

## Introduction

A historic shift is happening in the field of educational leadership. Policymakers, families, and other constituents of PK-12 schools are increasingly holding education leaders accountable for the academic success and personal well-being of every student. No longer is it enough to manage district finances, keep the buses running on time, and maintain a safe and efficient district office. Education leaders must also provide clear evidence that the children in their care are being better prepared for college, careers, and life. No individual leader is able to accomplish these goals alone. Today, education leadership is a collaborative effort distributed among a number of professionals in schools and districts.

Clear and consistent leadership standards can assist all educational stakeholders in understanding these expectations (Canole & Young, 2013). Over the last three years, the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), with financial support from the Wallace Foundation, have led a significant effort to revise the national standards that guide preparation and practice for educational leaders in the United States. The NELP district-level standards are appropriate for advanced programs at the master, specialist, or doctoral level that prepare leaders for district positions such as superintendents, curriculum supervisors, talent management specialists, assessment directors, and professional development providers. Their titles may vary, but all district leaders are charged with the same fundamental challenge: support every student's learning and development.

### Context

CCSSO published the first set of national standards for educational leaders in 1996, followed by a modest update in 2008 based on the empirical research at the time. Both versions provided frameworks for policy on education leadership at the state level for almost 20 years. However, the context in which schools and districts currently operate continues to shift. Globalization, for example, is transforming the economy and the 21st century workplace for which schools prepare learners. Technology, too, is advancing faster than ever, changing the nature of communication and learning. The conditions and characteristics of children, in terms of demographics, family structures, and more, are also changing. On the education front, the politics of leadership and changes in leadership personnel make the headlines. Cuts in school funding loom everywhere, even as schools are being subjected to increasingly competitive market pressures and held to higher levels of accountability for student achievement.

Without question, such changes are creating myriad challenges for educational leaders. At the same time, they present rich and exciting opportunities for educational leaders to innovate and inspire staff to pursue new, creative approaches for improving schools and promoting student learning. Since the crafting of the first set of educational leadership standards in 1996, the profession of educational leadership has developed significantly. Educators have a better understanding of how and in what ways leadership contributes to student achievement. An expanding base of research demonstrates

that educational leaders exert influence on student achievement by creating challenging and supportive conditions, conducive to each student’s learning, and by supporting teachers, creating positive working conditions, allocating resources, constructing appropriate organizational policies and systems, and engaging in other deep and meaningful work outside of the classroom. Given such changes, educational leaders need new standards to guide their practice in directions that will be the most productive and beneficial to learners.

In November 2015, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) were approved by NPBEA. These standards, which were formerly known as the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, are grounded in current research and leadership experience and articulate the knowledge and skills expected of educational leaders (Canole & Young, 2013; CCSSO, 1996; CCSSO, 2008). These standards were “recast with a stronger, clearer emphasis on students as learners, outlining foundational principles of leadership to help ensure that each child is well-educated and prepared for the 21st century” (CCSSO, 2015, p. 2). “They are student-centric, outlining foundational principles of leadership to guide the practice of educational leaders so they can move the needle on student learning and achieve more equitable outcomes” (CCSSO, 2015, p. 1).

The 2015 PSEL standards reflect the following leadership domains:

1. Mission, Vision, and Improvement
2. Ethics and Professional Norms
3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
5. Community of Care and Support for Students
6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel
7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff
8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community
9. Operations and Management
10. School Improvement

Significantly, each of the standards emphasizes both academic success and well-being. The PSEL standards will be adopted or adapted by many states to guide policies concerning the practice and improvement of educational leaders (e.g., licensure, evaluation, and professional learning policies).

In December 2015, a committee comprised of essential stakeholder communities from across the country began to develop a set of leadership preparation standards congruent to the PSEL. As noted by CAEP (2017), consistency among standards “ensures a coherent continuum of expectations” (p. 10). The preparation standards, formerly known as the Educational Leadership Constituent Council, or ELCC standards, have been renamed the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards and will be used to guide program design, accreditation review, and state program approval.

While aligned to the PSEL standards, the NELP standards serve a different purpose and provide greater specificity around performance expectations for beginning-level building and district

leaders. Whereas the PSEL standards define educational leadership broadly, the NELP standards specify what novice leaders and preparation program graduates should know and be able to do after completing a high-quality educational leadership preparation program. Like the ELCC standards that preceded them, the NELP standards were developed specifically with building and district leaders in mind and will be used to review educational leadership programs by the NELP Specialty Professional Association (SPA) (formerly known as the ELCC SPA) of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). There is one set of NELP standards for candidates preparing to become building-level leaders and a second set of standards for candidates seeking to become district-level leaders.

