

Higher Education Leadership Preparation Standards

District Leadership grades PreK-12



Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

Early Childhood through Late Adolescence/Adulthood
PreK-12, DRAFT 8-10-2026

Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Improvement.

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to 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 change process, data use, technology, structured literacy, digital literacy, and community.

Function 1.1: The candidate demonstrates the systemic capacity to collaboratively design, communicate, and evaluate a district mission and vision that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, values, structured literacy, digital literacy, social-emotional well-being, academic needs, and community.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

- 1.1.1 CK Research on the role and importance of a district's vision and mission.
- 1.1.2 CK Processes for collaboratively developing a mission and vision.
- 1.1.3 CK Processes for developing an actionable mission and vision attentive to such considerations as data use, technology, values, structured literacy, digital literacy, social-emotional well-being, academic needs, and community.
- 1.1.4 CK The characteristics of well-written mission and vision statements.

Professional Skills: The candidate demonstrates skills required to

- 1.1.5 PS Evaluate existing mission and vision processes and statements.
- 1.1.6 PS Collaboratively design an actionable district mission and vision attentive to such considerations as data use, technology, values, structured literacy, digital literacy, social-emotional well-being, academic needs, and community.
- 1.1.7 PS Develop a comprehensive plan for communicating the mission and vision to multiple constituencies.

Function 1.2: The candidate demonstrates the systemic capacity to lead district strategic planning and continuous improvement processes that engage diverse stakeholders in data collection, diagnosis, design, implementation, accreditation, and evaluation.

Content Knowledge: The candidate demonstrates knowledge of

- 1.2.1CK Research on and process of strategic planning, continuous improvement, and accreditation.
- 1.2.2CK Formal processes of system-wide, continuous, evidence-informed improvement.
- 1.2.3 CK Research-based strategic planning processes.
- 1.2.4 CK Data collection, diagnosis, and use.
- 1.2.5 CK School improvement implementation processes and effective program evaluation.

Professional Skills: The candidate demonstrates skills required to

- 1.2.6 PS Evaluate existing improvement processes.
- 1.2.7 PS Develop a district-wide improvement process that includes data collection, diagnosis, design, implementation, and evaluation.
- 1.2.8 PS Articulate a process for strategic planning.
- 1.2.9 PS Develop an implementation plan to support the improvement and accreditation processes.

Standard 2: Ethical Decisions and Professional Norms.

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the organizational capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to understand and demonstrate the capacity to advocate for ethical decisions and cultivate professional norms and culture.

Function 2.1: The candidate demonstrates the organizational capacity to reflect on, communicate about, and cultivate professional dispositions and norms (i.e., fairness, integrity, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, reflection, lifelong learning, digital citizenship) and professional district and school cultures.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

2.1.1 CK Professional norms (i.e., integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, democracy, digital citizenship, and the belief that each child can learn) that promote a productive, equitable, and effective district system.

2.1.2 CK Approaches to cultivating professional norms in others.

2.1.3 CK Approaches to building organizational culture.

2.1.4 CK Reflective practice.

Professional Skills: The candidate demonstrates skills required to

2.1.5 PS Engage in reflective practice.

2.1.6 PS Cultivate professional norms among the school community and each stakeholder constituency.

2.1.7 PS Model and communicate professional norms (i.e., integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, democracy, digital citizenship, and the belief that each child can learn).

2.1.8 PS Use professional norms as a basis for building organizational culture.

Function 2.2: The candidate demonstrates the organizational capacity to evaluate and advocate for ethical and legal decisions.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

2.2.1 CK Research on and practices for decision making.

2.2.2 CK Knowledge of law and ethics.

2.2.3 CK Guidelines for ethical and legal decision making.

Professional Skills: The candidate demonstrates skills required to

2.2.4 PS Evaluate ethical dimensions of complex issues, including stewardship and use of district resources.

2.2.5 PS Analyze decisions in terms of established ethical frameworks.

2.2.6 PS Advocate for ethical decisions.

Function 2.3: The candidate demonstrates the capacity to model ethical behavior in their personal conduct and relationships and to cultivate ethical behavior in others.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

2.3.1 CK Ethical practice.

2.3.2 CK Approaches to cultivating ethical behavior in others.

Professional Skills: The candidate demonstrates skills required to

2.3.3 PS Model ethical behavior in their personal conduct and relationships with others.

2.3.4 PS Cultivate ethical behavior in others.

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Standard 3: Student Success, Culture, and Access

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the social-emotional well-being of students and staff, and to support the success of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to develop and sustain safe, supportive, and effective district culture that respond to the needs of each student.

