



# 2024

SURVEY OF NOVICE ADMINISTRATORS  
AND THEIR SUPERVISORS

# IOWA

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# EDUCATION



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# Executive Summary

This project was administered by Jeremy Penn, Ph.D., M.P.H., University of Iowa College of Education, and supported with funding from the Iowa Department of Education. The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author or of the anonymous survey respondents and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the University of Iowa College of Education or the Iowa Department of Education. Questions about this survey or the results should be directed to [jeremy-penn@uiowa.edu](mailto:jeremy-penn@uiowa.edu).

- A large majority (60% - 92%) of novice administrators (including those who were and were not employed as administrators) indicated being well or very well prepared on all areas of preparation except for effectively managing the growth of English Language Learners (Table 7).
- Supervisors of novice administrators agreed, with a large majority (78% - 97%) perceiving the novice administrator they supervised as well or very well prepared across all areas of preparation (Table 8).
- Most novice administrators (52% - 86%) – employed as administrators and not employed as administrators – reported being well prepared to support MTSS (Table 9).
- A large majority (90% - 97%) of supervisors of novice administrators perceived the novice administrator they supervised as well or very well prepared for various aspects of MTSS (Table 9).
- Novice administrators who were employed as administrators felt more prepared in 2024 to support the mental health and wellness of their faculty and staff and their own mental health and wellness in comparison to 2023 (Figure 5).
- Supervisors of novice administrators perceived novice administrators as more prepared to support mental health (their own, their students', and their faculty and staff) than in the previous three years of the survey (Figure 6).
- Open-ended comments are offered verbatim to provide additional insight into the preparation of novice administrators.

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# Methods

## Questionnaire Design and Administration

- The questionnaires were designed through a collaboration between the Iowa Department of Education and the School Administrators of Iowa. The questionnaires were updated in 2022 to reflect the updated standards for school administrators, which prevents direct comparison of results to surveys prior to 2022.
- The full text of responses to the open-ended survey items is presented. Individual and institutional names have been removed from the open-ended comments.
- The survey was administered using the University of Iowa's Qualtrics license.
- The surveys were administered from April 3 to May 14, 2024.

## Survey Population

- Administrator preparation programs were asked to send the names and contact information for their recent graduates.
- The Iowa Department of Education provided a list of new administrators serving schools in Iowa.
- Matching was used to generate the contact list for supervisors of novice administrators. However, not all novice administrators who responded to the survey had their supervisors respond to the survey and vice versa.

## Response Rate

- 380 novice administrators were contacted, and responses were received from 83, for a response rate of 21.8%. Not all respondents were currently serving as administrators (this is noted throughout the results where relevant). Not all respondents answered every question so the number of responses per item varies.
- 73 supervisors of novice administrators were contacted, and responses were received from 32, for a response rate of 43.8%.

# Results

## Demographics of Respondents

### Novice Administrators

Table 1. Where did you complete your administrator preparation program?

Institution	Contacted	Responded	Response Rate	% of total
None of these / unknown	31	5	16.1%	6.0%
Dordt University	15	7	46.7%	8.4%
Drake University	58	10	17.2%	12.0%
Iowa Principal Leadership Academy	31	8	25.8%	9.6%
Iowa State University	9	2	22.2%	2.4%
Northwestern College	34	11	32.4%	13.3%
University of Iowa	47	10	21.3%	12.0%
University of Northern Iowa	92	19	20.7%	22.9%
Viterbo University	63	11	17.5%	13.3%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>21.8%</b>	

### Novice Administrators

Table 2. Are you currently employed in a school or district administration role?

	n	Percent
Yes, I am currently employed as a school or district administrator	48	57.8%
No, I am not currently employed as a school or district administrator, but I was employed as a school or district administrator in the past	2	2.4%
No, I am not currently employed as a school or district administrator, and I have NEVER been employed as a school or district administrator	33	39.8%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Novice Administrators

Table 3. (If respondent is currently serving as school or district administrator) Which statement best describes your current role?

	n	Percent
I am currently employed as a school administrator	33	68.8%
I am currently employed as a district administrator	2	4.2%
I am currently employed with an Area Education Agency (AEA)	2	4.2%
Other	11	22.9%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

Other text: Activities Director, Family Engagement Specialist, Dean of Students, will be on contract fall of 2024, instructional coach, school counselor, teacher, teacher leader, teacher leadership-facilitator / Dean of students, technology coordinator and business teacher.

### Novice Administrators

Table 4. (If respondent is not currently serving as a school or district administrator) Which statement describes your current employment status?

	n	Percent
I am employed in K-12 education, but not as a school or district administrator	33	97%
I am employed outside of K-12 education	1	3%
I am not employed, but I am seeking employment	0	0
I am not employed and I am not seeking employment	0	0
I am a full-time student	0	0
Total	34	100%

### Novice Administrators

Table 5. (If respondent is not currently serving as a school or district administrator) To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following are reasons why you are not employed as a school, school district, or AEA administrator?

	n	M	% Agree / Strongly Agree
I am waiting for the right job to become available.	33	3.09	87.9%
I am happy with my current job and am not interested in taking an administrative job right now.	33	2.55	54.5%
I am not interested in school / district / AEA administration.	33	1.55	6.1%
I have pursued administrative openings but have not received an acceptable offer.	33	2.24	42.4%
Personal / family / life circumstances make it difficult to pursue an administrative position at this time.	33	2.21	39.4%

Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree.

### Supervisors of Novice Administrators

Supervisors of novice administrators were asked to report the preparation institution attended by the person they were evaluating. If the supervisors did not know the institution the novice administrator had attended, this information was entered by the survey administrator by examining the contact lists sent by institutions.

### Supervisors of Novice Administrators

Table 6. What preparation institution did the novice administrator you are reviewing attend?

Institution	Contacted	Responded	Response Rate	% of Total
Unknown / None of these	26	4	X*	13%
Dordt University	1	2	X*	6%
Drake University	8	3	X*	9%
Iowa Principal Leadership Academy	11	8	X*	25%
Iowa State University	0	0	X*	0%
Northwestern College	3	0	X*	0%
Saint Ambrose University	0	0	X*	0%
University of Northern Iowa	0	0	X*	0%
University of Iowa	1	2	X*	6%
Viterbo University	36	13	X*	40%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>43.8%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*The response rate could not be calculated for individual institutions since the preparation institution was unknown for many who were contacted.

## Overall Level of Preparation

### All Novice Administrators

- As shown in Table 7, novice administrators – including those who were not employed as school or district administrators – generally felt well prepared to serve as school or district administrators.

Table 7. Overall level of preparation: All novice administrators.

"How well were you prepared to:"	Novice Administrators (Including those not employed as administrators)		
	n	M	% Well / Very Well
Advocate for ethical decisions and cultivate and enact professional norms.	75	3.44	92.0%
Develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive school culture.	75	3.31	86.7%
Build the school's professional capacity, engage staff in the development of a collaborative professional culture, and improve systems of staff supervision, evaluation, support, and professional learning.	75	3.16	80.0%
Strengthen student learning, support school improvement, and advocate for the needs of the school and community.	75	3.31	84.0%
Collaboratively lead, design, and implement a school mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.	75	3.24	84.0%
Improve management, communication, technology, school-level governance, and operation systems to develop and improve data-informed and equitable school resource plans and to apply laws, policies, and regulations.	75	3.15	82.7%
Evaluate, develop, and implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, data systems, supports, and assessment.	75	3.16	77.4%
Effectively manage special education.	75	2.80	60.0%
Effectively manage the growth of English Language Learners.	75	2.40	48.0%

Scale: 1 = Not well, 2 = Somewhat well, 3 = Well, 4 = Very well.