## Development

The NELP standards for district-level leadership preparation address the most critical knowledge and skills areas for beginning educational leaders at the district level. The standards align to national leadership practice standards and are supported by research on effective leadership practice, input from key stakeholder communities, and the four CAEP principles—(A) The Learner and Learning, (B) Content, (C) Instructional Practice, and (D) Professional Responsibility. (See Appendix 2 for alignment between NELP and CAEP principles.) The NELP standards flow from a 17-month process fostered by CCSO, the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), and NPBEA.

Recognizing the changes that have occurred in education leadership practice since the release of the 2011 ELCC standards, the adoption of new standards and policies at the state level, and the need to align to the new PSEL standards, a committee of educational leadership stakeholders was formed to collaboratively revise the 2011 ELCC standards. The committee members, which represented practicing leaders, professional association representatives, state department personnel, educational leadership faculty scholars, educational leadership preparation program leaders, and college leadership (see Appendix 6 for a list), were selected based on the stakeholders they represented as well as the expertise they brought to the committee.

The work of the NELP Standards Development Committee began as soon as the PSEL standards were released in November 2015 and involved reviewing the CAEP guidelines and gathering input on the 2011 ELCC standards from practitioners, state department of education representatives, and higher education faculty (Young, 2016). This work was followed by a rigorous review of empirical research supporting the PSEL standards and the preparation of building and district leaders for high-performing schools and school districts. This work also involved the development of several crosswalks between sets of important national and state leadership and educator preparation standards and the development, review, external vetting, and editing of draft standards.

Early drafts were vetted with focus groups hosted by a variety of leadership professional associations and included practitioners, higher education faculty, state department personnel, and professional association representatives. In addition to sharing and discussing the standards during

these focus groups, committee representatives also used the interactions to share key sections of the CAEP guidelines, such as the limits on the number of standards and components, the necessity of developing standards that are based on empirical research and that are measurable through six to eight assessments, and the importance of aligning the standards to the four CAEP principles. Committee members analyzed and reviewed the feedback from the focus groups and then used that feedback to further refine the standards. In May 2016, the standards were distributed widely through CAEP and NPBEA member organizations (CCSSO, UCEA, NASSP, NAESP, AASA, AACTE, ICPEL) for public comment. Public comment revealed strong support, with 86 percent approving or strongly approving the NELP standards and between 88 and 96 percent noting that the focus of the eight standards was warranted. A summary of the survey data was shared with the field through NPBEA organizations and used by the committee to inform revisions. The revised draft was presented to and approved by NPBEA in July 2016 and then submitted to the CAEP SPA Standards Committee for review and feedback.

Feedback from the CAEP SPA Standards Committee was received in October 2016 and shared with the NELP committee. Based on this feedback, the NELP committee further reviewed research on the preparation, evaluation, and practice of educational leaders; consulted with NPBEA organizations, practicing school and district leaders, state education officials, researchers, higher education leaders and faculty, and other policy-oriented constituents; and refined the draft standards to ensure that the standards included the most essential knowledge and skills, as identified by research and input from the field and that can be achieved by candidates during the course of their preparation and assessed by programs. In May 2017, feedback was sought on a final draft of the NELP standards from practicing leaders, higher education faculty, and state officials. The feedback indicated overwhelming support for the standards, specifically, their focus, measurability, and ability to guide effective leadership preparation.

At two points during the process of developing the NELP standards, analyses were conducted to determine the existence of potential duplication and/or overlap in the standards, first after the initial draft of the standards was developed and, subsequently, when the final draft was complete. In conducting this analysis, standards and elements/components for each of the CAEP SPAs were thoroughly reviewed, and no duplication was identified. However, it is important to point out that educational leaders share a common goal of collaboration with varied school personnel, including special education professionals as described by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), school librarians as described by American Association of School Librarians, (AASL), instructional technology specialists as described by International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), school psychologists as described by THE National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), and classroom teachers. Furthermore, educational leaders share a common goal of supporting the education of diverse learners. How this is accomplished by these educational professionals, however, is different. The NELP standards (see for example, Standard 3: Equity, Inclusiveness, and Cultural Responsiveness) articulate the specific knowledge and skills that educational leaders require to lead, facilitate, and collaborate with others in a mutual effort to achieve enhanced and equitable student learning.

## What's New?

The new NELP standards for district-level leaders reflect all of the elements of the 2011 ELCC standards for district-level leaders and the majority of the elements from the PSEL standards, as demonstrated in the crosswalk in Appendix 7. When compared to the 2011 ELCC standards for district leaders, there are several important additions. First, and perhaps most noticeable, is the number of standards.