Function 3.1: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to use data and evidence to evaluate, design, cultivate, and advocate for a safe, supportive, and effective district culture.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

- 3.1.1 CK Research on positive organizational culture (e.g., safe, healthy, respectful, supportive, and student-centered environments).
- 3.1.2 CK Characteristics of an effective organizational culture that support engagement, performance, and success of each student.
- 3.1.3 CK Methods and processes for evaluating culture and climate at the district and school levels.
- 3.1.4 CK Continuous improvement processes for strengthening organizational culture.
- 3.1.5 CK Communication and advocacy strategies that support positive culture and shared expectations.

Professional Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

- 3.1.6 PS Evaluate district and school culture using multiple data sources and stakeholder input.
- 3.1.7 PS Use research and data to design and sustain a supportive district culture that responds to the needs of each student.
- 3.1.8 PS Advocate for a supportive district culture that responds to the needs of each student.

Function 3.2: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for fair and effective access to educational resources, technologies, and opportunities that support the success and well-being of each student.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

- 3.2.1 CK Research on how access or lack of access to resources and opportunities impacts student success and well-being.
- 3.2.2 CK Effective allocation and use of district resources (e.g., staff, instructional materials, technologies, supports, and interventions) to support the success of each student.

3.2.3 CK Factors that influence the distribution and use of resources and opportunities.

Professional Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

3.2.4 PS Analyze data to identify gaps in access to resources, opportunities, and supports.

3.2.5 PS Develop and implement systems that ensure resources are used effectively to meet each student's needs.

3.2.6 PS Advocate for the allocation and use of resources that support student success and well-being.

Function 3.3: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to use data and evidence to evaluate, design, cultivate, and support effective instruction and student support practices across the district that meets the needs of each student.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

3.3.1 CK Responsive instructional and behavior support practices that meet the needs of each student.

3.3.2 CK Characteristics of effective teaching, learning, and support environments for each student.

3.3.3 CK Research on implications of instructional practices, student support systems, and student outcomes that meets the needs of varied student populations.

3.3.4 CK Factors that influence instructional quality and consistency in schools and districts.

Professional Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

3.3.5 PS Use data to identify barriers to student learning, participation, and performance.

3.3.6 PS Develop and implement policies, procedures, and systems that advocate for effective instruction and student support practices among teachers and staff

3.3.7 PS Promote the use of differentiated instructional strategies, materials, and supports to address the needs of each student.

3.3.8 PS Advocate for instructional and support practices that improve outcomes for each student.

Standard 4: Learning and Instruction

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by adapting and applying emerging knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to evaluate, design, cultivate, and implement coherent instructional leadership including: leading change; curriculum; instruction; literacy curriculum aligned with the science of reading to include the content and principles of structured literacy; assessments; support systems; technology integration; and data systems throughout the district.

Function 4.1: Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, design, and implement high-quality evidence-based, technology-rich curricula programs and other supports for all academic and non-academic student programs.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

4.1.1 CK Research on the leadership of academic and non-academic programs.

4.1.2 CK Research-based curricula, technologies, and other supports for academic and non-academic programs.

4.1.3 CK Approaches to coordinating among (a) curricula, (b) the use of technology, and (c) academic and non-academic systems of support.

4.1.4 CK Infrastructures for the ongoing support of academic and non-academic programs.

Professional Skills: The candidate demonstrates skills required to

4.1.5 PS Evaluate (a) curricula, use of technology, and other supports, (b) academic and non-academic systems, and (c) coordination among systems and supports.

4.1.6 PS Use research and evidence to propose designs and implementation strategies for improving coordination and coherence among (a) curricula, instructional technologies, and other supports, and (b) academic and non-academic systems.