Table 8. Overall level of preparation and performance: those with school or district administrator employment experience.

"How well were you prepared to:"	Novice Administrators (only those serving / served) (n = 44)		Supervisors of Novice Administrators (n = 32)		
		M	% Well / Very Well	M	% Well / Very Well
Advocate for ethical decisions and cultivate and enact professional norms.	Prepared	3.39	90.9%	3.56	96.9%
	Perform	3.33	93.0%	3.55	93.1%
Develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive school culture.	Prepared	3.18	84.1%	3.50	93.8%
	Perform	3.26	90.7%	3.59	93.1%
Build the school's professional capacity, engage staff in the development of a collaborative professional culture, and improve systems of staff supervision, evaluation, support, and professional learning.	Prepared	3.02	72.7%	3.31	87.6%
	Perform	3.14	83.4%	3.41	82.7%
Strengthen student learning, support school improvement, and advocate for the needs of the school and community.	Prepared	3.23	79.5%	3.50	96.9%
	Perform	3.28	88.3%	3.59	96.6%
Collaboratively lead, design, and implement a school mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.	Prepared	3.18	81.8%	3.47	93.7%
	Perform	3.12	88.4%	3.55	89.6%
Improve management, communication, technology, school-level governance, and operation systems to develop and improve data-informed and equitable school resource plans and to apply laws, policies, and regulations.	Prepared	3.11	79.5%	3.25	87.5%
	Perform	3.05	79.1%	3.41	93.1%
Evaluate, develop, and implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, data systems, supports, and assessment.	Prepared	3.07	72.7%	3.38	93.8%
	Perform	3.12	79.1%	3.41	93.1%
Effectively manage special education.	Prepared	2.77	56.8%	3.16	78.1%
	Perform	3.00	76.2%	3.34	86.2%
Effectively manage the growth of English Language Learners.	Prepared	2.30	40.9%	3.20	80.0%
	Perform	2.45	42.9%	3.22	81.4%

\*Scale: 1 = Not well; 2 = Somewhat well; 3 = Well; 4 = Very well

Figure 1. Novice Administrator Results. Overall % well / very well prepared. (Includes only those who were serving in an administrative role).

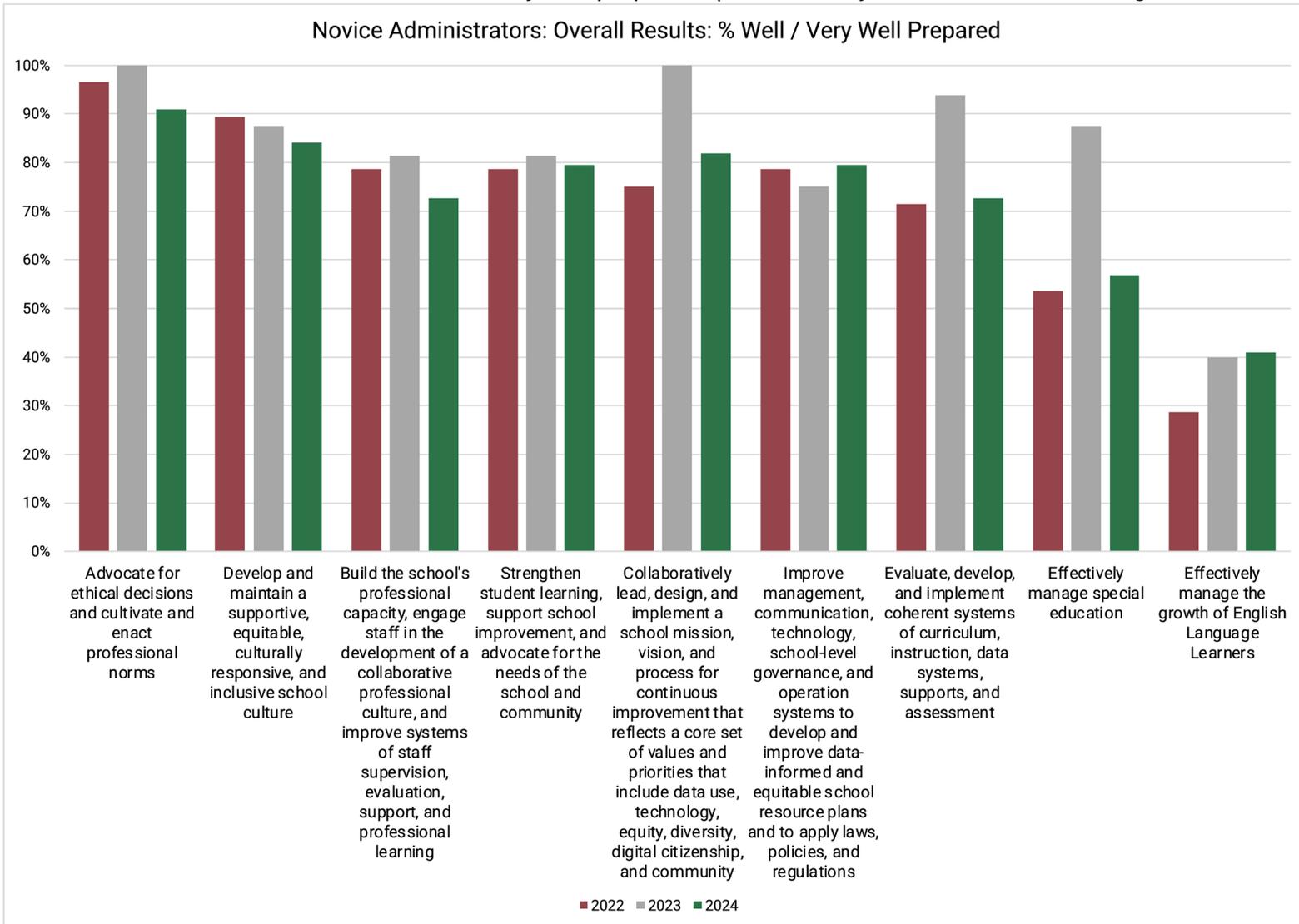
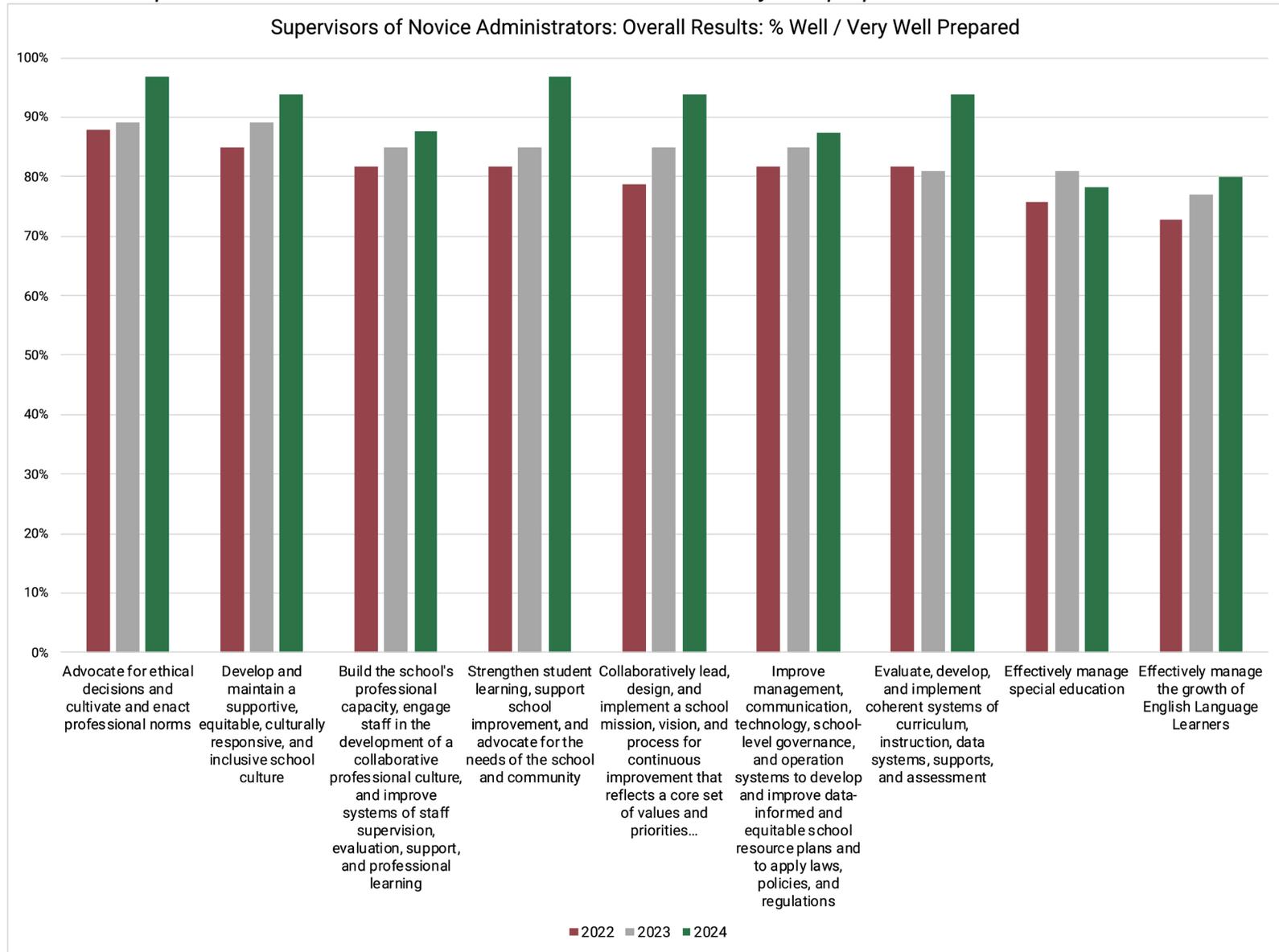


