STATE DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SUCCESS PROFILE

Introduction

At the 2019 annual meeting in Louisville, KY, the NADSE membership adopted a strategic plan that addresses the development of a success profile for state directors of special education as follows:

- ***GOAL 3: Build Leadership Capacity***
    - ***INITIATIVE 3A: Engage key performers to develop a success profile and assessment***

The NASDSE board contracted with Timothy Griles, Managing Principal, Human Dynamics Consulting and Doug Cox, Director, VA Aspiring Special Education Leaders Academy and former State Director of Special Education & Student Services, Commonwealth of Virginia to provide structure and leadership to the preparation of the success profile.

Background

The success profile was included in the NASDSE strategic plan to focus on the following issues:
- High turnover among state directors of special education
- Succession planning to increase the readiness of candidates for the role
- Onboarding new state directors
- Providing a tool to enable self-assessment of the success factors for the role
- NASDSE alignment of support and resources for directors to help build competence

Methodology

- Key performers were identified by NASDSE board members and the consultants and interviewed; interview responses were synthesized (see Appendix A)
- The Success Profile was divided into six areas based on what was gathered from the interviews:
    1. Role Description w/Primary Objectives
    2. Unique Challenges in the field of special education and with the role
    3. Primary Responsibilities (Accountabilities)
    4. Unique Key Attributes and Characteristics
    5. Functional Technical Skills or necessary Experience
    6. Mission Critical Leadership Competencies
- Key performers validated the synthesized data and engaged in a card sort" activity by designating the 28 Executive Core Qualifications (ECQ) competencies as (1) mission critical, (2) nice to have/useful, or (3) less important.
- The top ten competencies designated as "mission critical" were then included in the state director success profile. The full listing of ECQs is included in section VI.
- Throughout the success profile development process, input and feedback were provided by a work team of current state directors of special education (Appendix A).

Role Description and Primary Objectives	The State Director of Special Education is responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of federal and state statutes and regulations governing the education of students with disabilities, to ensure they meet their post-secondary goals to live, learn, work, and participate in their communities. Primary objectives: • Increased graduation rates • Closing achievement gap • Decreased disproportionality • Qualified workforce at state and local levels
Unique Challenges	• Multiple constituencies with competing agendas • Litigious environment • Special education not included in upfront decision making • Broad scope of responsibilities and spectrum of political entities • Lack of qualified workforce throughout field • Lack of adequate funding • Lack of consensus that students with disabilities are general education students first

Primary Responsibilities (Accountabilities)	Unique Key Attributes and Characteristics
• Creates, maintains and leverages strong partnerships with authentic stakeholders and effectively communicates between political entities • Uses appropriate data to make decisions and evaluate results • Targets Technical Assistance & Professional Development to identified needs • Creates policies aimed at results, equity, and compliance • Ensures state-level integration with general education • Manages fiscal processes and budget alignment with programs • Ensures effective results-driven monitoring • Ensures effective system of dispute resolution	• Enjoys working across varying points of view to reach consensus • Empathetic to parents and local education administration • Perseveres with patience, composure and thick-skinned; not taking it personally and not derailed by bureaucracy • Is comfortable encouraging others involvement in decision making • Adaptable/flexible with changing demands and requests • Acts on beliefs and values

Functional Technical Skills / Experience		Mission Critical Leadership Competencies
Education:	• Master's degree in education related field	1. External Awareness 2. Flexibility 3. Resilience 4. Strategic Thinking 5. Vision 6. Team Building 7. Accountability
Roles:	• Local education administration or practitioner • State education administration	
Assignments or experiences:	• Program monitoring and/or evaluation • Student assessment (diagnostician, psychologists, behavioral assessment) • Technical assistance	

Skills:	• Policy and legal interpretation and application • Data modeling and analysis	8. Decisiveness 9. Problem Solving 10. Partnering

I. **Role Description and Primary Objectives**	The State Director of Special Education is responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of federal and state statutes and regulations governing the education of students with disabilities, to ensure they meet their post-secondary goals to live, learn, work, and participate in their communities.
	Primary objectives:
	o Increased graduation rates
	o Closing achievement gap
	o Decreased disproportionality
	o Increased capacity and a qualified workforce at state and local levels

Supporting Information

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that all students receive a free, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. As a result, at the highest level, the outcome goal of special education is to ensure that students will live, learn, work, and participate in their communities. The state director of special education has the responsibility to provide leadership, management and oversight in line with the federal and state requirements and to ensure technical assistance and professional development is provided to the practitioners who ultimately deliver the services and to the leaders at all levels.

The primary strategies to accomplish this goal are increasing graduation rates with positive post-secondary outcomes, closing the achievement gap, being in compliance with federal and state special education requirements and decreasing disproportionality and building workforce capacity at the state and local levels.

