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Illinois receives 2014 ECS Frank Newman Award for State Innovation

DENVER – The Education Commission of the States is proud to announce the state of Illinois is the 2014 recipient of the Frank Newman Award for State Innovations for its collaborative work to improve the preparation and certification of school principals.

ECS Chair and Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval will present the award on Tuesday, July 1, at the ECS National Forum on Education Policy in Washington, D.C. Scheduled to accept the award are James Applegate, director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education; Harry Berman, former director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education; Erika Hunt, senior policy analyst at the Center for the Study of Education Policy, Illinois State University; and Christopher Koch, Illinois' state superintendent of education.

The Frank Newman Award for State Innovation recognizes a state for any of the following:

- Education improvement efforts that are replicable and hold valuable lessons for other states.
- Bold and courageous policies, including existing approaches with evidence of significant impact on student achievement in the state.
- Policies or programs that have bipartisan, broad-based support.

In 2005, Illinois embarked on a path to improve principal training in response to growing concerns about the quality of higher education programs preparing school leaders. The Commission on School Leader Preparation assembled leaders from K-12, colleges and universities, as well as business and education organizations, to develop a blueprint for change.

Building on the commission's work, the legislature created the Illinois School Leader Task Force, which brought together the state's most knowledgeable education leaders from preK-12 schools, higher education, business and state agencies to develop policy recommendations. The result of these efforts was the bipartisan passage of Public Act 096-0903 in 2011. This groundbreaking statute mandated that universities redesign their programs to align with the new criteria and obtain approval to admit principal candidates after September 2012.

"In improving our schools, there is little that matters more than the quality of our principals," said ECS President Jeremy Anderson. "Illinois' work exemplifies what can happen when stakeholders collaborate in such a critical area."

Other states are learning from Illinois' work. The state was highlighted in recent publications by the National Governors Association and National Conference of State Legislatures, in a seminar for legislators and during a webinar co-hosted by the Council of Chief State School Officers.

ECS recognizes the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Board of Higher Education and Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University for their work to build broad support to improve principal training. Their collaboration and innovation honor the late Frank Newman, and ECS is proud to recognize Illinois with this year's award.

[The Education Commission of the States](http://www.ecs.org) was created by states, for states, in 1965. We track policy, translate research, provide unbiased advice and create opportunities for state policymakers to learn from one another.