Figure 2. Results from Supervisors of Novice Administrators. Overall % well / very well prepared.



## **Preparation to Engage in Aspects of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)**

- Most novice administrators reported being well prepared and performing well on all aspects of MTSS (Table 9).
- The area where novice administrators felt least well prepared was “supporting the performance of progress monitoring” (58%).
- Nearly all supervisors of novice administrators reported the novice administrators they supervised were well or very well prepared to implement various aspects of MTSS (Table 9).

Table 9. Overall preparation in the aspects of a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).

“How well did your administrator preparation program prepare you for each of the following aspects of a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS)?”		Novice Administrators					Supervisors of Novice Administrators (n = 31)			
		n	M	% Well / Very Well 2024	% Well / Very Well 2023	% Well / Very Well 2022	M	% Well / Very Well 2024	% Well / Very Well 2023	% Well / Very Well 2022
Engage in data-based decision-making / interventions.	All	73	3.33	86%	88%	77%	-	-	-	-
	Employed	44	3.25	84%	81%	74%	3.42	90%	89%	82%
Participate in collaborative inquiry.	All	73	3.27	82%	84%	88%	-	-	-	-
	Employed	44	3.18	77%	81%	93%	3.42	90%	85%	79%
Support equity for all students.	All	73	3.34	85%	88%	77%	-	-	-	-
	Employed	44	3.23	82%	81%	81%	3.55	94%	78%	82%
Collaborate with teachers, school staff, and administrators on Rtl or MTSS.	All	73	2.99	69%	64%	77%	-	-	-	-
	Employed	44	2.89	66%	69%	78%	3.42	94%	85%	77%
Support implementation of evidence-based instruction.	All	73	2.99	68%	64%	75%	-	-	-	-
	Employed	44	2.86	61%	63%	74%	3.52	97%	74%	73%
Develop evidence-based interventions.	All	73	2.88	66%	72%	61%	-	-	-	-
	Employed	44	2.80	66%	69%	63%	3.37	90%	77%	81%
Participate in school-based initiatives that support Iowa’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan.	All	70	2.67	59%	60%	57%	-	-	-	-
	Employed	44	2.61	59%	63%	58%	3.47	93%	85%	82%
Support the completion of progress monitoring.	All	73	2.68	58%	68%	65%	-	-	-	-
	Employed	44	2.57	52%	75%	59%	3.40	90%	81%	76%
Support the performance of universal screening.	All	72	2.82	64%	56%	63%	-	-	-	-
	Employed	44	2.75	59%	56%	60%	3.41	97%	85%	79%

Scale: 1 = Not very well prepared, 2 = Somewhat well prepared, 3 = Well prepared, 4 = Very well prepared.

Figure 3. Novice Administrators. MTSS % Well / Very Well Prepared. (Includes only those who were serving in an administrative role).

