Guidelines & Criteria

This document has been prepared to provided updated guidance for individuals and organizations that have a role in the development and delivery of Administrators' Academy courses. The information in this document replaces related information in the Administrators' Academy Policies and Practices Manual; the remainder of that policies document (i.e., policies and practices on topics not addressed in this document) remains in effect until further notice.

Introduction

Local school administrators may engage in many different kinds and types of professional development activities. However, individuals who serve as school administrators must attend at least one approved Administrators' Academy course or workshop annually in order to renew their license at the end of the five year cycle. Individuals who hold only a teaching license with a administrative license who evaluate certified staff must attend at least one approved Administrators' Academy course at least once every two years.

Administrators' Academy courses or workshops may be developed by any number of providers, but to be approved for credit, and to satisfy the requirement for license renewal, an Administrators' Academy course must conform to a number of criteria. These criteria reflect high expectations for quality professional development intended for the Administrators' Academy, research-based characteristics of effective staff development activities, and State Board of Education and Administrators' Academy policy. While many useful, or even valuable, activities may be categorized as "professional development," not all such activities qualify for Administrators' Academy credit.

The Approval Process

The process for submitting and approving Administrators' Academy courses is, in large part, established by legislation and administrative rules. In addition, State Board of Education policy has been developed to help ensure consistency in quality and delivery of Administrators' Academy courses.

Administrators' Academy courses must be approved by the Illinois State Board of Education. Proposed Administrators' Academy courses must be submitted to the State Board of Education for review and approval. Proposals must be submitted electronically using the Illinois Administrators' Academy Management System (IAAMS), an online program for recording and maintaining records of administrator participation in Administrators' Academy activities. ISBE staff will review all proposals using an established set of criteria and program considerations. ISBE staff may also ask for clarification of materials submitted.

Administrators' Academy course proposals must be submitted by a Regional Office of Education or an Intermediate Service Center unless an entity has been given permission to submit course proposals directly to ISBE. Administrators' Academy Coordinators and other designated staff members in ROEs/ISCs who have access to IAAMS have been authorized to submit Administrators' Academy course proposals electronically. Administrators' Academy Coordinators in ROEs/ISCs may also be responsible for the development of courses, or courses may be developed by independent providers (professional organizations, businesses, law firms, etc.). However, regardless of the entity responsible for development of a proposed course, all such courses must be submitted by a ROE or ISC except when a third party is authorized to submit proposals directly to ISBE. The Illinois Association of School

Administrators (IASA), the Illinois Principals Association (IPA), and the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO) have been given such authorization, effective November 1, 2003.

ROE/ISC Coordinators and others authorized to submit Administrators' Academy course proposals are expected to screen Administrators' Academy course proposals prior to submission to determine if they appear to satisfy course approval criteria. In this regard, ROE/ISC staff members have a very important role. Course proposals should not be submitted until a response has been provided for all criteria. Coordinators are expected to work with third-party providers to ensure that proposed professional development activities submitted for Administrators' Academy approval meet the expectations of the Administrators' Academy for quality professional development and that they satisfy all course approval criteria.

Administrators' Academy courses must be submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education at least 30 days in advance of the first offering, and it is strongly advisable that a course be submitted at least 60 days in advance. Administrator access to required Academy courses is directly affected by the timeliness of the submission of these courses for approval and the extent to which information about approved courses can be made widely available in advance of the course-related workshops. Submission of proposed Administrators' Academy courses at least 60 days in advance of the first offering will generally allow ISBE staff the necessary time to review the course and to request clarification if needed or desired. That timeline will also allow providers an opportunity to enter course sessions in IAAMS 30 days prior to the first offering of the course and to post those workshops.

General Guidelines

As a result of new requirements for administrative certificate renewal effective July 1, 2003, there has been a conscious application of higher standards for the approval of Administrators' Academy courses. Some previous policies governing the approval of Administrators' Academy courses have been strengthened, and others have been revised to reflect a desire for high quality, as well as a desire to make courses available for delivery throughout the state.