The six content standards found in the 2011 ELCC standards have been expanded to seven in the NELP standards. The expansion enabled the NELP committee to develop standards that more closely reflect current understandings of district leadership, to better align to the 10 PSEL standards, and to more clearly delineate several core leadership functions. For example, the 2011 ELCC standards addressed core values, professional norms, ethics, and equity within one standard. The new NELP standards, like the 2015 PSEL standards, address these knowledge and competency standards separately. The NELP standards, like the 2015 PSEL standards, include one standard for ethics and professional norms (NELP standard 2) and one for equity and cultural leadership (NELP standard 3). These changes delineate expectations for educational leaders not present in the previous ELCC standards, such as developing the knowledge and “capacity to evaluate, advocate, and cultivate equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instructional and behavior support practices among teachers and staff” (NELP standard 3, component 3). Although CAEP includes the notion of ethical practice in its CAEP unit standards and a focus on diversity among its core principles, it is essential that educational leadership preparation standards address ethics and diversity in ways that attend to the specific professional responsibilities of educational leaders. As such, they are included within the NELP leadership standards and stated in terms of appropriate educational leadership candidate professional actions.

A second difference is represented within the stem statement of the NELP standards. The NELP standards expand ELCC’s concern for supporting “the success of every student” to promoting the “current and future success and well-being of **each** student and adult.” The focus on **each** student’s and **each** adult’s individual needs helps to ensure that when a leader meets the needs of each individual, no subgroup will be missed.

A third difference in the 2018 NELP standards is the addition of the leaders’ responsibility for the well-being of students and staff as well as their role in working with others to create supportive and inclusive district and school cultures. In addition to being included in each of the standard stem statements, this focus is found within components 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4.

Fourth, the NELP standards articulate the district leaders’ role in ensuring equitable access to educational resources and opportunities. Standard 3, which is a new standard with three components, focuses on developing and maintaining “a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive district culture.” Issues of diversity, equity, and cultural responsiveness are also addressed in the following components: 1.1, 2.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, and 8.1.

A fifth difference between the two sets of standards is the NELP standard’s stronger focus on assessment and the design and use of assessment systems. For example, component

4.3 focuses on designing, implementing, and evaluating “a developmentally appropriate, accessible and culturally responsive system of assessments and data collection, management, and analysis that supports instructional improvement, equity, student learning and well-being, and instructional leadership.”

Sixth, the NELP standards address community and external leadership in a way that more clearly addresses the need for communicating, engaging, and partnering with families and the community.

Seventh, the NELP committee identified nine practices through which educational leaders achieve the expectations outlined in the standards. These nine key practices, and only these key practices, are included in the NELP standards and their components. They include developing, implementing, evaluating, collaborating, communicating, modeling, reflecting, advocating, and cultivating. Importantly, several of these key practices (i.e., developing, implementing, evaluating) are essential for school and district improvement (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, and Luppescu, 2010). Definitions for each of these key practices are provided in the glossary, which can be found in Appendix 4.

Eighth and finally, the committee has developed a comprehensive crosswalk that compares the new NELP district-level standards to the 2011 ELCC standards and the 2015 PSEL standards. This crosswalk is available in Appendix 7.

## Assumptions

There are several key assumptions embedded in the new NELP standards. Preparation programs are the heart of educational leaders’ pre-professional growth and professional advancement. “Programs provide the structured opportunities (e.g., course content and field experiences) for individuals preparing to enter various education specialties to learn, practice, and be assessed on what they will need to know and be able to do when they enter their new professional responsibilities” (CAEP, 2017, p. 6). The following assumptions are embedded within the NELP district-level leadership preparation standards:

1. Improving student learning is the central responsibility of district-level leadership. Because district-level leaders must support all learners to achieve at high levels, the standards purposefully do not name specific sub-groups of students. Strong preparation of district-level leaders includes attention to learning and the needs of all student sub-groups as well as individual students.
2. The standards represent the fundamental knowledge, skills, and commitments intrinsic to district-level leadership that supports improved student learning.
3. The standards conceptually apply to a range of district-level leadership positions. They are intended to define what an entry-level district-level administrator should know and be able to do. While specific content and application details will vary depending upon the leadership role, the fundamental, enduring tenets are the same.

4. Each standard begins with the stem, **“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 ...”** in order to emphasize three things: (1) the importance of beginning-level leaders gaining the knowledge, skills, and commitments to both understand and have the capacity to undertake the leadership described in each of the standards; (2) the importance of leadership work to both the current and future experiences of the students and educational staff who leaders influence; and (3) the importance of attending to both the education and well-being of students and adults.
5. While there is a purposeful emphasis on leading to support student learning, an understanding and acceptance of district-level leaders’ responsibility for managing the resources and operations of the district are also embedded.
6. The practice of district-level leadership is well-established as a research-based body of knowledge. This research base helps inform the preparation of district-level leaders.
7. The preparation of district-level leaders requires overt connections and bridging experiences between research and practice.
8. The preparation of district-level leaders requires comprehensive practice in, and feedback from, the field over an extended period of time.
9. District leadership preparation programs must provide ongoing experiences for candidates to examine, refine, and strengthen the ethical platform that guides their decisions—especially during difficult times.
10. While district-level leadership preparation programs are ultimately an institutional responsibility, the strength of the design, delivery, and effectiveness of these programs will be significantly enhanced by participation and feedback from PK-12 institutions.
11. Performance-based measures are most effective in evaluating candidate outcomes.