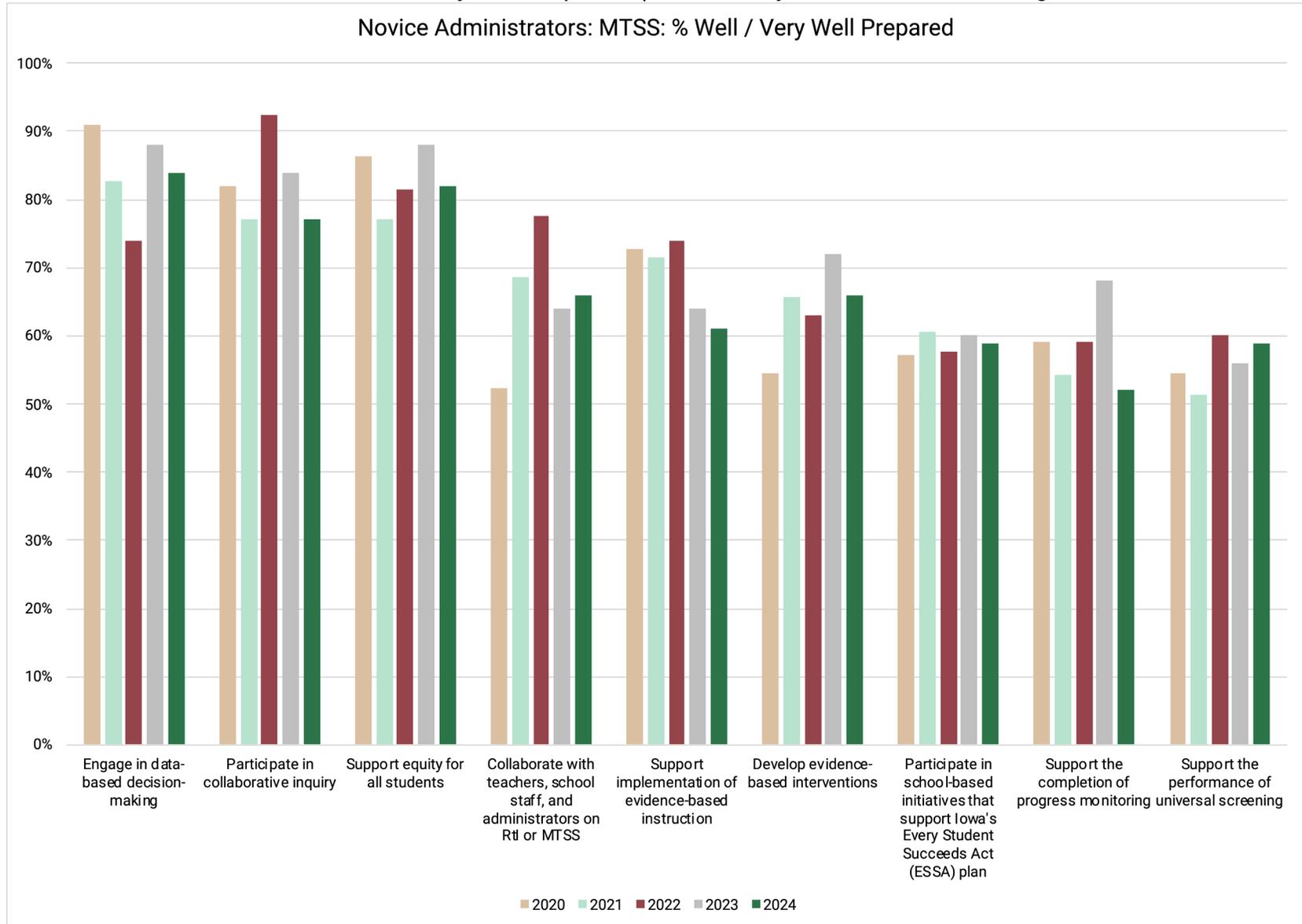
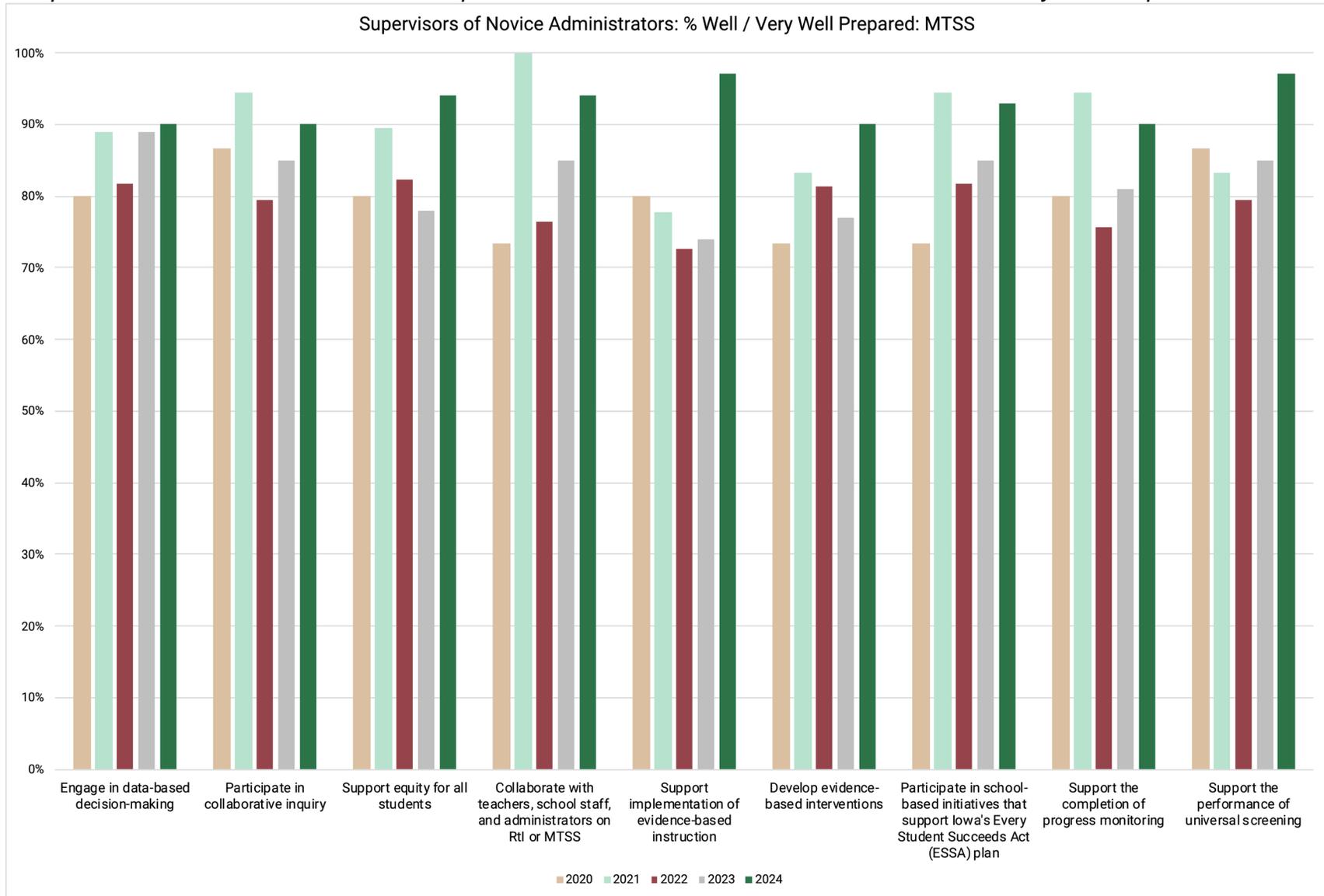


Figure 4. Supervisors of Novice Administrators. Supervisors of Novice Administrators: MTSS % Well / Very Well Prepared.