Administrators' Academy courses are intended to provide in-depth learning experiences around a single topic or set of outcomes. Research on effective staff development suggests that professional development activities are more meaningful when they are focused. To provide that focus, Administrators' Academy course activities must be directed toward a single topic or set of outcomes. By focusing on outcomes, a variety of professional development activities or multiple facets of an issue may be introduced on a topic without compromising the purpose of the course or workshop. For example, a course may focus on evaluation of beginning staff or it may focus on the critical knowledge needed by new administrators as defined in the research. When multiple activities linked to a single topic or set of outcomes are planned, the proposal should indicate the research or other basis for their being linked in an Academy course. If a proposed course (particularly one that will be offered through a conference, roundtable meeting or similar multi-focus meeting) does not have this coherent and in-depth approach, it will not be approved (see next paragraph).

Most "Conferences," "Roundtables," "Legal Updates," or other update courses will no longer be approved unless the course consists of an integrated review and analysis of a single theme or set of laws that have an impact on one or more aspects of administrative work. In the past, ROEs, ISCs, and individual districts have submitted proposals for approval of seminars or workshops that provided a potpourri of information that was at best very loosely connected. Many such proposals were for an annual series of lectures, typically provided by a local law firm, to update participants on new laws after each legislative session. These and similar topic-specific "updates" will be evaluated based on the design of the proposed course. For example, if the course consists simply of representatives from various law firms giving an update on new legislation or court decisions, the activity will not be approved as an Academy. If, however, a workshop focuses on legal issues concerning one topic, such as the requirements for serving students with handicaps or a workshop on the legal issues involved regarding district policy on student discipline, the activity might be approved as an Administrators' Academy course. Likewise, periodic "roundtable"

meetings designed to allow administrators to meet and discuss a variety of topics will not be approved for Administrators' Academy credit. Please remember that even though such broadly focused activities will not be approval as Academy courses, the activities can be used by administrators to meet the other professional development requirements for certificate renewal (i.e., 100 hours over the five year period).

Administrators' Academy courses must include at least six (6) hours of professional development time. Public Act 92-796 states that administrators must complete an Administrators' Academy course annually, and over the five-year certificate registration period, all Administrators' Academy courses taken must total at least 30 hours. Therefore, it is the policy of the Administrators' Academy that a course includes at least 6 hours of professional development time in order to satisfy the requirement for certificate renewal. This will allow administrators to take a minimum of one course each year and still satisfy the certificate renewal requirement. The 6 hour course need not be a single session on one day, and different types of professional development activities may be incorporated in the 6 hour curriculum. Depending upon the nature of the course, for example, two sessions of at least 3 hours in duration may be more appropriate than a single session of 6 hours in one day to present the course. No single session of a course, however, may be less than two hours in duration.

The professional development activities incorporated in an Administrators' Academy course may vary as appropriate to the topic or focus. A 6 hour course, for example, may include formal presentations, training, group involvement, exercises that provide for guided practice, exercises that provide for independent practice, and/or exercises that require that knowledge be applied in a practical setting.

Within the context of this flexibility, courses may include activities that involve both direct contact instruction and opportunities for appropriate independent learning and/or application. Direct contact includes those activities that provide for direct interaction between the instructors or presenters and the participants. Independent learning refers to the time that may be allotted to "home-work" assignments or time during which the participant is expected to engage in a structured application of the knowledge and skills that are the focus of the course. Registration time, breaks, lunch, and other non-instructional time do not count toward the 6 hour requirement for Administrators' Academy courses.

An Administrators' Academy course should be a professional development activity that can be provided or delivered to other district administrators throughout the state. Administrators' Academy courses must be portable. Professional development activities designed specifically for only one district or region, or those that are intended to be "one-time" events, will be approved as Administrators' Academies only if the activity can be either replicated in other districts, or serve as a model for their adaptation.

Potential providers are strongly encouraged to adopt or adapt an existing course if such a course would respond to the needs in their area. Administrators' Academy course proposals should not be submitted if the proposed course duplicates or is very similar to one that is already approved. For many reasons, it seems advisable to limit the proliferation of courses that essentially duplicate courses that have already been approved. By focusing on adopting or adapting approved courses, ROEs and ISCs should be able to more rapidly expand the availability of Academy courses, and focus on developing new ideas. In addition, this approach should save staff time at the regional and state levels.