There are tremendous compliance requirements associated with special education and the state's role to oversee the data and measures is a primary focus. These measures are included in the state performance plan/annual performance report (SPP/APR) as required in IDEA and administered by the Federal Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Detailed information can found here: https://www2.ed.gov/fund/data/report/idea/sppapr.html

Based on Federal indicators states receive their determination as either:
- o   **Meets** requirements and purposes of the IDEA
- o   **Needs assistance** in implementing the requirements of Part B or Part C of the IDEA
- o   **Needs intervention** in implementing the requirements of Part B or Part C of the IDEA
- o   **Needs substantial intervention** in implementing the requirements of Part B or Part C of the IDEA

The Department makes Part B determinations using both compliance and results data, giving each equal weight in making a State's determination. For the first time in 2015 and again in 2016, 2017 2018, 2019, and 2020, the Department made Part C determinations using both compliance and results data, giving each equal weight in making a State's determination. For the first time in 2018, and again in 2019 and 2020, the Department made Part B determinations for the outlying areas, freely associated States, and the Bureau of Indian Education using both compliance and results data, with a 60% weight and 40% weight respectively. OSEP's accountability framework, called Results Driven Accountability (RDA), brings into focus the educational results and functional outcomes for children with disabilities while balancing those results with the compliance requirements of IDEA. Protecting the rights of children with disabilities and their families is a key responsibility of State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) for Part B, and Lead Agencies and early intervention service programs for Part C, but it is not sufficient if children are not attaining the knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish the ideals of IDEA: equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. (Source: IDEA Determinations Fact Sheet)

In an effort to focus on the primary outcomes that a state director can influence, the list below associates some of the federal indicators with the broader objectives. While compliance with the requirements of IDEA are a major responsibility of the state education agency, these alone are insufficient without positive outcomes for children with disabilities.

- o Increasing graduation rate with positive post-secondary outcomes
    - o Percent of students with IEPs who graduate with a regular diploma
    - o Percent of youth with IEPs who, one year after leaving school were competitively or otherwise employed and/or were enrolled in higher education or training program
- o Closing the achievement gap
    - o Participation rate and performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments compared to students without disabilities
- o Decreasing disproportionality
    - o Percent of local districts with disproportionate representation of racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups in special education that is the result of inappropriate identification
- o Building capacity and supporting a qualified workforce at state and local Levels
    - o Percent of special education teachers who are fully licensed and endorsed
    - o Turnover and retention rates of identified critical roles to include special education practitioners and administrators
    - o Percent of subject matter teachers who instruct students with disabilities demonstrating applicable content knowledge
    - o Percent of critical roles with "ready-now" candidates

II. **Unique Challenges**	• Multiple constituencies with competing agendas • Litigious environment • Special education not included in upfront decision making • Broad scope of responsibilities and spectrum of political entities • Lack of qualified workforce throughout field • Lack of adequate funding • Lack of consensus that students with disabilities are general education students first

Supporting Information

Many of the challenges to this role are similar to leading at the state and federal level. Some of these are exacerbated by the unique challenges found within the field of education and even more within special education.

- Operating between federal and state legislation conflicts
- Responsible for students from 3 to 21-years-old and therefore has to partner with and rely on multiple agencies to accomplish goals and drive results.
- The role of advocates can vary from supportive of initiatives to full on adversarial and not about system improvement.
- Some states have found that their legal system allows for higher levels of litigation and have seen legal action looking for a victim.
- Turnover in special education leadership at local and state levels is continuing to increase
- Overall shortage of teachers and those seeking special education credentials leave the field before fully licensed and lack of subject matter teachers who instruct students with disabilities demonstrating applicable content knowledge
- Silo mentality keeps special education from fully integrating with general education
- IDEA has not been fully funded by the Federal Government to the authorization level of 40% of the cost
- A special education program can only be as good as the general education program
- Growth of virtual and distanced learning and how to ensure equitable access and deliver services with quality

III.	Primary Responsibilities (Accountabilities)	• Creates, maintains and leverages strong partnerships with authentic stakeholders and effectively communicates between political entities • Uses appropriate data to make decisions and evaluate results • Targets technical assistance & professional development to identified needs • Creates policies aimed at results, equity, and compliance • Ensures state-level integration with general education • Manages fiscal processes and budget alignment with programs • Ensures effective results-driven monitoring • Ensures effective system of dispute resolution

Supporting Information

The responsibilities/accountabilities are essentially what a State Director of Special Education could be measured by on a year over year basis. These are based on the General Supervision information as provided by OSEP. More information is available at the following link:

- o **Developing and Implementing an Effective System of General Supervision: Part B**

The following information augments the general supervision support document in regard to successfully accomplishing a few of the primary responsibilities and accountabilities:

- The first responsibility, c*reates, maintains and leverages strong partnerships with authentic stakeholders and effectively communicates between political entities*, is at the heart of a state director's success. The director role is the lynchpin between the federal IDEA requirements and local education administrator's efforts to implement policy and procedures. Additionally, the director is accountable for alignment with general education and other state agencies with responsibilities within IDEA and other disability related responsibilities and legislation.