Function 4.2: The candidate demonstrates the capacity to collaboratively evaluate, design, and cultivate coherent systems of support, coaching, and professional development for educators, educational professionals, and school and district leaders, including themselves, that promote reflection, digital literacy, distributed leadership, and data literacy to improve outcomes for each student.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

4.2.1 CK Research on instructional leadership at the school and district level.

4.2.2 CK Research-based approaches on using data to design, implement, and evaluate professional development for teachers and other educational professionals that promote reflection, digital literacy, distributed leadership, data literacy, improvement, and student success.

4.2.3 CK Research-based approaches to leadership development focused on improving instructional practice (i.e., leadership evaluation, coaching, development of professional learning communities, etc.).

4.2.4 CK Approaches and strategies for supporting district and school collaboration.

Professional Skills: The candidate demonstrates skills required to

4.2.5 PS Use research and data to evaluate the coordination, coherence, and relevance of the district's systems of support, coaching, and professional development for educators, educational professionals, and leaders.

4.2.6 PS Use research to propose designs and implementation strategies for cultivating systems of support and professional development that promote reflection, digital literacy, distributed leadership, data literacy, improvement, and student success.

Function 4.3: Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to design, implement, and evaluate a developmentally appropriate, responsive, accessible balanced assessment system, data collection management, and analysis to provide tiered systems of support leading to improved outcomes for each student

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

4.3.1 CK Research, theory, and best practice regarding effective and ineffective assessments of academic and non-academic factors (i.e., instruction, student learning and well-being, instructional leadership, etc.).

4.3.2 CK Research on assessment practices that are responsive and accessible.

4.3.3 CK Research and best practices regarding systems for collecting, analyzing, managing, and utilizing assessment results and other sources of data.

Professional Skills: The candidate demonstrates skills required to

4.3.4 PS Evaluate the quality of formative and summative assessments of student learning.

4.3.5 PS Evaluate coordination and coherence among academic and non-academic assessments and use data from these sources to support instructional improvement, student learning and well-being, and instructional leadership.

4.3.6 PS Use research to propose designs and implementation strategies for district-wide assessment systems that are responsive and accessible.

Function 4.4: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to design, implement, and evaluate district-wide use of coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, assessment, student services, technology, and instructional resources that support the needs of each student in the district.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

- 4.4.1 CK Research on the coordination (or lack thereof) within and among academic and non-academic services and its impact on student learning and well-being.
- 4.4.2 CK Appropriate and ethical use of data to monitor and continuously improve the district's curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.
- 4.4.3 CK Approaches and strategies for developing and implementing coherent and equitable systems of curriculum, instruction, assessment, student services, technology, and instructional resources.

Professional Skills: The candidate demonstrates skills required to

- 4.4.4 PS Engage appropriate staff in gathering, synthesizing, and using data to evaluate the quality, coordination, and coherence in and among the district's academic and non-academic services.
- 4.4.5 PS Use research to propose designs and implementation strategies for improving coordination and coherence among the district's academic and non-academic systems.
- 4.4.6 PS Use technology and performance management systems to monitor, analyze, and evaluate district curriculum, instruction, services, assessment practices, and results.

Standard 5: Community and External Leadership

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to understand and engage, communicate, and intentionally collaborate with families, communities, and other constituents in the work of schools and the district and to advocate for district, student, and community needs.

Function 5.1: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to represent and support district schools in engaging diverse families in strengthening student learning in and out of school.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of
5.1.1 CK Research on the role of families in supporting student learning in and out of school.

5.1.2 CK Strategies for supporting schools in cultivating relationships with and engaging families in strengthening student learning in and out of school.

Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

5.1.3 PS Represent the district and its schools.

5.1.4 PS Support the efforts of district schools in engaging diverse families in strengthening student learning in and out of school.

5.1.5 PS Make decisions about when and how to engage families.

Function 5.2: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to understand, engage, and effectively collaborate, build partnerships, and communicate with, through oral, written, and digital means, diverse families, community members, business stakeholders, and other constituencies to benefit learners, schools, and the district as a whole.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of
5.2.1 CK Research on student, family, and community diversity.