## Implementation

Supporting the current and future success and well-being of students depends on the implementation of multiple and integrated effective leadership practices within a set of complex and nested contexts. Given the interdependency between the execution of specific district leadership skills and the overall educational environment, preparation programs are expected to provide candidates with intentionally developed leadership development experiences that connect, embed, and transcend explicit leadership skills within authentic contexts.

Candidates need multiple bridging experiences between course content and the realm of leadership practice. Life as a district leader requires the use of specialized skills within the context of often ambiguous, demanding, and interconnected events. Powerful connections to, and

emphasis on, real or simulated leadership experiences will greatly facilitate a program graduate's ultimate success as an educational leader.

Leadership preparation programs must include three dimensions:

1. Awareness—acquiring concepts, information, definitions, and procedures
2. Understanding—interpreting, integrating, and using knowledge and skills
3. Application—applying knowledge and skills to new or specific opportunities or problems

The overall program should represent a synthesis of key content and field-based experiences extended over time that result in the leader candidates' demonstration of the professional knowledge, skills, and commitments articulated in the NELP standards, and, ultimately, the candidates' success in improving student achievement after taking a leadership position.

Standard 8: The Internship includes three components that address the internship under the supervision of knowledgeable, expert practitioners that engages candidates in multiple and diverse settings. In addition, the internship provides candidates with coherent, authentic, and sustained opportunities to synthesize and apply the knowledge and skills identified in NELP standards 1–7 in ways that approximate the full range of responsibilities required of district-level leaders and enable them to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult in their district. Evidence confirms the importance of a substantial and sustained educational leadership internship experience that has district-based field experiences and clinical internship practice in a district setting, monitored by a qualified onsite mentor. Many of the internship components and descriptors of practice in standard 8 parallel the research findings regarding the critical components of the field experience (Milstein & Kruger, 1997). This research is provided in Appendix 3.

## This Document

The purpose of this document is to provide background concerning the history, development, and guidance for using the NELP standards for district-level leadership preparation. The standards, their component areas and supporting explanations that provide guidance regarding the scope and focus of each standard component are presented in the following section. This section also includes criteria or rubric starters that clarify SPA expectations for appropriate candidate knowledge and skills. Subsequently, the document includes several appendices. Appendix 1, "Using NELP Standards for Program Evaluation," identifies the assessments types to be used for measuring candidate knowledge and skills and provides guidance for judging assessment evidence and for making program decisions. Appendix 2 provides a review of district leadership research supporting each of the NELP standards. Appendix 3 provides an overview of how the NELP standards align with and reflect the four CAEP principles. Appendix 4 provides a definition of terms used within the NELP standards and throughout this document. Appendix 5 provides an overview of the process used to select and train reviewers for the NELP SPA. Appendix 6 lists the individuals who directly contributed to the development of the NELP standards. Appendix 7 provides a crosswalk demonstrating the similarities and differences between the NELP district-level standards, the 2011 ELCC standards, and the 2015 PSEL standards.



**NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION (NELP)  
PROGRAM STANDARDS  
District Level**

## 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 district mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, values, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.

### STANDARD 1 COMPONENTS:

**Component 1.1** Program completers understand and demonstrate the 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, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.

**Component 1.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to lead district strategic planning and continuous improvement processes that engage diverse stakeholders in data collection, diagnosis, design, implementation, and evaluation.

### RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR STANDARD 1

Evidence presented in Appendix 3 in support of standard 1 confirms that a district-level education leader must have the knowledge and skills to promote the success of every student through collaboratively leading, designing, and implementing a district mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities. This includes knowledge of how to design, communicate, and evaluate a district mission and vision that reflects a core set of values and priorities and to lead district strategic planning and continuous improvement processes that engage diverse stakeholders in diagnosis, design, implementation, and evaluation. This research evidence was used to inform the development of standard 1 and components 1.1 and 1.2.

## Acceptable Candidate Performance for NELP District-Level Leadership Standard 1

### NELP Standard Component 1.1

Program completers understand and demonstrate the 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, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.

#### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Research on the role and importance of district mission and vision
- Processes for collaboratively developing a mission and vision
- Processes for developing an actionable mission and vision attentive to such considerations as data use, technology, values, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community
- The characteristics of well-written mission and vision statements

#### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Evaluate existing mission and vision processes and statements
- Collaboratively design an actionable district mission and vision attentive to such considerations as data use, technology, values, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community
- Develop a comprehensive plan for communicating the mission and vision to multiple constituencies

### NELP Standard Component 1.2

Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to lead district strategic planning and continuous improvement processes that engage diverse stakeholders in data collection, diagnosis, design, implementation, and evaluation.

#### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Research on district improvement
- Formal processes of system-wide, iterative, evidence-informed improvement
- Research-based strategic planning processes
- Data collection, diagnosis, and use
- Implementation theory and research

#### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

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

## Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms

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 demonstrate the capacity to advocate for ethical decisions and cultivate professional norms and culture.

### STANDARD 2 COMPONENTS:

**Component 2.1** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to reflect on, communicate about, and cultivate professional dispositions and norms (i.e., equity, fairness, integrity, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, reflection, lifelong learning, digital citizenship) and professional district and school cultures.

**Component 2.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate and advocate for ethical and legal decisions.

**Component 2.3** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to model ethical behavior in their personal conduct and relationships and to cultivate ethical behavior in others.

### RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR STANDARD 2

Evidence presented in Appendix 3 in support of standard 2 confirms that a district-level education leader must have the knowledge and skills to advocate for ethical decisions and cultivate professional norms and culture. This includes knowledge of how to reflect on, communicate about, and cultivate professional norms and culture and to evaluate and advocate for ethical and legal decisions. It also involves an understanding of how to model ethical behavior in their personal conduct and relationships and to cultivate ethical behavior in others. This research evidence was used to inform the development of standard 2 and components 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

## Acceptable Candidate Performance for NELP District-Level Leadership Standard 2

**NELP Standard Component 2.1** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to reflect on, communicate about, and cultivate professional dispositions and norms (i.e., equity, 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:

- Professional norms (i.e., integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, equity, democracy, digital citizenship, diversity, inclusiveness, and the belief that each child can learn) that promote a productive, equitable, and effective district
- Approaches to cultivating professional norms in others
- Approaches to building organizational culture
- Reflective practice

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Engage in reflective practice
- Cultivate professional norms among diverse constituencies
- Model and communicate professional norms (i.e., integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, equity, democracy, digital citizenship, diversity, inclusiveness, and the belief that each child can learn)
- Use professional norms as a basis for building organizational culture

**NELP Standard Component 2.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate and advocate for ethical and legal decisions.

### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Research on and practices for decision making
- Knowledge of law and ethics
- Guidelines for ethical and legal decision making

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Evaluate ethical dimensions of complex issues, including stewardship and use of district resources
- Analyze decisions in terms of established ethical frameworks
- Advocate for ethical decisions

**NELP Standard Component 2.3** Program completers understand and demonstrate 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:

- Ethical practice
- Approaches to cultivating ethical behavior in others

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Model ethical behavior in their personal conduct and relationships with others
- Cultivate ethical behavior in others

## Standard 3: Equity, Inclusiveness, and Cultural Responsiveness

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 develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive district culture.

### STANDARD 3 COMPONENTS:

**Component 3.1** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive district culture.

**Component 3.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable access to safe and nurturing schools and the opportunities and resources, including instructional materials, technologies, classrooms, teachers, interventions, and adult relationships, necessary to support the success and well-being of each student.

**Component 3.3** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, advocate, and cultivate equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instructional and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.

### RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR STANDARD 3

Evidence presented in Appendix 3 in support of standard 3 confirms that a district-level education leader must have the knowledge and skills to develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive district culture. This includes knowledge of how to cultivate and advocate for a supportive and inclusive district culture and evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for each student in the district having equitable access to safe and nurturing schools and other resources and opportunities necessary for success. It also involves an understanding of how to evaluate, advocate, and cultivate equitable instructional and behavior support practices among teachers and staff. This research evidence was used to inform the development of standard 3 and components 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

## Acceptable Candidate Performance for NELP District-Level Leadership Standard 3

**NELP Standard Component 3.1** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive district culture.

### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Research on inclusive district cultures
- Dimensions of positive and inclusive district culture (i.e., fair, safe, healthy, caring, responsive, inclusive, and respectful)
- Processes for evaluating district culture
- Processes for fostering cultural change
- Strategies for advocacy

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Evaluate district culture
- Use research and evidence to design and cultivate a supportive and inclusive district culture
- Advocate for a supportive and inclusive district culture

**NELP Standard Component 3.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable access to safe and nurturing schools and the opportunities and resources, including instructional materials, technologies, classrooms, teachers, interventions, and adult relationships, necessary to support the success and well-being of each student.

### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Research on the consequences for students of equitable and inequitable use of educational resources and opportunities
- Equitable allocation of educational opportunities and resources, including instructional materials, technologies, classrooms, teachers, interventions, and adult relationships
- Broader social and political concerns with equity and inequality in the use of educational resources and opportunities

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Evaluate sources of inequality and bias in the allocation of educational opportunities and resources, including instructional materials, technologies, classrooms, teachers, interventions, and adult relationships
- Cultivate the equitable use of educational resources and opportunities through procedures, guidelines, norms, and values
- Advocate for equitable access to educational resources, procedures, and opportunities

**NELP Standard Component 3.3** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, advocate, and cultivate equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instructional and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.

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### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Culturally responsive instructional and behavior support practices
- Characteristics and foundations of equitable and inequitable educational practice
- Research on implications for students of equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive practice
- Broader social and political concerns with equity and inequity in schools and districts

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Evaluate root causes of inequity and bias
  - Develop district policies or procedures that cultivate equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive practice among teachers and staff
  - Advocate for culturally responsive instructional and behavior support practices among district staff and across district schools
  - Cultivate culturally responsive instructional and behavior support practices across the district and its schools
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## 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 applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to evaluate, design, cultivate, and implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, data systems, supports, assessment, and instructional leadership.

### STANDARD 4 COMPONENTS:

**Component 4.1** Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, design, and implement high-quality curricula, the use of technology, and other services and supports for academic and non-academic student programs.

**Component 4.2** Program completers understand and can demonstrate 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, data literacy, equity, improvement, and student success.

**Component 4.3** Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to design, implement, and evaluate a developmentally appropriate, accessible, and culturally responsive system of assessments and data collection, management, and analysis that support instructional improvement, equity, student learning and well-being, and instructional leadership.

**Component 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.

### RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR STANDARD 4

Evidence presented in Appendix 3 in support of standard 4 confirms that a district-level leader must have the knowledge and skills to evaluate, design, cultivate, and implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, supports, assessment, and instructional leadership. This includes knowledge of how to evaluate, design, and implement curricula, instructional technologies, and other supports for student programs and how to evaluate, design, and cultivate systems of support, coaching, and professional development for principals and other school and district leaders. It also involves an understanding of how to design, implement, and evaluate coherent and technically, developmentally, and culturally appropriate systems of curriculum, resources, supports, instruction, assessments, and data collection, management, and analysis that support student learning and well-being, instruction, and instructional leadership. This research evidence was used to inform the development of standard 4 and components 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

## Acceptable Candidate Performance for NELP District-Level Leadership Standard 4

**NELP Standard Component 4.1** Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, design, and implement high-quality curricula, the use of technology, and other services and supports for academic and non-academic student programs.

### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Research on the leadership of academic and non-academic programs
- Research-based curricula, technologies, and other supports for academic and non-academic programs
- Approaches to coordinating among (a) curricula, (b) the use of technology, and (c) academic and non-academic systems of support
- Infrastructures for the ongoing support of academic and non-academic programs

### Educational Leadership Skills

Programs provide evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

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

**NELP Standard Component 4.2** Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to collaboratively evaluate, design, and cultivate 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, data literacy, equity, improvement, and student success.

### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Research on instructional leadership at the school and district level
- Research-based approaches on using data to design, implement, and evaluate professional development for teachers and other educational professionals that promotes reflection, digital literacy, distributed leadership, data literacy, equity, improvement, and student success
- Research-based approaches to leadership development focused on improving instructional practice (i.e., leadership evaluation, coaching, development of professional learning communities, etc.)
- Approaches and strategies for supporting district and school collaboration

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- 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
- 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, equity, improvement, and student success

**NELP Standard Component 4.3** Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to design, implement, and evaluate a developmentally appropriate, accessible, and culturally responsive system of assessments and data collection, management, and analysis that support instructional improvement, equity, student learning and well-being, and instructional leadership.

**Content Knowledge**

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- 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.)
- Research on assessment practices that are culturally responsive and accessible
- Research and best practices regarding systems for collecting, analyzing, managing, and utilizing assessment results and other sources of data

**Educational Leadership Skills**

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Evaluate the quality of formative and summative assessments of student learning
- 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
- Use research to propose designs and implementation strategies for district-wide assessment systems that are culturally responsive and accessible

**NELP Standard Component 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:

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

**Educational Leadership Skills**

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- 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
- Use research to propose designs and implementation strategies for improving coordination and coherence among the district's academic and non-academic systems
- 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 families, communities, and other constituents in the work of schools and the district and to advocate for district, student, and community needs.

### STANDARD 5 COMPONENTS:

**Component 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.

**Component 5.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to understand, engage, and effectively collaborate and communicate with, through oral, written, and digital means, diverse families, community members, partners, and other constituencies to benefit learners, schools, and the district as a whole.