  The emphasis on "authentic stakeholders" aligns with the core principles of *Leading by Convening: A Blueprint for Authentic Engagemen*t, a concept that NASDSE has championed for over 15 years. This resource provides extensive tools and resources to support a state director in this responsibility.

  - o **Leading by Convening Blueprint Full PDF**

- Targets Technical Assistance & Professional Development to identified needs includes both state and local capacity building. This responsibility is the primary driver of the objective to build capacity and support a qualified workforce at both state and local Levels.

  Often this is thought of as remediation based on lack of performance with specific indicators. But the state director has a strategic role to also proactively address gaps in the workforce throughout the state to ensure that there are qualified candidates as roles open or service demand grows. Activities include leadership development and other professional development in addition to initiatives related to licensing and credentialing.

  Success in these responsibilities typically calls on the following unique key attributes and characteristics as well as combining the required functional/technical skills and mission critical leadership competencies. While a director doesn't necessarily have to be great at all of them, a weakness in any of them has typically caused challenges to accomplish the primary responsibilities with success.

IV.	Unique Key Attributes and Characteristics	• Enjoys working across varying points of view to reach consensus • Empathetic to parents and local education administration • Perseveres with patience, composure and thick-skinned; not taking it personally and not derailed by bureaucracy • Is comfortable encouraging others involvement in decision making • Adaptable/flexible with changing demands and requests • Acts on beliefs and values

Supporting Information

This list is based on the typical characteristics possessed by leaders that become state directors and those who excel in the role. They are tied to many of the responsibilities and also have a high correlation to overcoming many of the unique challenges in this role.

An individual's performance and ultimate success is often closely correlated to their preferences as they will often develop certain leadership competencies associated with the things that they enjoy doing. These preferences often present themselves as characteristics that a person inherently possesses. This is not to say that the behaviors associated with these cannot be learned, but someone who does not prefer to be in situations like these will not typically excel in the role or will need to develop compensating behaviors or systems to work around or work through them.

V. Functional Technical Skills / Experience	• **Education:** Master's degree in education related field
	• **Roles:**
	   o Local education administration or practitioner
	   o State education administration
	• **Assignments or experiences:**
	   o Program monitoring and/or evaluation
	   o Student assessment (diagnostician, psychologists, behavioral assessment)
	   o Technical assistance
	• **Skills:**
	   o Policy and legal interpretation and application
	   o Data modeling and analysis

Supporting Information

Functional/technical skills are typically acquired through traditional learning and instruction (e.g., coursework) and can be learned from or further developed from specific experiences.

Key performers report that successful state directors are likely to:
- Hold a master's degree or higher in special education or a related field (e.g., speech/language pathology)
- Have a strong working knowledge of the IDEA, resulting in ability to understand proper application and policy analysis as well as where further legal interpretation is required
- Have experience at the local/district level as a practitioner, but not necessarily an administrator, resulting in significant empathy for the impact of decisions at the SEA
- Have experience at the state level resulting in knowledge of the state system of governance
- Have experience with leadership/administration of teams and organizations

Specific experiences that could be full-time roles or assignments included:
- Program monitoring and/or evaluation that provides valuable insight into special education issues and processes.
- Student assessment (diagnostician, psychologists, behavioral assessment) that required working with evidence-based practices and experience evaluating the impact of those practices
- Technical assistance to include professional development at various levels

Key performers reported that successful state directors typically possess the following skills coming into the role. Some of these can be delegated but the Director must have a working knowledge:
- Data modeling and analysis
- Time management
- Project management
- Financial and budget management

VI. Mission Critical Leadership Competencies	1. External Awareness 2. Flexibility 3. Resilience 4. Strategic Thinking 5. Vision	6. Team Building 7. Accountability 8. Decisiveness 9. Problem Solving 10. Partnering

Supporting Information

The Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) define the competencies needed to build an organizational culture that drives for results, serves customers, and builds successful teams and coalitions within and outside the organization. NASDSE leveraged existing and former state directors that were nominated as "key performers" to select the few competencies that are mission critical for success in this role.

The ECQs were developed in 1997 after extensive research on the attributes of successful executives in both the private and public sectors. They were revalidated and reissued with a few modifications in 2006. In their current form, ECQs represent the best thinking of organizational psychologists, human resources professionals both at OPM and other agencies, and Senior Executives themselves.

