

## **Principal Credential FAQ – North Dakota**

*Guidance for Aspiring and Current School Leaders*

### **Credential Requirements**

1. **Do assistant principals or deans of students need a Principal Credential?**

**No.** *North Dakota Administrative Rules do not require assistant principals or deans of students to hold a Principal Credential. This is left to the hiring school district.*

2. **What experience is needed to qualify for a Principal Credential?**

*You need three years of teaching experience at the grade level for which you're applying.*

- *Grades 5–8 can count as both elementary and secondary experience.*
- *Experience must be specific to the level (elementary or secondary) of the credential you're seeking.*

3. **Does my degree qualify me for a Principal Credential?**

*A Master's or Doctorate in an education-related field is acceptable.*

- *However, you must still complete the required coursework for Educational Leadership.*
- *You also need three years of teaching experience at the appropriate grade level.*

4. **Can NDDPI review my transcripts to see if any of my coursework qualifies?**

**No.** *NDDPI no longer conducts transcript reviews to determine alignment with state-approved educational leadership programs for the Level I Principal Credential. Because program design and standards vary by institution, only university advisors from state-approved educational leadership programs can accurately assess coursework for alignment. NDDPI remains available to assist with questions related to provisional credential eligibility.*

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### **Out-of-State and Additional Credentials**

5. **I'm a principal moving to North Dakota. Do I need to take additional coursework?**

*It depends:*

- *If you have a Master's in Educational Leadership, you can receive a credential without additional coursework.*
- *You still need three years of experience at the appropriate grade level.*

6. **Can I add a Secondary Principal Credential if I already have an Elementary one?**

*Not automatically. You must:*

- *Have three years of experience at the secondary level.*
- *Complete a secondary-level internship course.*

7. **Can I get a provisional credential if I'm short on experience?**

**No.** *North Dakota requires three full years of experience at the grade level. However, you may serve as an assistant principal to gain the necessary experience.*

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## **Special Situations**

8. **What if my school becomes K–12 and I'm asked to serve as both elementary and secondary principal?**

*Even if you've completed all coursework, you must still have three years of experience at the secondary level to receive a Secondary Principal Credential.*

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## **Transcripts & Documentation**

9. **Are official transcripts required?**

**No.** *Unofficial copies are perfectly acceptable and can be uploaded directly into your credential application.*

10. **I already sent transcripts for my teaching license. Do I need to send them again?**

**Yes,** *because:*

- *Teaching license renewals and Principal Credential renewals are handled by different offices.*
- *You can request ESPB to forward them or upload a copy to your credential application.*

11. **I uploaded transcripts to ND Teach, but it says I need to mail originals. Do I?**

**No.** *Uploaded copies are acceptable. The system will update once your transcripts are reviewed by NDDPI staff.*

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## **Receiving & Renewing Your Credential**

12. **How will I receive my Principal Credential?**

- *You'll receive an email with a PDF certificate and a congratulatory letter.*
- *The letter includes your credential details, expiration date, and renewal instructions.*

13. **Do I need to renew my Principal Credential if I have a lifetime teaching license?**

**Yes.** *Even with a lifetime teaching license, your Principal Credential must be renewed every five years.*

14. **Why does my new credential expire next year already?**

- *Level I Principal Credentials align with your teaching license expiration.*
- *If your teaching license expires soon, your credential will too—but you'll follow a prorated renewal schedule.*

15. **Do I still need to keep my teaching license current?**

**Yes.** *All North Dakota principals must hold a valid teaching license.*