**Component 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.

### RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR STANDARD 5

Evidence presented in Appendix 3 in support of standard 5 confirms that a district-level education leader must have the knowledge and skills to engage families, communities, and other constituents in the work of schools and the district and to advocate for district, student, and community needs. This includes knowledge of how to represent and support schools in engaging families in strengthening student learning in and out of school and to effectively collaborate, communicate, and engage community members, partners, and other constituencies in district matters that benefit learners, schools, and the district as a whole. It also involves an understanding of how to collaborate and communicate with members of the business, civic, and policy community so they can cultivate relationships and advocate for their district, student, and community needs. This research evidence was used to inform the development of standard 5 and components 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3.

## Acceptable Candidate Performance for NELP District-Level Leadership Standard 5

**NELP Standard Component 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:

- Research on the role of families in supporting student learning in and out of school
- 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:

- Represent the district and its schools
- Support the efforts of district schools in engaging diverse families in strengthening student learning in and out of school
- Make decisions about when and how to engage families

**NELP Standard Component 5.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to understand, engage, and effectively collaborate and communicate with, through oral, written, and digital means, diverse families, community members, partners, and other constituencies to benefit learners, schools, and the district as a whole.

### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Research on student, family, and community diversity
- Research on how community members, partners, and other constituencies effectively engage in and support district and school improvement and student success
- Effective practice for communicating through oral, written, and digital means
- Strategies for understanding and engaging district constituents
- Governance and decision-making processes that support family-school communications and engagement

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

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

**NELP Standard Component 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.

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### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

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

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Conduct a needs assessment of the district, school, students, and community
  - Develop a plan for accessing resources that addresses district needs
  - Cultivate collaborative relationships with district constituencies
  - Develop oral, written, and digital communications targeted on the larger organizational, community, and political contexts
  - Advocate for district and community needs
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## 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 applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to develop, monitor, evaluate, and manage data-informed and equitable district systems for operations, resources, technology, and human capital management.

### STANDARD 6 COMPONENTS:

**Component 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.

**Component 6.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to develop, communicate, implement, and evaluate a data-based district resourcing plan and support schools in developing their school-level resourcing plans.

**Component 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.

### RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR STANDARD 6

Evidence presented in Appendix 3 in support of standard 6 confirms that a district-level education leader must have the knowledge and skills to develop, monitor, evaluate, and manage district systems for operations, resources, and human capital management. This includes knowledge of how to design, communicate, implement, coordinate, and evaluate management, communication, technology, district-level governance, and operation systems that support schools in realizing the district’s mission and vision and to design, communicate, advocate, implement, coordinate, and evaluate a district resourcing plan and support schools in developing their school-level resourcing plans. It also involves an understanding of how to develop, implement, and evaluate coordinated systems for hiring, retaining, supervising, developing, and cultivating school and district staff in order to support the district’s collective instructional and leadership capacity. This research evidence was used to inform the development of standard 6 and components 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3.

## Acceptable Candidate Performance for NELP District-Level Leadership Standard 6

**NELP Standard Component 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:

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

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

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

**NELP Standard Component 6.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to develop, communicate, implement, and evaluate a data-based district resourcing plan and support schools in developing their school-level resourcing plans.

### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- School and district-based budgeting
- Processes for gathering, synthesizing, and evaluating data to develop resourcing plans
- Research and best practices for allocating district- and school-level resources to support equity and excellence
- Methods for accessing and integrating external resources into the district and schools

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Use data to evaluate district resource needs and practices
- Use research and data to design an equitable district resourcing plan and support schools in designing school resourcing plans that coordinate resources with needs
- Communicate about district resources needs and plans
- Develop an implementation plan for the district's resourcing plan

**NELP Standard Component 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.



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### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Research-based practices for recruiting, hiring, supporting, supervising, developing, and retaining school and district staff
- Strategies for engaging school and district staff in the recruitment and selection process
- Strategic data-informed staffing based on student, school, and district needs
- Research on and strategies for developing a collaborative professional culture designed to support improvement, retention, learning, and well-being
- Strategies for cultivating leadership among school and district staff

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Use data to evaluate district human resources needs
  - Use research and data to develop a district-level system for hiring, retention, development, and supervision of school/district personnel
  - Evaluate candidates' materials for instructional and leadership positions
  - Implement systems of leadership supervision, evaluation, feedback, and support
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## 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 applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to cultivate relationships, lead collaborative decision making and governance, and represent and advocate for district needs in broader policy conversations.

### STANDARD 7 COMPONENTS:

**Component 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.

**Component 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 and diverse stakeholder groups, including school and district personnel, families, community stakeholders, and board members.