The ECQs are:

I. **Leading Change:** The ability to bring about strategic change, both within and outside the organization, to meet organizational goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to establish an organizational vision and to implement it in a continuously changing environment.

II. **Leading People:** The ability to lead people toward meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to provide an inclusive workplace that fosters the development of others, facilitates cooperation and teamwork, and supports constructive resolution of conflicts.

III. **Results Driven:** The ability to meet organizational goals and customer expectations. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to make decisions that produce high-quality results by applying technical knowledge, analyzing problems, and calculating risks.

IV. **Business Acumen:** This core qualification involves the ability to manage human, financial, and information resources strategically.

V. **Building Coalitions** This core qualification involves the ability to build coalitions internally and with other State and Federal agencies, local governments, nonprofit and private sector organizations, to achieve common goals.

There are 28 total competencies in the library. Twenty-two of the competencies are the specific competencies for the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs). The remaining six are the fundamental competencies and are the attributes that serve as the foundation for all of the ECQs. Mission Critical for the role of State Director of special Education are in *RED ITALICS*

I. **Leading Change**

Creativity and Innovation – Develops new insights into situations; questions conventional approaches; encourages new ideas and innovations; designs and implements new or cutting-edge programs/processes.

External Awareness – Understands and keeps up to date on local, national, and international policies and trends that affect the organization and shape stakeholders' views; is aware of the organization's impact on the external environment.

Flexibility – Is open to change and new information; rapidly adapts to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles.

Resilience – Deals effectively with pressure; remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks.

Strategic Thinking – Formulates objectives and priorities and implements plans consistent with long-term interests of the organization in a global environment. Capitalizes on opportunities and manages risks.

Vision – Takes a long-term view and builds a shared vision with others; acts as a catalyst for organizational change. Influences others to translate vision into action.

II. **Leading People**

Conflict Management – Encourages creative tension and differences of opinions. Anticipates and takes steps to prevent counter-productive confrontations. Manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a constructive manner.

Leveraging Diversity – Fosters an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued and leveraged to achieve the vision and mission of the organization.

Developing Others – Develops the ability of others to perform and contribute to the organization by providing ongoing feedback and by providing opportunities to learn through formal and informal methods.

Team Building – Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride, and trust. Facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish group goals.

III. **Results Driven**

Accountability – Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost- effective results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with established control systems and rules.

Customer Service – Anticipates and meets the needs of both internal and external customers. Delivers high-quality products and services; is committed to continuous improvement.

Decisiveness – Makes well-informed, effective, and timely decisions, even when data are limited, or solutions produce unpleasant consequences; perceives the impact and implications of decisions.

Entrepreneurship – Positions the organization for future success by identifying new opportunities; builds the organization by developing or improving products or services. Takes calculated risks to accomplish organizational objectives.

Problem Solving – Identifies and analyzes problems; weighs relevance and accuracy of information; generates and evaluates alternative solutions; makes recommendations.

Technical Credibility – Understands and appropriately applies principles, procedures, requirements, regulations, and policies related to specialized expertise.

IV. **Business Acumen**

Financial Management – Understands the organization's financial processes. Prepares, justifies, and administers the program budget. Oversees procurement and contracting to achieve desired results. Monitors expenditures and uses cost-benefit thinking to set priorities.

Human Capital Management – Builds and manages the workforce based on organizational goals, budget considerations, and staffing needs. Ensures that employees are appropriately recruited, selected, appraised, and rewarded; takes action to address performance problems. Manages a multi- sector workforce and a variety of work situations.

Technology Management – Keeps up to date on technological developments. Makes effective use of technology to achieve results. Ensures access to and security of technology systems.

V. **Building Coalitions**

Partnering – Develops networks and builds alliances, collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.

Political Savvy – Identifies the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization. Perceives organizational and political reality and acts accordingly.

Influencing/Negotiating – Persuades others; builds consensus through give and take; gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals.

VI. **Fundamental Competencies**

These competencies are the foundation for success in each of the Executive Core Qualifications.

Interpersonal Skills – Treats others with courtesy, sensitivity, and respect. Considers and responds appropriately to the needs and feelings of different people in different situations.

Oral Communication – Makes clear and convincing oral presentations. Listens effectively; clarifies information as needed.

Integrity/Honesty – Behaves in an honest, fair, and ethical manner. Shows consistency in words and actions. Models high standards of ethics.

Written Communication – Writes in a clear, concise, organized, and convincing manner for the intended audience.

Continual Learning – Assesses and recognizes own strengths and weaknesses; pursues self- development.

Public Service Motivation – Shows a commitment to serve the public. Ensures that actions meet public needs; aligns organizational objectives and practices with public interests.

