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November 6, 2026

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Eric G. Mackey
State Superintendent of Education

RE: *School Principal Leadership and Mentoring Act* Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Stipends

During the 2025 legislative session, a statute related to the *School Principal Leadership and Mentoring Act* (2023-340) was signed into law (Act 2025-286). For the purposes of this law, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**. An individual who is certified for the position of assistant principal, as prescribed by the board, and who is employed full-time by a local board of education as an administrator of a public school to assist the principal in managing and leading the school. This term includes a Career and Technical Education Building Administrator, Alternative School Administrator, or similar position approved by the State Department of Education, who is housed full-time at a standalone facility, who assists with overseeing the day-to-day schedule and operations in that facility, and helps supervise teachers at that facility in a full-time capacity.
- **PRINCIPAL**. An individual who is certified for the position of principal, as prescribed by the board, and who is employed full-time by a local board of education as the chief school administrator of a public school. This shall include a Career and Technical Education Building Administrator, Alternative School Administrator, or similar position approved by the State Department of Education, who is housed full-time at a standalone facility, oversees the day-to-day schedule and operations in that facility, and supervises teachers at that facility in a full-time capacity.
- **HIGH-POVERTY SCHOOL**. A school that has a direct certification of free and reduced federal lunch student percentage of 75 percent or greater, as determined by the most recent data posted.
- **LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOL**. Any school that is identified as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement School, a school with a D or F grade as defined by the Alabama Education Report Card, Chapter 6C, or a full-support school as defined by the *Alabama Literacy Act*, Chapter 6G, or the *Alabama Numeracy Act*, Chapter 6H.

In accordance with the *School Principal Leadership and Mentoring Act* (2023-340), the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) will provide an annual base supplement of up to $10,000 to any principal and up to $5,000 to any assistant principal who successfully completes the Alabama Principal Leadership Development System (APLDS) program and meets the stipend eligibility criteria. The ALSDE will also provide additional supplements of up to $5,000 to any principal and up to $2,500 to any assistant principal serving in a high-poverty school or low-performing school as identified by the law (Act 2025-286). Additionally, the appropriated funds will cover the employer portion of benefits.

For all currently employed principals and assistant principals (as of October 1, 2026), successful completion of the APLDS program consists of the following:

- Annual completion of the APLDS Evaluation System in the Teaching Effectiveness (TE) application through the ALSDE Identity Management (AIM) Portal ((AIM) Portal).
- Annual completion of at least 30 APLDS clock hours of approved, high-quality professional learning awarded through the PowerSchool Professional Learning platform.
- All new principals (first and second year) must also participate in an approved new principal mentoring program.

In order to implement the law, the ALSDE has prepared the following guidelines:

Base Supplement:

1. School administrators who are coded as full-time principals or assistant principals in an Alabama public PreK-12 school included in the FY 2027 financial reports submitted to the ALSDE.
2. School administrators who are employed as a full-time principal or assistant principal by October 1, 2026, at a standalone facility in accordance with Act 2025-286.
3. School administrators who meet the definition of a principal or assistant principal in accordance with Act 2025-286.
4. School administrators who are assigned a principal or assistant principal staff position in the Education Directory application and not assigned a superintendent or assistant superintendent staff position.
5. School principals and assistant principals who hold a valid leadership certificate in Alabama by October 1, 2026.
6. School principals and assistant principals who are not serving in an interim position.
7. School principals and assistant principals who serve in the position for the full school year.
8. Only one principal per school is eligible to receive the stipend from the ALSDE.

Additional Supplement:

An Alabama public PreK-12 school included in the FY 2027 financial reports submitted to the ALSDE with student enrollment that meets at least one of the criteria:

1. Direct certification of free and reduced federal lunch student percentage of 75 percent or greater based on Fall 2026 Official Student Attendance State Collection (20 Day).
2. Comprehensive Support and Improvement school based on the Fall 2025 Federal Accountability System.
3. D or F grade as defined by the Alabama Education Report Card based on the Fall 2025 Priority Schools List.
4. *Alabama Literacy Act* full support school based on the 2025-2026 identified list.
5. *Alabama Numeracy Act* full support school based on the 2025-2026 identified list.

Beginning with the 2026–2027 school year, the *Principal Act* Alabama Certification for Educators (ACE) Application will provide a streamlined process for eligible principals and assistant principals to apply for the *Principal Act* stipend. Eligible school administrators will complete the application in the ACE platform through the AIM Portal ((AIM) Portal) and submit documentation of required APLDS program completion. The local education agency (LEA) will review the application, complete the required attestations, and submit the application to ALSDE for final review and stipend processing. The *Principal Act* ACE Application will be available for review by the LEA on November

2, 2026. School administrators must submit their applications no later than May 1, 2027, and LEAs must review and submit completed applications no later than May 15, 2027. More information can be found at the following link: Principal Act ACE Application.

For questions and support with the *Principal Act* ACE Application platform, please reach out to the ALSDE Service Desk by telephone at (334) 694-4777 or by email at servicedesk@alsde.edu. If you have any questions about the *Principal Act* stipend eligibility criteria, please contact Dr. Anna Shepherd-Jones by telephone at (334) 694-0785 or by email at anna.jones@alsde.edu.

EGM:ASJ:KW

cc: Chief School Financial Officers
Mr. Arthur Watts, Jr.
Mrs. Angela Martin
Dr. Melissa Shields
Mr. Ethan Taylor
Dr. Anna Shepherd-Jones

FY27-2004