**Component 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.

**Component 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.

### RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR STANDARD 7

Evidence presented in Appendix 3 in support of standard 7 confirms that a district-level education leader must have the knowledge and skills to cultivate relationships, lead collaborative decision making and governance, and represent and advocate for district needs in broader policy conversations. This includes an understanding of how to represent, communicate, collaborate, advocate, and cultivate a respectful and responsive relationship with a district's board of education focused on achieving the shared mission and vision of the district and to collaborate, design, communicate, implement, coordinate, cultivate, and evaluate effective systems for district governance that engage multiple stakeholder groups, including school and district personnel, families, community stakeholders, and board members. It also involves an understanding of how to evaluate and engage in decision making around, implement, and appropriately communicate about policy, laws, and regulations and how to evaluate, represent, and advocate for district needs and priorities within larger policy conversations. This research evidence was used to inform the development of standard 7 and components 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4.

## Acceptable Candidate Performance for NELP District-Level Leadership Standard 7

**NELP Standard Component 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 shared mission and vision of the district.

### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Research and best practice focused on school board governance and relations
- Management theory
- Communication strategies
- Negotiation strategies

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Represent the district and its mission, strengths, and needs to the board of education
- Cultivate a positive, respectful, and responsive relationship with the board
- Advocate for board actions that will support the mission and vision of the district and meet district needs

**NELP Standard Component 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 and diverse stakeholder groups, including school and district personnel, families, community stakeholders, and board members.

### Content Knowledge

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Research and best practice concerning effective systems for district governance
- Processes for engaging multiple and diverse community stakeholders
- Developing and sustaining effective board relations

### Educational Leadership Skills

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

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

**NELP Standard Component 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.

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**Content Knowledge**

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

- Educational policy, laws, rules, and regulations
- Educational policy systems, formulation, adoption, and actors
- Strategies for accessing information about: (a) policy, (b) local, state, and federal contexts, and (c) the policy implications for various contexts
- Strategies for 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:

- Evaluate the implications of educational policy for district practices
  - Develop a plan for the implementation of laws, rights, policies, and regulations
  - Communicate about district, state, and national policy, laws, rules, and regulations
  - Coordinate decisions and district policies with policies and/or regulations from local, state, and federal policy entities
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**NELP Standard Component 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.

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**Content Knowledge**

Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:

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

**Educational Leadership Skills**

Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

- Use evidence to evaluate district needs and priorities vis-à-vis education policy conversations and emerging challenges
  - Represent the district and its priorities and needs at the local, state, and national level
  - Advocate for the needs and priorities of the district at the local, state, and national level
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## Standard 8: Internship

Candidates successfully complete an internship under the supervision of knowledgeable, expert practitioners that engages candidates in multiple and diverse district settings and provides candidates with coherent, authentic, and sustained opportunities to synthesize and apply the knowledge and skills identified in NELP Standards 1–7 in ways that approximate the full range of responsibilities required of district-level leaders and enable them to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult in their district.

### STANDARD 8 COMPONENTS:

**Component 8.1** Candidates are provided a variety of coherent, authentic, field, or clinical internship experiences within multiple district environments that afford opportunities to interact with stakeholders and synthesize and apply the content knowledge and develop and refine the professional skills articulated in each of the components included in NELP district-level program standards 1–7.

**Component 8.2** Candidates are provided a minimum of six months of concentrated (10–15 hours per week) internship or clinical experiences that include authentic leadership activities within a district setting.

**Component 8.3** Candidates are provided a mentor who has demonstrated effectiveness as an educational leader within a district setting; understands the specific district context; is present for a significant portion of the internship; is selected collaboratively by the intern, a representative of the district, and program faculty; and is provided with training by the supervising institution.

### RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR STANDARD 8

Evidence presented in Appendix 3 in support of Standard 8 confirms that effective internships include the use of expert practitioners as supervisors who engage candidates in multiple and diverse district settings and provide coherent, authentic, and sustained opportunities to synthesize and apply the knowledge and skills identified in NELP standards 1–7 in ways that approximate the full range of responsibilities required of district-level leaders and enable them to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult in their district. This research evidence was used to inform the development of standard 8 and components 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3.



The NELP Standards document suggests the following three levels:

**Level 1 – Approaching.** Level 1 represents a level of developing candidate performance, a level in which there is evidence that the candidate meets some but not all of the component’s expectations. At this level, the candidate has developed content knowledge and understanding, but there is not sufficient evidence of a candidate’s ability for independent practice for all parts of the component expectations.

**Level 2-Meets.** Level 2 represents a level of candidate performance in which the candidate understands and demonstrates the capacity to meet component expectations at an acceptable level for a candidate who is completing a leadership preparation program and is ready to begin independently leading in a school or district context.

**Level 3-Exceeds.** Level 3 represents a level of performance in which the candidate demonstrates performance characteristics that exceed the component’s expectations by demonstrating their understanding and skills through effective leadership practice within a school or district context. This level represents exemplary practice for a candidate who is completing leadership preparation program and is ready to begin independently leading in a school or district context.