Primary Responsibilities Assessment Tool

Responsibility	Descriptor(s)	Rating
1) Creates, maintains, and leverages strong partnerships with authentic stakeholders and effectively communicate between political entities	Actively involves a wide range of stakeholders including political entities in • policy development • the State Performance Plan • other programmatic issues	1 2 3 4
2) Uses appropriate data to make decisions and evaluate results	Ensures that • data are verified for accuracy through multiple means • data submission is timely and accurate • data is used for multiple decisions (e.g., budget, improvement strategies, grants, staffing)	1 2 3 4
3) Targets technical assistance (TA) and professional development (PD) to identified needs	Ensures that • TA and PD are linked to federal indicators and other data sources • TA and PD initiatives are evaluated in terms of outcomes for students with disabilities • TA and PD are aimed at state and local capacity building, including leadership development	1 2 3 4
4) Creates policies aimed at results, equity, and compliance	Continually reviews policies and procedures to ensure that • they are compliant with federal requirements • they are designed to improve results for students with disabilities • they address issues of equity for students with disabilities • they are informed by data • they are developed collaboratively with internal and external partners	1 2 3 4
5) Ensures state-level integration with general education	Designs and promotes internal practices to ensure that • the interests of students with disabilities are included in all aspects of state education governance • students with disabilities are viewed as first being general education students	1 2 3 4
6) Manages fiscal processes and budget alignment with programs	Ensures that • IDEA funds are distributed and utilized in accordance with federal requirements • use of funds by LEAs is monitored	1 2 3 4
7) Ensures effective results-driven monitoring	Designs and evaluates LEA monitoring procedures that: • include results as well as compliance elements • trigger corrective action, technical assistance and/or professional development	1 2 3 4
8) Ensures effective system of dispute resolution	Ensures that: • resolution of disputes are effected within required timelines • results of dispute resolution procedures are tracked and analyzed • dispute resolutions trends inform other operations including technical assistance, professional development, budget allocations, and staffing	1 2 3 4

1: Weakness or unskilled (no opportunity to practice)   2: Competent with room to grow   3: Proficient equal to most   4: Highly skilled among the best

Mission Critical Competency Assessment Framework

		Awareness	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
	Proficiency Level Definition	o Applies *the competency in the simplest situations* o *Requires close and extensive guidance*	o Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations o Requires frequent guidance	o Applies the competency in difficult situations o Requires occasional guidance	o Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations o Generally, requires little or no guidance	o Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations o Serves as a key resource and advises others
1)	**External Awareness -** Understands and keeps up to date on local, national, and international policies and trends that affect the organization and shape stakeholders' views; is aware of the organization's impact on the external environment.	• Keeps up to date by attending key meetings hosted by other agencies or organizations • Keeps abreast of developments of other parts of the organization	• Gathers and summarizes information to predict stakeholder views on a new policy • Considers external policies and trends when reviewing correspondence, reports, and policy documents	• Considers the impact of a shift in programmatic direction to meet the needs of local and national customers • Synthesizes complex information gathered from a variety of external sources and disseminates it to staff	• Provides policy advice to officials which are consistent with local, national, and international policies and trends • Reflects industry best practices in the development of agency-wide policies and procedures	• Examines and utilizes best practices to build an organizational infrastructure • Develops programs taking into account multiple, diverse views and needs of other agencies or external organizations
		O	O	O	O	O
2)	**Flexibility -** Is open to change and new information; rapidly adapts to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles.	• Meets with team to adjust and coordinate schedules to accommodate all team members • Adjusts staff assignments based on feedback and workload priorities	• Uses staff feedback to streamline processes in order to meet deadlines • Adjusts project plan based on input from staff and stakeholders	• Realigns resources to meet changing customer needs • Takes feedback into consideration while implementing organizational change	• Adjusts organizational priorities quickly as situations change • Shifts agency goals and initiatives to align with administration and Congressional priorities	• Implements a successful action plan after a major organizational change • Prioritizes, considers alternatives, and responds quickly and effectively to unexpected and rapidly changing conditions
		O	O	O	O	O

