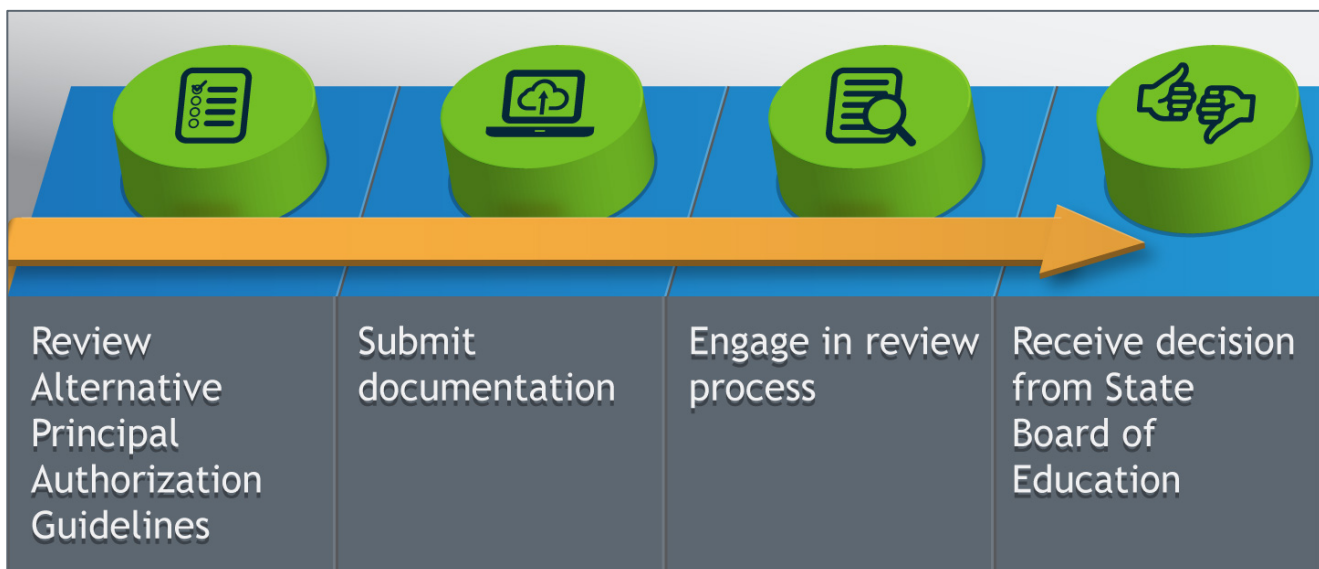
- A letter from the collaborating school district stating the school district’s intention to employ the applicant as a principal or assistant principal upon issuance of the principal authorization;
- Coursework, practicum and other educational requirements identified by the school district that will comprise the individualized alternative principal plan and which will be completed while the candidate is employed under the principal authorization; and
- A completed individualized plan template.

At a minimum, an individualized alternative principal plan shall ensure that:

- The candidate will attain and demonstrate evidence of experience, training, skills and proficiency comparable to a person who qualifies for an initial principal license and aligned to the:
 - [Principal Quality Standards](#),
 - English Language Learner Standards (per 1 CCR 301-37, 5.12 - 5.15), and
 - professional competencies in leadership; communication and human relations; instruction, curriculum, design and assessment; problem-solving and decision-making; management, planning, organization and administration; personnel administration, staff development and evaluation; child growth and development; and knowledge and application of standards-based education. *(CRS 22-60.5-303)*
- The candidate will receive coaching and mentoring from one or more Iprofessionally licensed principals and administrators, as well as continuing performance-based assessment of the candidate’s skills and development.

Obtaining a Principal Authorization

There are four broad steps that school district and alternative principal candidates must complete for Colorado State Board of Education approval. Each of these steps is described in more detail and supported with links and resources at the [Educator Preparation](#) website.





Alternative Principal Plan Rubric (Quality Indicators)

To have their alternative principal plan approved, entities must meet or exceed the standard for all of the quality indicators below.

Quality Indicators	Explanation/Examples	Does Not Meet Standard	Partially Meets Standard	Meets or Exceeds Standard
Plan Curriculum	Alignment to Principal Quality Standards; delivery method, etc.			
Candidate Support	Supervision and mentoring by a professionally licensed principal and administrator; depth, breadth and frequency of support; struggling candidate protocols, etc.			
Plan Evaluation	Growth monitoring; continual improvement processes; documentation of candidate progress, etc.			

Please visit the [Educator Preparation](#) website for more information and the plan template.

Ongoing Commitments

Once an individual plan is approved and a principal authorization issued, there are a few activities that districts and the candidate will need to complete:

- Upon the fulfillment of the individualized program's requirements:
 - candidates will need to pass the Colorado State Board of Education-approved assessment for principals (PRAXIS 5412);
 - candidates will need to complete, sign and date the reflection document (which is part of the plan template); and
 - districts/BOCES will need to complete the verification form and provide it to the candidate.

Obtaining Initial or Professional Licensure

Candidates who hold a principal authorization are eligible for initial or professional principal licensure upon completion of their individualized principal plan, three years of licensed experience, passing the PRAXIS 5412 assessment and, for a professional license, participation in a principal induction program.

Two other common situations:

- If candidates have three years of licensed teaching experience *prior* to obtaining the principal authorization, they are eligible for an initial principal license upon successful completion of the individualized alternative principal plan. If candidates have also completed a principal induction program, they may obtain a professional principal license.
- If candidates have less than three years of licensed teaching experience prior to obtaining the principal authorization, they must remain on the principal authorization until they meet the requirement of licensed experience (total of three years) in order to apply for their initial or professional principal license.