## Level of Preparation for Supporting Mental Health

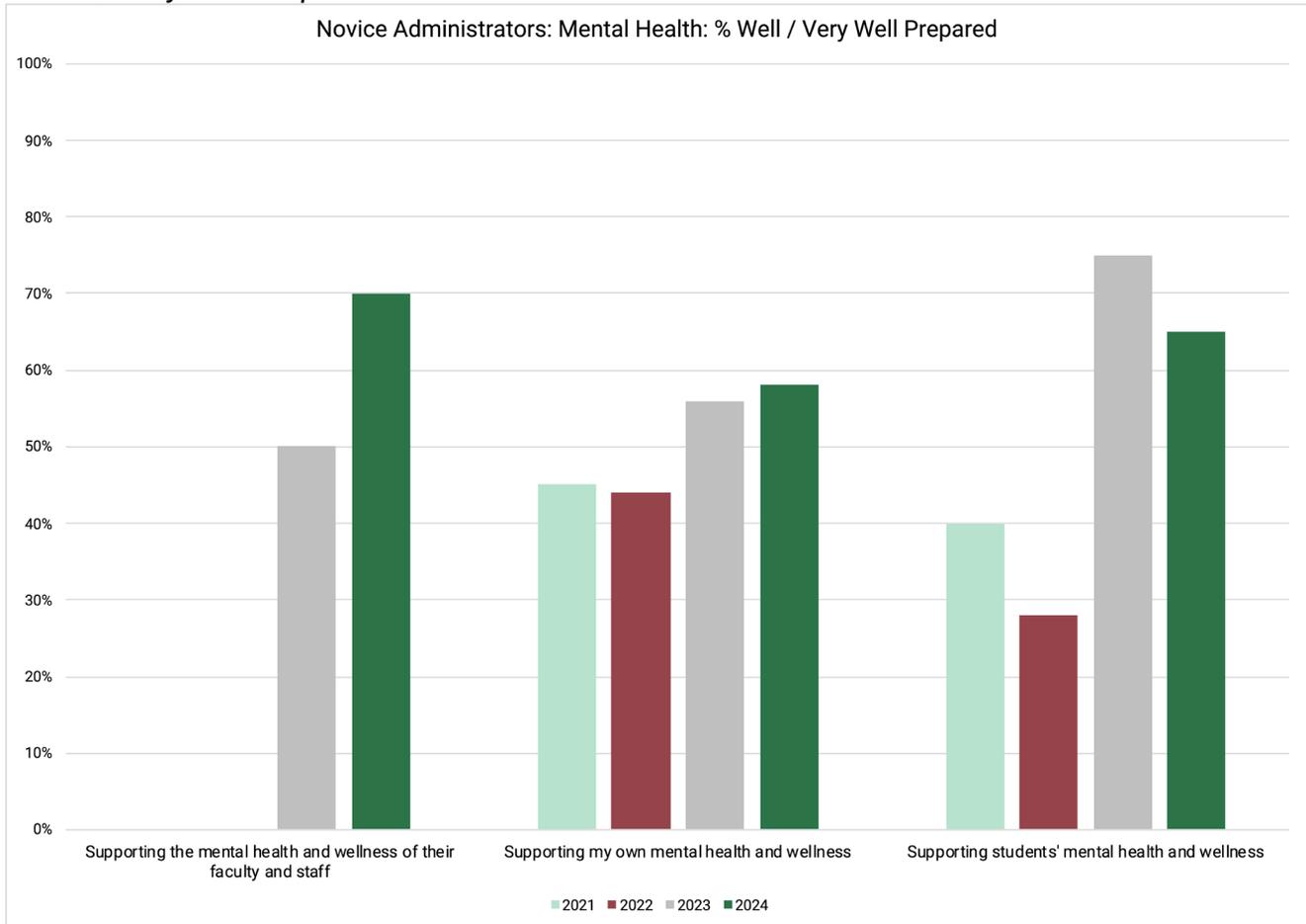
- Many novice administrators felt well / very well prepared to support students' mental health and wellness (Table 10).
- Novice administrators' perceptions of their level of preparation for mental health improved in two of three areas in comparison to 2023 (Figure 5).
- Supervisors of novice administrators generally felt novice administrators were prepared to support mental health (Table 10).
- Supervisors' perceptions of the level of preparation of novice administrators in mental health improved in all three areas in 2024 in comparison to 2023 (Figure 6).

Table 10. Overall level of preparation to support mental health.

How well prepared...?		Novice Administrators (n = 72 all; 43 employed)		Supervisors of Novice Administrators (n = 32)	
		M	% Well / Very Well	M	% Well / Very Well
Supporting students' mental health and wellness	All	2.74	60%	-	-
	Employed	2.72	65%	3.31	88%
Supporting the mental health and wellness of their faculty and staff	All	2.78	61%	-	-
	Employed	2.81	70%	3.22	88%
Supporting their own [my own] mental health and wellness	All	2.67	58%	-	-
	Employed	2.65	58%	3.25	91%

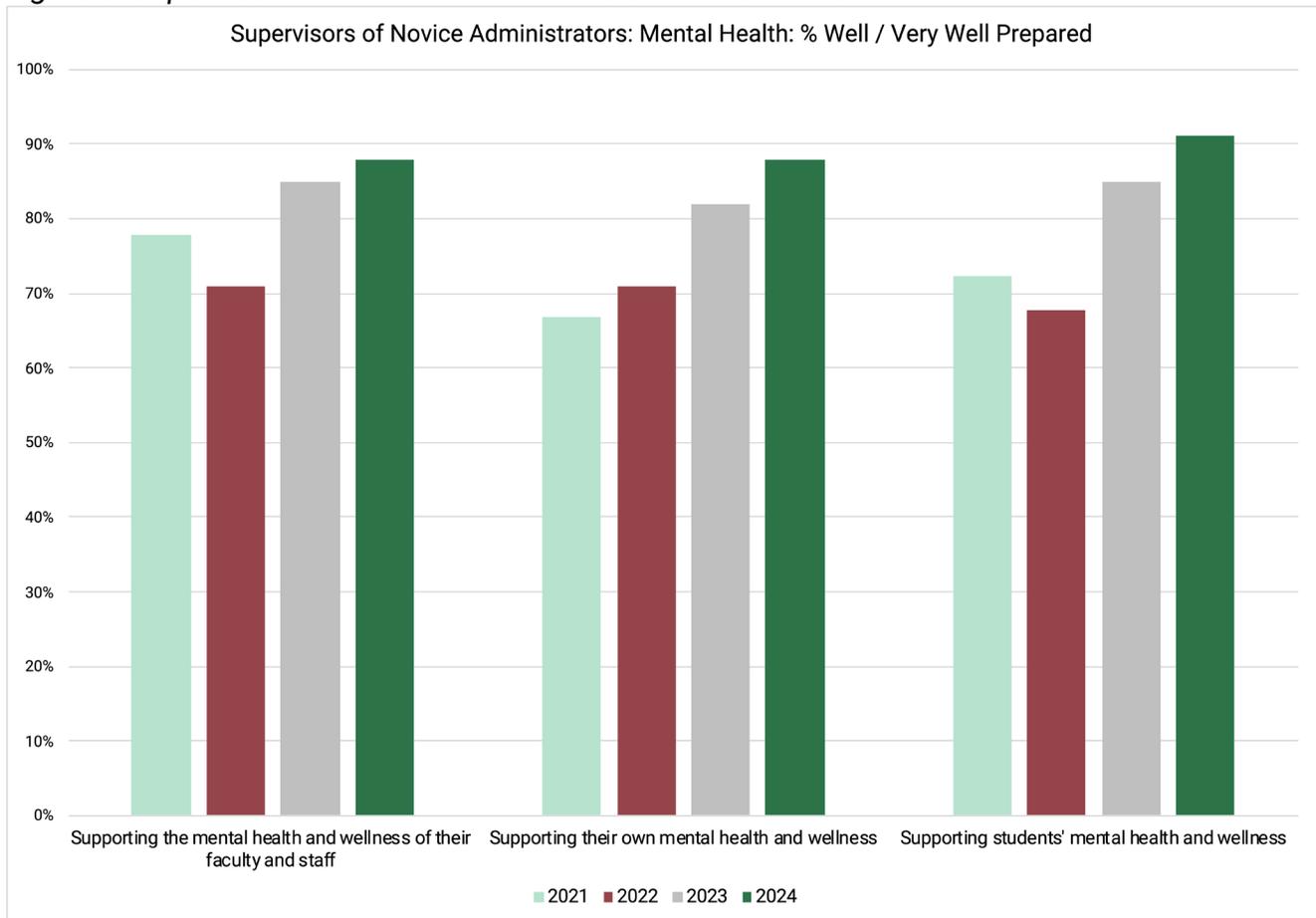
Scale: 1 = Not very well prepared; 2 = Somewhat well prepared; 3 = Well prepared; 4 = Very well prepared.

Figure 5. Novice Administrators and Mental Health (employed as administrators). Mental Health % Well / Very Well Prepared.



Note: The item "supporting the mental health and wellness of their faculty and staff" was different in 2022 and 2021, so no comparative results are available.

Figure 6. Supervisors of Novice Administrators and Mental Health.



## Open-ended Responses

Responses are provided verbatim unless a specific Administration Program or Novice Administrator was named. Responses of “NA / Not sure / don’t know” were removed.