		Awareness	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
	Proficiency Level Definition	o *Applies the competency in the simplest situations* o *Requires close and extensive guidance*	o *Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations* o *Requires frequent guidance*	o *Applies the competency in difficult situations* o *Requires occasional guidance*	o *Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations* o *Generally, requires little or no guidance*	o *Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations* o *Serves as a key resource and advises others*
3)	**Resilience** - Deals effectively with pressure; remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks.	• Reduces project deliverables following funding cut • Continues presentation to customer despite technical difficulties with audio-visual system	• Meets with employees resistant to organizational change to address concerns • Maintains composure and direction in high-pressure situations • Accepts negative feedback in a constructive manner and adjusts behavior accordingly	• Perseveres on project despite changing objectives, deliverables, and deadlines • Develops strategies using existing resources for achieving objectives following budget cuts	• Responds to setbacks by developing alternative approaches to determine the best course of action • Maintains unit's effectiveness, quality, and morale during organizational change • Cultivates internal and external stakeholders to develop strategies for obtaining funding from alternate sources following budget cuts	• Defends current policy to high-level officials by explaining legal ramifications of suggested changes and the potential impact of legal action on the organization • Demonstrates persistence when providing rationale to staff during times of significant organizational change
		O	O	O	O	O
4)	**Strategic Thinking** - Formulates objectives and priorities and implements plans consistent with the long-term interests of the organization in a global environment. Capitalizes on opportunities and manages risks.	• Develops project teams and staffing plans based on consideration of strategic objectives • Ensures team objectives are consistent with strategic plan	• Considers customer needs and trends in the development of strategic plans • Implements strategic objectives and develops metrics to assess attainment of work unit goals	• Conducts review of the agency's core mission and gathers information from relevant sources to support development of a strategic plan • Develops and implements Governmentwide or agency policy by determining target audience, building coalitions with the appropriate population, and developing a budget	• Leads and directs a strategic planning team to address and outline the future direction of an organization • Establishes strategic performance measures to allow the organization to continually assess and adjust program direction	• Anticipates a demographic change in society and establishes a vision to effect change through formulation and implementation of objectives and priorities • Designs approaches and procedures to develop a strategic plan supporting key national goals and objectives
		O	O	O	O	O

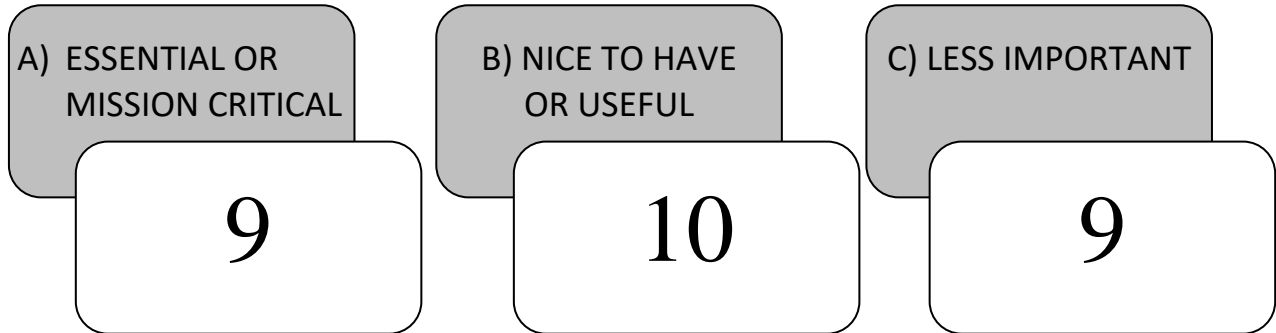|		Awareness	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
	Proficiency Level Definition	o Applies *the competency in the simplest situations* o *Requires close and extensive guidance*	o Applies *the competency in somewhat difficult situations* o *Requires frequent guidance*	o Applies *the competency in difficult situations* o *Requires occasional guidance*	o Applies *the competency in considerably difficult situations* o *Generally, requires little or no guidance*	o Applies *the competency in exceptionally difficult situations* o *Serves as a key resource and advises others*
5)	**Vision -** Takes a long-term view and builds a shared vision with others; acts as a catalyst for organizational change. Influences others to translate vision into action.	• Meets with staff to address concerns about new organizational structure • Develops and generates support for work group vision	• Involves staff in setting annual goals to ensure buy-in • Conducts interviews with staff to ascertain organization's needs • Conveys vision of agency to staff and stakeholders	• Involves employees and stakeholders in an organizational change process by conducting meetings and providing frequent updates • Acknowledges organizational strengths and develops plan to address areas needing improvement • Communicates vision and mission of new office to employees while incorporating employee feedback for ideas on accomplishing new goals and objectives	• Directs and provides guidance to managers to develop long-term strategic plan for the division • Educates agency officials about new system and outlines how the long-term benefits align with agency goals • Conducts workshop with employees, human resources staff, and customers to build a vision, strategy, and goals for the unit	• Develops an approach to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the organizational structure by using creative reorganizing concepts • Considers various viewpoints from internal and external sources when developing new organizational mission and vision • Builds nationwide coalitions to develop and garner support for shared programs
		O	O	O	O	O
6)	**Team Building -** Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride, and trust. Facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish group goals.	• Works with team to implement operating procedures within agency • Suggests utilizing team building exercises to improve office dynamics	• Encourages staff to share skills and abilities within work group to facilitate completion of challenging tasks • Forms teams to identify and address agency concerns • Informs team members of issues requiring resolution and considers input	• Includes entire team in decision-making process when developing mission and goals for the division • Creates senior-level teams to design and implement requirements for new systems and procedures • Leads team from various organizational units to create new systems or processes	• Promotes cohesiveness of a dysfunctional team by defining roles and responsibilities of each team member and establishing overall objectives • Leads teams to implement Congressional programs and interact with legislative representatives • Motivates agency-wide team by assigning work based on team	• Leads a team to address controversial agency-wide legislative and regulatory policy issues • Inspires interagency team to accomplish long-term strategic goals
		O	O	O	O	O