ROEs and ISCs should check the list of previously approved Administrators' Academy courses before developing and submitting a proposal for a new course to determine if a course already exists that includes the topic, content, and outcomes of one they wish to offer.

If there are courses that will meet local needs, ROEs and ISCs may simply adopt them, using procedures outlined in the earlier policy document. Adoption of an existing course assumes that the core concepts and principles will be

maintained and taught, the presenters will be qualified, the required curriculum materials will be used, and permission will be obtained to offer copyrighted courses.

Adaptation of a previously approved course may occur when the proposed course is similar to the one that has already been approved, but local needs require that new or different content and materials be used to address new or different outcomes. In such instances, ROEs and ISCs must submit a proposal for such courses, clearly indicating in the introduction and text how the course differs from one that is already approved. Such courses may have a title that is similar to one that is approved, but the title should indicate a new emphasis or different approach to the topic that makes the course distinctly different. In addition, the course description should indicate that the course is an adaptation of one already approved and how it differs. The title of the course being adapted should be identified in the description of the new courses. Text from the course that is being adapted that is consistent with the adapted course may simply be replicated on the proposal. Where there are differences, these should be clearly identified as such. When a previously approved course is adapted, it is expected that the core concepts and principles be maintained.

If, after examining the list of approved courses, none exist that cover the topic, content, or outcomes that a region or intermediate service center wishes to offer, a proposal for a new course should be developed and submitted.

Criteria for Approval/Required Components

It is recognized that meaningful staff development experiences may include many different kinds and types of activities. As stated previously, however, not all such activities are appropriate for Administrators' Academy credit. Proposals for Administrators' Academy courses must be submitted electronically through IAAMS by ROE/ISC staff and providers authorized to submit course proposals directly. Course proposals must include certain components and satisfy certain criteria. The components and criteria are as follows:

1. **Course Title and Description:** Administrators' Academy proposals must indicate the course title and provide a description of the course. The course title should be descriptive, indicating the content, or topic of the course. The description should provide information on the purpose and nature of the course content. Local school administrators should be able to know from the title and description whether they want to know more about the course and/or whether they want to attend the course. Titles such as "One Step Beyond" or "The Future is Now" are not sufficiently descriptive. Acronyms should be avoided.

2. **Rationale:** Proposals require that a rationale for offering the course be provided, including the reasons for offering the course. Specifically, the proposal should identify the participant needs addressed by the course, and describe how the course content addresses these needs. A proposal is not likely to be approved unless it contains a statement of need. Nor will it be approved if a description of how the course content addresses the needs is not included. A listing of topics included in the course is not sufficient.

3. **Illinois Professional School Leader Standards:** All Administrators' Academy courses must contribute to the achievement of the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards. A detailed description as to how the course content is relevant to the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards and/or Content-Area Standards for Administrators must be provided. A simple listing of standards or the identification of the standard numbers is not sufficient. The description must indicate and elaborate on how the content is relevant to the standards. Specific Knowledge and Performance Indicators addressed by the course content should be identified (referenced).

4. **Research-Base/Knowledge-Base:** Administrators' Academy proposals must reference and explain how the research and/or knowledge upon which the proposed course is based provide a foundation for the course content. Specific references (books, literature, surveys, etc.) that provide a knowledge base for the course

should be identified. A statement or two should be included that explains how the knowledge base supports the course content.

5. **Course Goals:** Administrators' Academy courses must have a set of goals. Goals are more general than outcomes. A description of the overall course goals in terms of the intended impact on the participants should be provided.

6. **Participants' Outcomes:** An Administrators' Academy course proposal should describe the knowledge, skills, attitudes and expertise that the participants will gain as a result of this professional development opportunity. Outcomes respond to the question: "What will administrators know and be able to do as a result of taking the course?" The outcomes should provide the focus for the course and align with the course goals. Course content must focus on a single set of participant outcomes.

7. **Course Syllabus:** The proposed course syllabus must be included in an Administrators' Academy proposal. The electronic format includes the following instructions:
    1. List each subtopic and a detailed description of the course content,
    2. Indicate which subtopic(s) include an application/dissemination component,
    3. Indicate whether each subtopic involves direct or indirect contact, and
    4. Indicate the duration and expected outcomes of the various professional development activities.