5.2.2 CK Research on how community members, partners, and other constituencies effectively engage in and support district and school improvement and student success.

5.2.3 CK Effective practice for communicating through oral, written, and digital means.

5.2.4 CK Strategies for understanding and engaging district constituents.

5.2.5 CK Governance and decision-making processes that support family-school communications and engagement.

Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

- 5.2.6 PS Develop systems and processes designed to support district personnel's understanding of diverse families, community members, partners, and other constituencies.
- 5.2.7 PS Collaborate with diverse community members, partners, and other constituencies.
- 5.2.8 PS Foster regular, two-way communication with community members, partners, and other constituencies.
- 5.2.9 PS Develop communication for oral, written, and digital distribution targeted to a diverse stakeholder community.
- 5.2.10 PS Engage community members, partners, and other constituents in district efforts.

Function 5.3: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to communicate through oral, written, and digital means within the larger organizational, community, and political contexts and cultivate relationships with members of the business, civic, and policy community in support of their advocacy for district, school, student, and community needs.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

- 5.3.1 CK Research on the importance and implications of social, cultural, economic, legal, and political contexts.
- 5.3.2 CK Strategies for effective oral, written, and digital communication with members of the business, civic, and policy community.
- 5.3.3 CK Strategies for cultivating relationships with members of the business, civic, and policy community.
- 5.3.4 CK Public relations.
- 5.3.5 CK Educational advocacy.

Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

- 5.3.6 PS Conduct a needs assessment of the district, school, students, and community.
- 5.3.7 PS Develop a plan for accessing resources that addresses district needs.
- 5.3.8 PS Cultivate collaborative relationships with district constituencies.
- 5.3.9 PS Develop oral, written, and digital communications targeted on the larger organizational, community, and political contexts.
- 5.3.10 PS Advocate for district and community needs.

Standard 6: Operations and Management

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by adapting and applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to lead change, develop, monitor, evaluate, and manage data-informed and equitable district systems for operations, resources, technology, and human capital management.

Function 6.1: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to develop, communicate, implement, and evaluate data-informed and equitable management, communication, technology, governance, and operation systems at the district level to support schools in realizing the district's mission and vision.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

- 6.1.1 CK Research, theories, and best practices concerning continuous improvement and the use of data to achieve equitable outcomes for diverse student populations.
- 6.1.2 CK Research, theories, and best practices concerning the management of operations, technology, communications, and governance systems.
- 6.1.3 CK Methods for analyzing the design and effectiveness of management, communication, technology, district-level governance, and operation systems in supporting equity.
- 6.1.4 CK Use of technology to enhance learning and the management of systems.

Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

- 6.1.5 PS Evaluate management and operation systems.
- 6.1.6 PS Use data and research to propose designs for improving the coordination and impact of district management, communication, technology, governance, and operation systems.
- 6.1.7 PS Communicate with relevant stakeholders about the relationship between the district's management, operation, and governance systems and the district's mission and vision.
- 6.1.8 PS Develop an implementation plan to support improved district systems.

Function 6.2: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to develop, communicate, implement, and evaluate a data-based district resourcing plan, including financial management, fiscal budgeting and planning, and support schools in developing their school-level resourcing plans.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

6.2.1 CK School and district-based fiscal budgeting and financial management.

6.2.2 CK Processes for gathering, synthesizing, and evaluating data to develop resourcing plans.

6.2.3 CK Research and best practices for allocating district- and school-level resources to support equity and excellence.

6.2.4 CK Methods for accessing and integrating external resources into the district and schools.

Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

6.2.5 PS Use data to evaluate district resource needs and practices.

6.2.6 PS Use research and data to design an equitable district resourcing plan and support schools in designing school resourcing plans that coordinate resources with needs.

6.2.7 PS Communicate about district resources needs and plans.

6.2.8 PS Develop an implementation plan for the district's resourcing plan.

Function 6.3: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to develop, implement, and evaluate coordinated, data-informed systems for hiring, retaining, supervising, and developing school and district staff in order to support the district's collective instructional and leadership capacity.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

6.3.1 CK Research-based practices for recruiting, hiring, supporting, supervising, developing, and retaining school and district staff.