		Awareness	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
	Proficiency Level Definition	o *Applies the competency in the simplest situations* o *Requires close and extensive guidance*	o *Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations* o *Requires frequent guidance*	o *Applies the competency in difficult situations* o *Requires occasional guidance*	o *Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations* o *Generally, requires little or no guidance*	o *Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations* o *Serves as a key resource and advises others*
7)	**Accountability** - Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with established control systems and rules.	• Maintains confidentiality of sensitive information by establishing new policies and procedures for handling such information • Delegates work to staff to ensure responsibilities are completed • Meets weekly with team to monitor progress of work plans • Outlines written policies and procedures to ensure consistent adherence by staff	• Investigates claims of employee violations and encourages staff to take responsibility for actions • Outlines goals and assesses workgroup progress towards goal achievement • Plans and researches safety issues and contacts agency to ensure safety standards are fully utilized • Distributes workload among staff to ensure staff meet key deliverables	• Implements new guidelines and procedures mandated by Congress • Accepts responsibility when missed deadlines affect major project outcome • Develops and implements internal controls for pilot program to manage potential barriers to implementation	• Provides and promotes position information across divisions to educate staff on respective duties, performance expectations, and consequent impact on accomplishment of agency goals • Holds staff accountable for new performance standards and expectations by taking action with employees not meeting standards	• Revises and communicates to employees expectations and methods for achieving results in light of failed or delayed agency-level project • Administers and provides oversight of a new complex procedure which delegates responsibility for compliance to various agencies or parties • Accomplishes cultural change of accountability among staff by defining roles and responsibilities to ensure agency goals are met
		O	O	O	O	O
8)	**Decisiveness** - Makes well-informed, effective, and timely decisions, even when data are limited, or solutions produce unpleasant consequences; perceives the impact and implications of decisions.	• Develops meeting agenda and determines topics for group decision making • Determines the appropriate individuals needed for a decision-making process	• Makes sound and timely decisions for a project, team, or work unit • Seeks out best practices to make organizational decisions	• Decides to redesign current performance appraisal system to better meet organizational needs • Makes the decision to solve controversial workplace issue by establishing an employee task force	• Changes course of action despite public support when new information indicates previous strategy would not succeed • Makes timely decisions using available information regarding severe operating budget reductions including possible reductions in force (RIFs)	• Uses limited information to solve a variety of complex problems during a crisis situation • Solves highly complex technical, administrative, and policy issues involved in the implementation of new systems and programs by making timely decisions
		O	O	O	O	O

		Awareness	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
	Proficiency Level Definition	o *Applies the competency in the simplest situations* o *Requires close and extensive guidance*	o *Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations* o *Requires frequent guidance*	o *Applies the competency in difficult situations* o *Requires occasional guidance*	o *Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations* o *Generally, requires little or no guidance*	o *Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations* o *Serves as a key resource and advises others*
9)	**Problem Solving -** Identifies and analyzes problems; weighs relevance and accuracy of information; generates and evaluates alternative solutions; makes recommendations.	• Proposes solution to improve customer satisfaction • Determines cause of workforce problem and recommends corrective action	• Addresses routine organizational problems by leading a team to brainstorm solutions • Establishes guidelines to clarify complex and/or controversial processes	• Reconciles conflicting and/or incomplete information to develop solutions • Applies appropriate methodology to discover or identify policy issues and resource concerns	• Synthesizes information from internal and external sources to develop an action plan addressing program issues • Addresses systemic barriers inhibiting the achievement of results by forming teams to conduct focus groups and develop solutions	• Improves organizational efficiency by developing, planning, and implementing a multi-tier solution to complex or unprecedented problems • Develops and implements a remediation plan restoring stakeholder confidence in a critical agency program
		O	O	O	O	O
10)	**Partnering -** Develops networks and builds alliances; collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.	• Meets regularly with peers and supervisors to identify recurring issues • Develops and maintains network of stakeholders for collection and sharing of information • Meets with staff to discuss plans to implement strategic goals	• Considers stakeholder input when developing strategies to ensure mutually agreeable initiatives Coordinates with various agencies to plan and conduct annual events • Coordinates across and within organizations to determine required resources to support goals • Works with a team of managers or employees across agencies to address mutual issues and concerns	• Builds consensus with partners by considering input and promoting trust between various parties • Gains support from key leaders and staff within organization to ensure support for objectives and team initiatives • Coordinates with partners regarding new strategies to ensure consistent communication with agencies • Ensures future partnerships by developing strong relationships and resolving issues with partners	• Collaborates with headquarters, regional offices, and key stakeholders to implement new initiatives • Partners with various parties by sharing information and resources across multiple levels to establish new programs	• Develops, publicizes, and garners support for programs and policies by meeting with key officials, executives, unions, employees, and other interested parties • Partners with key officials from various offices and agencies to develop strategic goals
		O	O	O	O	O

