

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Information provided by CHOICES Career & Education Advice

WHO IS A PRINCIPAL?

We've all had them. That somewhat intimidating person you see at school functions, hear over the intercom, and, sometimes, for better or worse, even meet with in the office.

While many students may have limited interactions with their school principal, they have probably had a huge impact on the academic well-being of the entire school population – whether we notice or not. Sure, we know that principals are the heads of schools ... But, how many of us really understand what that job entails?

WHAT THE WORK INVOLVES

A principal's duties depend on his/her school's educational level (e.g. primary or secondary) and size. Generally, however, they spend days:

- Managing staff members
- Working with the school board and staff to establish goals and develop ways of achieving them
- Hiring and organizing training for staff members
- Working with the school's bursar to prepare annual budgets and oversee their administration
- Developing and implementing a curriculum based on the current national standard
- Overseeing the creating class timetables
- Meeting with various stakeholders (e.g. parents, staff, board members, and members of the public) to present progress reports, discuss relevant issues and address their concerns
- Helping to co-ordinate events such as fundraisers, graduations, award ceremonies etc.



WHO IS THIS CAREER FOR?

If you're passionate about education and would like to impact students on a larger scale than is possible by solely being in the classroom, then becoming a principal may be the career for you!

Principals must:

- Be able to work under pressure, take initiative and work for long hours and sometimes on evenings and on weekends.
- Think critically and make difficult decisions when needed.
- Be strong leaders who can delegate tasks and motivate others to challenge themselves.
- Communicate well with others and be open to continuous feedback and criticism.
- Calmly and diplomatically deal with a variety of individuals (some of whom may occasionally have conflicting interests).
- Exemplify and inspire students and staff to embody the school's core values.
- Be passionate about education and willing to adopt innovative practices to help students learn.

WHAT CAN I EARN?

Principals typically earn medium level salaries. The exact amount will depend on factors such as the school's educational level and whether it is privately-owned or publicly-funded.

HOW DO I QUALIFY?

Within the public-school system, individuals should hold a teaching certificate/diploma and a Bachelor of Education to principal at the primary and secondary levels respectively. They should also possess at least 3 years of teaching experience. Private schools, on the other hand, may have different sets of criteria.

WHO OFFERS TRAINING IN JAMAICA?

The National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) offers the post-graduate level “Aspiring Principals’ Programme” which awards successful participants with the Professional Qualification for Principalship (PQP).

The University of the West Indies (Mona) offers a Bachelor’s and Master’s of Education in the field of Educational Administration.

Continue reading for more on exciting careers for now and the future. Send your comments and suggestions to Angela deFreitas, General Manager of CHOICES Career & Education Advice. e-mail- info@choicescaribbean.com. Do the online Career Key Test at – www.choicescaribbean.com/career-key/