*Novice Administrators: What, if anything, could your preparation program have done to better prepare you to support the mental health of your faculty, staff, and students?*

Addressed this issue specifically and with concrete examples

Discussing resources, protocols, admin position in these situations, etc.

Draw more attention to it in the managerial leadership coursework. Students were addressed well, but not so much for staff and self.

Electives to focus on areas of weakness

Give us more actionable items and research based approaches on this

Had a class on it or incorporated it into part of an existing course.

How to support staff members when situations are out of our control.

I believe the program did an amazing job. [Name] and [Name] are strong leaders. With the changing climate in the state of Iowa, one of hate. Which is lead by kim reynolds and her band of misfits, the mental health in any school is at an al time low. Bullying by government officials does not lead to a great working environment.

I felt like my program was excellent

I graduated 1999; these things were not at the forefront of administrator preparation programs.

I imagine my feelings about this are centered on the current educational political landscape in the state of Iowa at this time more than as a reflection of the educational leadership program at [Administrator Preparation Program].

I loved the Iowa Leadership Principal Academy

I wish that there was a way for all universtities/colleges to work with the administrator mentors directly in letting us implement (and maybe even create and implement) something for this, rather than it just being the theory of how to do it.

I wonder if we could have had some scenarios that were somewhat gray in the area of providing support to a teacher VS disciplining them.

More active support in finding programs and levels of support that could be implemented in a small school

More emphasis on instruction and keeping relevant on best instructional practices and developing that in staff

My program did an awesome job here!

Nothing-amazing program that will need “on the job learning” to continue to grow and apply what has been learned.

Preparation programs for administrators as well as teachers needs to prepare them for the reality of the job. The components you are asking about in the [survey] were not discussed or taught in my administrative program. All of these components need to be part of the preparation program in

adding more in depth understanding specifically in special education, working with behaviors that range on a spectrum of intellectual disabilities to emotional disabilities. Often times being an expert in special education fellow administrators call me for support in special education.

Provide case-studies that provide practice in identifying mental health concerns in students, faculty and staff with possible interventions to help improve it.

provide resources that could be beneficial because it is hard to prepare others on what to say and do, especially because each situation is unique

Providing more education/training surrounding mental health supports for students while they are at school. Providing opportunities to implement strategies for our students to be successful with their mental health. In general, providing more training/knowledge around mental health and how to support staff and students.

Research based behavior interventions

Suggestions on how to "fill in" so they can be gone. Lack of staffing has created a lack of quality education, but teachers need a break.

The opportunity to hear more from those currently in the field supporting student and staff mental health.

Tier 1 supports were taught, however Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports could have been [more] thoroughly taught.

*Supervisors of Novice Administrators: What, if anything, could [Name]'s preparation program have done to better prepare them to support mental health and wellness of their faculty, staff, and students?*

Behavior and special education

I don't think you can prepare anyone for the amount of mental health needs that come to your desk. You have to get in the trenches and see it/feel it. I do believe a critically important part of helping them get through it, is having a good mentor that checks in with them weekly.

I think any program would be better served if we could look at the systems that schools are putting in place. This means that instead of exasperating about its importance, let's look at best practices.

[Name] offers great support, the ability for our county to support kids and their families lacks resources for her to utilize.

Mental Health is an area that many of us need more trainings and background in to better serve our students.

More exposure to addressing challenging behavior.

None – [Name] is a passionate professional who is well-prepared.

Nothing--though this is tough to answer because [Name] already had a counseling degree and a lot of experience with mental health before the program.

Unfortunately, we had to deal with a student tragedy in our district this year and [Name] was tremendous in his knowledge and support in assisting faculty, staff, and community members. [Name] provided a strong and calming presence for people that was much appreciated and his follow up, still to this day, is tremendous.

While it is generally well known that October and February are hard months in education, to actually feel that struggle of staff and students is hard. Any additional opportunities to engage in learning around understanding staff's struggles, how to support and how to plan to minimize unnecessary stress would be important for new admin. Also, new admin should have a clear understanding of how to support a new teacher as a new admin. What does that need to look like so that the new teacher is supported and can experience a positive first year?

With any new administrator, having as much experience as possible. This can be done with more practical experiences in the field during preparation.

*Novice Administrators: What, if anything, could your preparation program have done to better prepare you to support your own mental health and wellness?*

Addressed this issue specifically and with concrete examples

[Administrator preparation program] did this well.

Draw more attention to it in the managerial leadership coursework. Students were addressed well, but not so much for staff and self.

Give us more actionable items and research based approaches on this

How to overthrow the hate our current government in Iowa has for public education.

I don't know that the program could have done anything. Pretty sure I have always put others first and not sure how I can get past that.

I feel a section of a course should be devoted to work/home balance that feeds into mental health and wellness.

I felt like they spoke to it often.

I graduated 1999; these things were not at the forefront of administrator preparation programs.

Knowing the reality of the job. All of the moving parts as an administrator and how to balance it all.

Modeled it or incorporated it into an existing course.

Nothing-amazing program that will need "on the job learning" to continue to grow and apply what has been learned.

Nothing, resources in school districts is a major component to this.

Nothing. My program was amazing and I hope other future Administrators can benefit from programs like this.

Perhaps more time with active administrators that share their experience and management of their mental health.

Providing more guest-speakers to speak to how they have balanced their wellness and mental health while working as an administrator.

Resources to access such things as work life balance, modeling healthy behavior, building resilience, and stress management

The flexibility and support of the faculty was amazing. My mental health did not suffer as a result of the program.

They did a very nice job in this. To find something wrong for an area of growth is unnecessarily trying to find a flaw. I wish [Administrator Preparation Program] would/could come and work with my current administration in this area.

*Supervisors of Novice Administrators: What, if anything, could [Name]'s preparation program have done to better prepare them to support their own mental health and wellness?*

Balancing and setting healthy boundaries with work/life balance.

Focusing on distributive leadership.

It needs to be talked about. As a building principal, you are pulled in several directions and especially during the first couple of years, you are trying to make everyone happy and feel supported. Making sure its understood that you have to say "no" and are able to take care of your own needs.

[Name] is one that will make sure others are taken care of first before he worries about himself. That is just who he is as a person. I do see [Name] continually working to involve himself in healthy activities alongside the people he is encouraging and supporting to do things that improve their health.

Nothing. When you get in the job, is when you realize what it takes and the balance that is needed. Until then, you can not prepare for the unknown. Every school you inherit is different and every job comes with its own expectations.

Resources and being able to identify the resources in your area are more of an issue than the actual training.

Stephen Covey's Seven Habits does a nice job with sharpening the saw. There needs to be time to focus on self-health that includes both physical and mental health.

*Novice Administrators (employed as administrators): What are examples of the knowledge, skills, or dispositions you learned in your preparation program that helped you succeed this year as a school or district administrator?*

A framework for establishing boundaries to protect time and decision-making.

At Risk Population, collaborating with stakeholders to support all aspects within the school.

Curriculum and leaning on teaching experience

Dealing with people is the majority of my job and [Administrator Preparation Program] did an excellent job of giving me the tools and resources on how to connect with the school community and have easy and difficult conversations. Another major part of the program focuses on the development and implementation of policies and guidelines that I use often in my activities.

Ed Leadership and communication skills collaboration and teamwork skills

Effective hiring practices, systematic building improvement, organization on the things that matter, evaluation process

I feel [Administrator Preparation Program] prepared me very well for the wide variety of tasks and issues that an administrator faces on a daily basis. These include having a wide understanding of curriculum design, selection, and implementation, working with teachers to build a cohesive community and tight knit culture, as well as having an understanding of legal challenges that face education and schools in particular.