Card Sort Directions

Step 1: Using the header cards A, B & C, sort the 28 competencies into three piles based on the most important future competencies for State Directors of Special Education to accomplish the outcomes, overcome challenges and deliver on accountabilities.
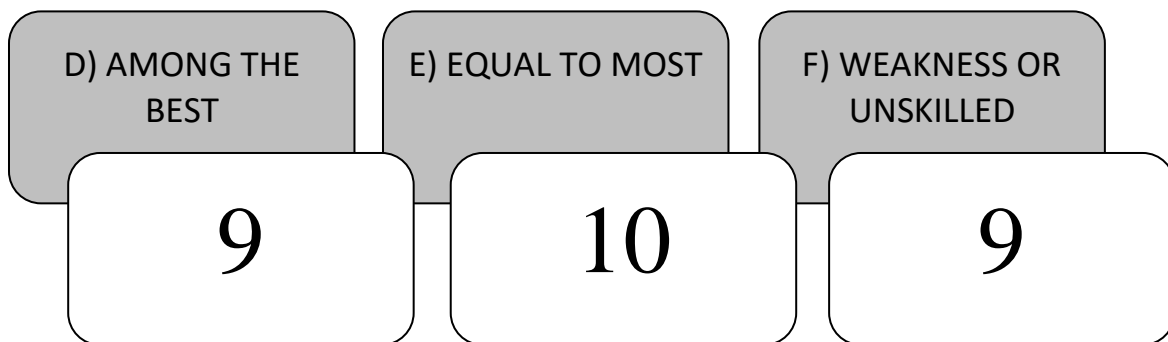
A) ESSENTIAL OR MISSION CRITICAL	B) NICE TO HAVE OR USEFUL	C) LESS IMPORTANT
9	10	9

Step 2: Use the Competency Tally Sheet to record your results in the *importance* column (Critical, Useful, Less)

Step 3: On the tally sheet:
- Highlight each CELL of the competencies that you rated Mission Critical YELLOW
- Highlight each CELL of the competencies that you rated Less Important PINK/ORANGE
- Leave the "Nice to Have" competencies white

Step 4: Using header cards D, E & F, sort the 28 competencies into three piles based on overall current skill (this can be done as a "self" or "general workforce" assessment)

D) AMONG THE BEST	E) EQUAL TO MOST	F) WEAKNESS OR UNSKILLED
9	10	9

Step 5: Use the Competency Tally Sheet to record your results in the *Skill* Column (L,M,H)

Step 6: On the tally sheet:
- Highlight each CELL of the competencies that you rated Among the Best YELLOW
- Highlight each CELL of the competencies that you rated Weakness or Unskilled PINK/ORANGE.
- Leave the "Equal to Most" competencies white

NASDSE
GUIDING CHANGE
National Association of State Directors of Special Education

Importance	Competencies	Skill
	ECQ 1: Leading Change	
	1) Creativity and Innovation	
	2) External Awareness	
	3) Flexibility	
	4) Resilience	
	5) Strategic Thinking	
	6) Vision	
	ECQ 2: Leading People	
	7) Conflict Management	
	8) Leveraging Diversity	
	9) Developing Others	
	10) Team Building	
	ECQ 3: Results Driven	
	11) Accountability	
	12) Customer Service	
	13) Decisiveness	
	14) Entrepreneurship	
	15) Problem Solving	
	16) Technical Credibility	
	ECQ 4: Business Acumen	
	17) Financial Management	
	18) Human Capital Management	
	19) Technology Management	
	ECQ 5: Building Coalitions	
	20) Partnering	
	21) Political Savvy	
	22) Influencing/Negotiating	
	Fundamental Competencies	
	23) Interpersonal Skills	
	24) Oral Communication	
	25) Continual Learning	
	26) Written Communication	
	27) Integrity/Honesty	
	28) Public Service Motivation	

Appendix A

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