6.3.2 CK Strategies for engaging school and district staff in the recruitment and selection process.

6.3.3 CK Strategic data-informed staffing based on student, school, and district needs.

6.3.4 CK Research on and strategies for developing a collaborative professional culture designed to support improvement, retention, learning, and well-being.

6.3.5 CK Strategies for cultivating leadership among school and district staff.

Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

6.3.6 PS Use data to evaluate district human resources needs.

6.3.7 PS Use research and data to develop a district-level system for hiring, retention, development, and supervision of school/district personnel.

6.3.8 PS Evaluate candidates' materials for instructional and leadership positions.

6.3.9 PS Implement systems of leadership supervision, evaluation, feedback, and support.

Standard 7: Policy, Governance, and Advocacy

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the present and future success and well-being of students and district personnel by adapting and applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to cultivate relationships; lead district transformation, collaborative decision making, and governance; and, represent and advocate for district needs in broader policy conversations.

Function 7.1: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to represent the district, advocate for district needs, and cultivate a respectful and responsive relationship with the district's board of education focused on achieving the district's shared mission and vision.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of 7.1.1 CK Research and best practice focused on school board governance and relations.

7.1.2 CK Management Theory.

7.1.3 CK Communication Strategies.

7.1.4 CK Negotiation Strategies.

Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

7.1.5 PS Represent the district and its mission, strengths, and needs to the board of education.

7.1.6 PS Cultivate a positive, respectful, and responsive relationship with the board.

7.1.7 PS Advocate for board actions that will support the mission and vision of the district and meet district needs.

Function 7.2: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to design, implement, cultivate, and evaluate effective and collaborative systems for district governance that engage multiple stakeholder groups, including school and district personnel, families, students, community stakeholders, and board members.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of 7.2.1 CK Research and best practice concerning effective systems for district governance.

7.2.2 CK Processes for engaging multiple community stakeholders.

7.2.3 CK Developing and sustaining effective board and stakeholder relations.

Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

7.2.4 PS Evaluate district governance and stakeholder engagement systems.

- 7.2.5 PS Design governance systems that engage multiple stakeholder groups.
- 7.2.6 PS Implement strategies (i.e., communication) that support stakeholder engagement in district governance.
- 7.2.7 PS Cultivate and coordinate an effective and collaborative system for district governance.

Function 7.3: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, engage in decision making around, implement, and appropriately communicate about district, state, and national policy, laws, rules, and regulations.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

- 7.3.1 CK State and national educational policy, laws, rules, and regulations.
- 7.3.2 CK State and national educational policy systems, formulation, adoption, and actors.
- 7.3.3 CK Strategies for accessing information about: (a) policy, (b) local, state, and federal contexts, and (c) the policy implications for various contexts.
- 7.3.4 CK Strategies for engaging and collaborating with and/or influencing local, state, and federal policy and policy leaders.

Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

- 7.3.5 PS Evaluate and share the implications of educational policy for district practices.
- 7.3.6 PS Develop and receive feedback on a plan for the implementation of laws, rights, policies, and regulations.
- 7.3.7 PS Communicate about district, state, and national policy, laws, rules, and regulations.
- 7.3.8 PS Coordinate decisions and district policies with policies and/or regulations from local, state, and federal policy entities.

Function 7.4: Program completers understand the implications of larger cultural, social, economic, legal, and political interests, changes, and expectations and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate and represent district needs and priorities within larger policy conversations and advocate for district needs and priorities at the local, state, and national level.

Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of

- 7.4.1 CK Research on the implications of culture, societal trends, economic conditions, laws, and political factors for the students, schools, staff, and practices of school districts.
- 7.4.2 CK Research on emerging challenges such as privacy, social media (i.e., cyber-bullying), and safety.

7.4.3 CK Approaches for collaboratively identifying and addressing district and school needs.

7.4.4 CK Prioritization processes.

Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to

7.4.5 PS Use evidence to evaluate district needs and priorities vis-à-vis education policy conversations and emerging challenges.

7.4.6 PS Represent the district and its priorities and needs at the local, state, and national level.

7.4.7 PS Advocate for the needs and priorities of the district at the local, state, and national level.

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