I have been around education for a long time, so I have a background in a lot of things. However, taking us through the leadership standards and really unpacking each area was something that I was really glad to have done. Every area of the state looks at things differently. Hearing multiple thoughts and how to best attack scheduling, teacher issues, students, hate from elected officials, the battles to fight for and how to best work through issues. Legal issues are always at the top. Also, the instructors being available to discuss items with you when you had a question. There was so much that was positive.

I have been in this role, following my leadership program at [Administrator Preparation Program], for two years. The knowledge and skills I learned in educational law, special education law, and practical applications of problem-solving and leadership styles set me up for success in my day-to-day work with students, parents, teachers and the community.

I'm still a classroom teacher, I have not applied for an administrative position yet. However, my own administrators rely on me more and I honestly feel like I got knowledge, skills, and vocabulary which they never had in their programs.

Knowledge of building and state systems in regards to education, how to work well with a team and other adults, what it looks like to lead and facilitate teams

Many special education issues that needed to be dealt with, how to have crucial conversations to make sure students were able to learn, how to converse with parents and community members, how to lead PLCs

My instructional leadership course helped me enact great change with my current staff, moving the staff members to taking ownership of the students, program, etc.

School improvement based on data, effective instructional strategies and curricular materials, creating a positive school culture, educational law and special education law

Some of the best skills were participating in life-like situations that administrators handle. Observation/clinical hours were crucial to my personal learning. Having the opportunity to put into action the information and knowledge I was learning in class was very impactful in my professional growth. My special education courses were also very beneficial as I am involved in many meetings throughout the year, and having that background knowledge helps me feel prepared, informed, and able to lead the meetings.

Staff evaluation process.

Systems thinking

The communication skills that I learned were awesome. I also felt like the school law and special education pieces have been invaluable. I pull out my school law book all the time.

The course work I completed helped me be successful in planning and carrying out professional development during this school year, budgeting for Title funds, and making sure we are meeting the needs of our students. The principal and I are also reworking our teacher evaluation program to make better use of the IPDP and I am overhauling our mentoring program for the 24-25SY.

The program as a whole gave me a good base and knowledge into this world

The program focused a lot on DEI, which is great. However, in quite a few classes, this topic overshadowed learning about much else. In particular, the curriculum course was a disaster in that it rarely discussed curriculum and instead had student-led talks on DEI. And to be clear, I'm not against DEI work, but it is one of many other issues that we needed to learn. Overall, the admin program at [Administrator Preparation Program] lacked learning of core competencies and lacked opportunities to practice skills.

*Supervisor of Novice Administrator: What has been [administrator]'s biggest success so far this year?*

[Name] has helped the school to adopt new math curriculum that better serves our students. Additionally, she has established processes for teacher coaching and support.

Began implementation of a TSS system 7-12.

Building relationships with stakeholders; students, parent and staff.

Building strong professional relationships with staff

Coaching and supporting special education teachers.

Developing relationships with staff, students and community members.

Doing a great job

Effective first year as building principal

Everything - he has done a wonderful job as a first year principal!

Figuring out the system and identifying and implementing solutions.

Focusing on student achievement despite a very challenging schedule of high school principal, athletic director, dual credit teacher and head football coach.

Her energy, her passion to do what is right for her kids. She had to transition in January to a head principal job with no experience. She has hit the ground running. We meet weekly and have taken on the big task of filling in for a veteran of 15 years and working through past practices to bring forth new change in a better light.

[Name] has been great about helping us to create more efficient ways to manage and track data via technology. [Name] has made great relationships with students and grown tremendously in working to identify behavior tendencies and put a plan for support together.

[Name] started and directed an alternative high school for our district this year. He has gotten 7 kids to graduate that would have been drop outs this year.

[Name] is caring, collaborative, and has built strong relationships.

Professional learning and culture building

Returning as a mentor teacher for the district, utilizing her experience into new teacher success.

Seal of Biliteracy implementation, Spear heading the use of Panorama

She has taken over a fairly difficult staff and has impacted positive change throughout the building.

She has taken ownership for our MTSS scheduling program we are using and does a phenomenal job with that. She also did some presentation to teachers on teaching, assessing, and developing interventions based on standards.

She is a data driven educational leader.

She is a strategic thinker and had created new systems to make processes more efficient for all.

She understands the idea of equity and our moral imperative to get kids to learn to read like no one I've seen.

Staying calm in the storm of daily happenings

Supporting the growth of PLC teams

Utilization of MTSS processes and collaboration within her PLC's

We have 30 students graduating with an Associates Degree from [Community College] mostly because of [Name]'s understanding of concurrent courses.

Working as a team member to build the team better for the services we provide to schools.

*Novice Administrators (employed as administrators): What are the knowledge, skills, or dispositions that have been the greatest challenge for you as a school or district administrator?*

Adult situations, special education law

All of the components you talked about.

Application and knowledge of special education law, policies, and best practices.

As an educator with an undergraduate degree and 10 years of teaching experience in instrumental music education, learning the nuances of curricular application has been the greatest challenge. I believe this is something that will vary district to district and continuing to be a lifelong learner through this process is the best education I can gain.

Creating newer and more effective systems and standard operating procedures in a small district with limited resources that has had decades of ineffective/lacking systems and a toxic culture and climate ... as well as balancing the role of PK-12 principal and responding to challenging behavior in a system that lacks adequate staff/personnel.

CTE areas, State Mandated documents

Evaluation tools and strategies

Having crucial conversations with adults, having the courage to be disliked by those who don't believe in my job or the things that I am doing

HR processes: due process, administrative leave. Student support: behaviors - what do we do when we have tried a multitude of interventions and nothing seems to work and the parents are not supportive. Staffing: coverage for classrooms as well as individual student needs.

I feel like the basic newness of the profession. However, I am a member of SAI and I am participating in the mentor program for new administrators and I feel like this has truly helped with any of those little things that I need in the day-to-day expectations of my job.

I think my greatest challenge has been how to have those "hard to have" conversations with staff when changes in performance or behavior is needed. My principal does a great job and I learn so much from sitting in on those conversations as he has them with staff.

I think there are three big challenges- one, communicating with my superintendent and knowing what is my responsibility (some of this is an us problem but some is a lack of knowledge about state reporting), two, the emotional toll of the things that I handle daily, and three, the change from teaching students to teaching adults.

I was prepared for students who need extra support, but lack of resources makes that a challenge.

Improving toxic school culture and teacher's deficit mindset about students.

Prioritizing improvements, trying not to do it all first year

School budgeting is still something I wish I knew more about. I hear things about items being paid for from the general fund, and I keep thinking, "Is that where it's supposed to come from?" Luckily it's not me doing it.

Special Education

Staff morale, legislation

The special ed class was also a let-down. We did not "practice" anything, and instead mostly just listened to lecture and theoretical discussions. We needed to simulate the following: IEP meetings,

writing IEPs, evaluating classrooms with IEP supports, etc. to have any sense of what all this means in actual schools.

There is always so many things to do and only a certain amount of time to do them in. That is the challenge and [Administrator Preparation Program] did a reasonable job of teaching time management techniques to try and reduce the stress related to the daily activities.

Veteran Staff unwilling to consider "change" initiatives; set in their ways.

While one can have the best administrator preparation program available, when the rubber meets the road is when challenges arise. I have found it difficult to perform well when I am facing long standing cultural anomalies that are resistant to a shift of culture or "the way things have always been done."