    Reminder: A minimum of six (6) hours of professional development time is required.
    The course syllabus is, in effect, a list of the course components. Each component should be described, and it should be indicated whether each topic includes an application/dissemination component, whether each topic involves direct contact (between presenters and participants) or indirect contact (homework or independent work), and the duration and outcomes of each course component. It is expected that all outcomes identified in Item #6 above will be addressed by the various subtopics identified in this section. Modification will be requested if all outcomes are not addressed. Reminder: registration time, breaks, lunch, and other non-instructional time should not be included in the course syllabus and do not count toward the 6 hour requirement for Administrators' Academy courses.

8. **Application/Dissemination Component:** All Administrators' Academy courses must include a written Application/Dissemination component. That is, all courses must provide for the application of what is learned or for the participant to disseminate or communicate that information in some manner. Specifically, legislative rules require that for each professional development activity completed, an administrator must either:

    Apply what he or she has learned in his or her practice and create a written record of its application for submission to the responsible reviewer, or

    Disseminate an analysis of what was learned to some other group of educators, including its results, benefits, and/or implications for the needs of one or more districts, schools, or individual administrators.

    The required Application/Dissemination component should be incorporated as part of the 6 hour (or longer) Administrators' Academy course. The online proposal form requests that a detailed description of the activity/activities and/or product(s) required for completion of the application and/or dissemination component be provided. A proposal will not be approved unless there is a specific statement or statements describing the specific activities or product(s) required to satisfy this requirement.

    The proposal must also:
    o   Indicate the time frame for expected completion (number of days/months or same day),

- o Identify the accountability procedures that will be used to ensure completion, and
- o Identify the position of the specific person(s) who will be responsible for verifying completion.

Most Administrators' Academy courses will start and end on the same day. If, however, participants are asked to apply information learned in class and report or turn in an assignment or independent work at a later time, the time frame for the course should reflect the due date of the assignment. For example, if participants have 30 days to complete an assignment, a 30 day time frame should be indicated.

Also, the time frame indicated above for the course in days or months should match the time frame indicate in Item #11 below when the course starting date and ending date are provided.

When identifying the accountability procedures, it is important to indicate how it will be determined that participants have completed the application/dissemination component. A participant cannot simply report or state that he/she has completed the component. Someone other than the participant must verify that the application/dissemination component was completed.

When identifying the position of the person who will verify completion of the application/dissemination component, the names of individuals should not be listed. If the presenter or instructor is responsible for verifying completion, indicate "presenter" or "instructor." If ROE/ISC staff will be responsible for verifying completion, then the title of the position of that person or persons should be listed, such as "Administrators' Academy Coordinator."

9. **Course Materials:** A list of the required and/or recommended course materials should be provided. It should be indicated if any of the materials listed are copyrighted. Important disclaimer: The acquisition of written approval for copyrighted materials to be used by participants is the sole responsibility of the provider and/or presenter. When individuals in an ROE/ISC wish to offer a course that has been submitted and approved in another ROE/ISC, it should be clear what specific curriculum materials will be needed when the course is offered.

10. **Course Copyright:** It should be indicated if the course is legally copyrighted. If yes, it is necessary to provide all copyright information including the name of the entity or person holding the copyright and the date of copyright. In addition, provide the contact information so other entities may obtain permission to use the copyrighted course. Important disclaimer: The acquisition of permission to offer a course that is copyrighted is the sole responsibility of the provider and/or presenter.

11. **Certified or Trained Presenters/First Workshop Session:** It is important to note if the course must be presented by certified or trained presenters. If yes, it is important to provide the name of the entity or person to contact for a list of the certified or trained presenters. Finally, the names of the individuals who will be presenting the first session of the course once it is approved should be identified, together with the course start date and the course end date. As indicated above, the course start date and end date should match the duration of the course indicated in item #8 above. State Board of Education staff will enter the first session of the course on IAAMS when the course is approved.

12. **Least Restrictive Environment:** The last component required on the online proposal form is an indication of whether the course content addresses serving students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Article 14 of the School Code. If yes, it is necessary to describe how the course content addresses this requirement.