***To: Area School District Superintendents and Human Resource Directors***

***From: ISU/NCC/WIU***

***Re: U.S. Department of Education School Leadership Grant - IL-PART***

\_\_\_\_\_ ***ISU/NCC/WIU*** \_\_\_\_\_\_ was recently selected to be part of a U.S. Department of Education-funded program called Illinois Partnerships Advance Rigorous Training (IL-PART). The project represents a collaborative effort between high-need districts and universities that have come together in formal partnerships aimed at improving the way in which principals are prepared and developed in Illinois.

IL-PART is an effort aimed primarily at developing a pipeline of well-trained principals through rigorous and relevant principal preparation programs with intensive internships that address the many complexities faced by today’s school leaders. We are writing to you today to provide you with information about the IL-PART project and to outline how your district may benefit from this work.

***Benefits to aspiring candidates:***

1. Candidates will be provided an opportunity to complete an intensive, full-time/full-semester internship experience (at no additional cost to the district);
2. Candidates will be provided leadership opportunities involving school improvement efforts aimed at increasing student achievement. The full-time structure of the internship will allow candidates to gain a greater understanding of the principalship and hands-on experience with all aspects of school administration;
3. District teachers enrolled in the \_\_\_\_\_ ***ISU/NCC/WIU*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ principal preparation program will be provided with various pre-service training and workshops funded by the grant ***(***e.g. Growth Through Learning –which costs $650/per person).

***Benefits to Districts:***

1. Participation represents an improvement to the District’s talent development strategy. The newly redesigned principal preparation program, combined with the intensive full-time/full semester internship, provides the District with a pipeline of well-prepared school leaders. Program candidates completing an intensive internship where they are exposed to a broad base of leadership experiences aimed at school improvement;
2. There is low to no cost to the District. Funding will be provided to Districts to cover the cost of the substitute teacher needed to provide principal candidates with release time to complete a full-time/full-semester internship. (The grant will reimburse the District for the cost of the substitute teacher for an entire semester, based on the rate determined by your District’s collective bargaining agreement and will include additional cost for compliance with the Affordable Care Act);
3. Candidates will return to the District having completed the State mandated training required to evaluate teachers;
4. Through the collaborative efforts, the university is able to provide a more relevant and rigorous principal preparation program that better prepares candidates for school leadership positions.

***Considerations:***

Districts that choose to allow teachers in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ***ISU/NCC/WIU*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ principal preparation program to participate in the intensive full-time/full semester internship will need to consider and communicate how the following issues will impact their employees.

Cost:

The IL-PART Project will fund the substitute cost required to provide participating teachers with release time (including additional health insurance costs required by the newly enacted Affordable Care Act). However, the expectation of the program is that while participating teachers are completing their full-time/full semester principal internship, the District will continue to pay their teacher salary. This would be no additional cost to the District but may require a specific process be followed, based on your collective bargaining agreement (e.g. candidate is granted a sabbatical, leave for educational purposes, leave with compensation, etc.). If principal preparation training is not covered by your collective bargaining agreement, District board approval may be necessary.

PERA:

Because the new IL Performance Evaluation Reform Act requires that teacher evaluations include a student growth component, Districts will need to consider how that piece will be handled for IL-PART participants that will be out of their classroom for ½ of the school year. Strategies that Districts might consider include:

1. Timing the internship to coincide with the professional development year for tenured teachers (Student growth is only required to be included as a portion of the tenured teacher evaluation every other year.)
2. Have teachers complete two consecutive years of performance evaluations involving the student growth component;
3. Use alternate growth measures and/or Student Learning Objectives (SLO);
4. Waive teachers out of the student growth component for principal internships as part of the District’s talent development strategy

Please note that options 2,3 and 4 may require approval by your Joint Committee.

The IL-PART project provides \_\_\_\_\_\_ ***ISU/NCC/WIU*** \_\_\_\_\_ with an exciting opportunity to prepare transformational leaders for our area schools through intensive full-time/full semester internships. We would like to have an opportunity to discuss this opportunity with you further and discuss how this may help address the need for talented leaders in your District.