*Supervisor of Novice Administrator: What has been [name]'s biggest challenge so far this year?*

[Name] has had a challenging year in that she has uncovered work that was not done by the previous principal that should have been done.

Balancing legislative actions and potential actions taken towards her role in AEA.

Balancing the requests of so many districts

Behavioral Issues

Being a K-12 principal

Finding time to be with his young family.

Getting past ideas and theory and digging in and doing the work. Being more confident in handling situations and follow through on disciplinary situations.

Graduating 7 kids from an alternative school that he started this year. [Name] also is the head of our Special Ed. Department and has done a great job of helping meet the needs of our students in that area.

Handling the stress and pressure of the building principal.

[Name] has spent his teaching career at the middle school level. Familiarizing himself with the primary age levels has been new for him both socially and academically.

Just learning the job. Trying to figure out work and life balance is always tough for new admins.

Learning behavior students / special education

Learning pacing of all the demands that come along with the role

Managing adults has been more time consuming this year.

Managing difficult relationships with staff.

Multi-tasking to the level necessary and managing the big picture in a new role.

navigating such large role in two very large elementary schools

Not having enough time to get around and do as much as she would like. She is poised to be more impactful in the classroom and we are excited about that possibility.

See above. She taught semester one and transitioned semester 2 to head principal. That is not an easy task.

Separating schools wants and needs versus individuals as a parent.

Student behavior

Student behavior and discipline - he has handled it very well!

Supporting mental health of staff and students.

The same issue we all of have moving people forward that are stuck in their own paradigm of education.

The staff has been fairly challenging and reluctant to change.

*Novice Administrators (all respondents): Is there anything else you would like to share about your level of preparation?*

I am struggling with finding a principal job. There seems to be an overabundance of principal candidates and few jobs. Districts are not willing to hire (or even interview) candidates without experience when there are so many candidates with experience. I fear that the amount of time and money spent on obtaining my administrative license may have been futile.

I feel like I was really prepared, but I also had been handling a lot of things that I shouldn't have been through the years. It may be a totally different situation if I go to a different district.

I gained a lot of experience around MTSS, curriculum, data referenced decision making, putting together processes, procedures and structures, leading and growing adult learners, equity through my experiences prior to going through the admin program. That experience has been instrumental this year!

I have not yet left the classroom, and I am still a teacher in Houston, Texas. My principal mentor told me not to stay out of administration too long, but I still want to teach and build out the "Teacher Leader" role since it's still pretty new to our school district. I'm at a point in my career as an lowa-educator who works in Texas where the level of preparation that I've received is clearly of high quality. Others around me who did not have that quality teacher-prep or administrative-prep often turn to me, and I find myself being placed on the most important committees. I don't get very many walkthroughs or questions about what I'm doing anymore. I try not remind them, but sometimes I have more background knowledge about administrative topics than my own administrators, or I have an approach to a situation which strikes them as revolutionary when I saw it in Iowa and was educated about it in my administrative prep program. From my experience, I can attest that the [Administrator Preparation Program] principalship prep program sets a standard that has helped me as an educator to achieve anything I set my mind to outside the state of Iowa.

I have one course that helped me prepare to be an administrator. There is a significant gap between administrative prep programs and the reality of the job. This goes for teachers as well. This is a passion of mine I wrote my masters thesis on. I'd love to discuss further if interested. [personal email address]

I know about special education because of my own professional experience, I believe that administrators could benefit from more training around special education.

I loved [Administrator Preparation Program], it was far better quality of education than any other university attended ([names of other universities])

I think [Administrator Preparation Program] has a fantastic program preparing leaders for the heavy demands.

I thoroughly enjoyed my Educational Leadership Masters program at the [Administrator Preparation Program] and would highly suggest it to anyone who is looking to move forward in this field.

I was well prepared by [Administrator Preparation Program]. It is an outstanding program. If I could change one thing, it would be to make the teacher evaluation course a full semester instead of half of a semester.

I went to [Administrator Preparation Program] because I expected it to be the premier admin training program in the state. In that, I was very disappointed. The program needed more classes like those taught by [faculty member] and less by professors with only theoretical backgrounds.

I would really encourage all universities/colleges to work with the state in creating a way for administrator mentors (the principals/administrators mentoring the students through these

administrator programs) to not have to be an administrator at the students' current school. I went through the administrator program to further my education, get my master's to make more money and earn grad credits to renew my license. I chose the administrator pathway as at the time I felt that if I ever wanted to leave the classroom this would give me the most options. I wanted to keep things quiet, I'm just a private person, but I had to use my administrators here as mentors per the requirements and rules. I was very vocal with them that I was not interested in leaving this school or my current post, I was simply furthering my education. Since completing the program I have had to defend my getting my master's, that it was not an act of trying to leave the school, I don't want to leave the school, yes I want to be a teacher.... it culminated into a two hour meeting on a Friday after school in which I had to sit and and listen to accusations of how I went and got my administrators degree (true) my counseling degree (false, nor have I even started this, I was asked point blank if I did continue to further my education had I given any thought as to what it would be in and counseling was my answer to that question) and that I had talked about leaving education and going into business. (Also false, nor have I ever, EVER said anything about this) Ironically, as a result of that meeting being the final straw, I am planning on giving myself one more year in education before leaving it completely. Please consider letting students going through an administrator program using admin from other school districts, or retired admin with plenty of knowledge and wisdom to give, as mentors so that nobody else has to go through this.

If it was possible to "job" shadow a principal for a week, uninterrupted, that would be a "true" learning experience. Walking in their shoes with them for a full week. EX: Arriving to school when they do at 7, and doing everything they do all day long, and not leaving until they do at night. Do this for a whole week.....would be extremely eye opening and meaningful.

[Administrator Preparation Program] is one of the best programs I have ever been part of in my educational career. I am so glad this opportunity was available. Real hands on learning with instructors who are knowledgeable was amazing. Thank God for AEA support. May the God of our understanding protect us from the Christians who are practicing hate in Iowa. May God save us from the hate. Oh Lord, hear our prayers to save us from bigoted hateful people who take the Lord's name in vain.

It is difficult to assess before I have actually landed a job. The market of candidates has been quite unusual with so many candidates with experience on the market after recent legislative changes.

Prep programs need to do a better job of holistically helping first year administrators to be able to manage a building especially when you are the only administrator for the building.

*Supervisor of Novice Administrator: What, if anything, could [Name]'s administrator preparation program have done to better prepare this principal?*

Being more of a servant leader. Do what needs to get done, not time to delegate day to day things that come up.

Focus on a deliberate, consistent approach to discipline (exploring common pitfalls)

Focus on personal well-being is as important as everything else.

Great theory background. Truly understanding the various pulls of the position and time that is needed to make it work is lacking. Being pulled in multiple directions for time and the pace of the position is not something expected.

[Name] was as prepared as he could be.

I think [Name] does an excellent job at everything that we ask him to do. I do not know about his finance background or knowledge bc we do not ask him to worry about that.

If the state would have a one year paid apprenticeship program to pay a retired leader to be with the person at minimum of 3 days per week for guidance and support. We have student teaching, but we don't have student teaching for building leaders.

It is hard to single this out with [Name]'s earlier training and education.

[Name] is an excellent leader and systems thinker.

More experience-based learning.

More on Iowa School Finance

Not sure, he is an outstanding young administrator!

[Name] is good example of a person that has the ability and personality to lead a building, programs help add tools to a person that already has the right stuff to begin with.