



Section I – The Survey Instrument

The Uniqueness of the Leadership Roles of CEO’s in ESAs
AESA Study of the ESA Chief Executive
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1. Name:
- 2. Organization:
- 3. Years in this position as Chief Executive:
 - Range: 4-18 years
 - Mean: 9.3 years
 - Median: 8.5 years
- 4. Years as Chief Executive in other ESA(s), if applicable:
 - None
- 5. Predominant Service Region:

Urban Area	01
Suburban Area	00
Rural Area	06
Contribution of two or more of the above	11
- 6. Years of Experience as a local superintendent (all positions):
 - Mean: 11 years
 - Median: 9.5 years

This survey represents an attempt to determine to what extent the role of a CEO of a regional service agency requires different skills and knowledge than the knowledge and skills required of a superintendent of a local district. Listed below are a set of characteristics usually identified with school leaders. You are asked to provide your estimate of the importance of each characteristic in fostering success as a local superintendent and as a service agency leader. It does not matter whether you have had any formal training in these areas.

KNOWLEDGE BASES

7. Please rank the importance of the following knowledge bases for a Local Superintendent:

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Of little or no importance
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School Finance	11	4	2	0
Organizational Theory and Application	5	11	2	0
Leadership Theory and Application	10	7	1	0
Law	8	6	4	0
Human Resources Theory and Application	4	8	6	0
Evaluation and Assessment	5	10	3	0
Change Theory (includes system thinking)	7	8	3	0
Strategic Planning	7	6	5	0
Politics and Policy Theory and Application	7	5	6	0
Motivation Theory	7	8	3	0
Philosophy and Ethics	5	10	3	0
Inter-organizational Partnership: Theory and Application	1	6	10	1

8. Please list any other knowledge bases you believe are important for local superintendents, and indicate how important you believe they are (using the scale in question 7, above).

- Community Relationship Building – Essential
- Government Relations – Important
- Curriculum/Instruction & Assessment – Essential
- Community Relations – Very Important
- Curriculum and Instruction – Very Important
- I don't think it is a knowledge base, but the two most critical assets are common sense and human relations – much more so than technical competencies.
- I think you missed the most essential knowledge base of all...INSTRUCTION!!!
- The state organizations of administrators and the department of education are important sources of information.
- Legislation and lobbying knowledge – Very Important
- Facilities Planning (Building & Construction) - Essential

9. Please rank the importance of the following knowledge bases for a Services Agency Leader:

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Of little or no importance
School Finance	5	6	6	0
Organizational Theory and Application	11	6	1	0
Leadership Theory and Application	13	5	0	0
Law	2	11	5	0
Human Resources Theory and Application	4	8	6	0
Evaluation and Assessment	9	7	2	0
Change Theory (includes system thinking)	13	5	0	0
Strategic Planning	15	3	0	0
Politics and Policy Theory and Application	11	5	2	0

Motivation Theory	8	7	3	0
Philosophy and Ethics	7	9	1	1
Inter-Organization Partnership: Theory and Application	17	1	0	0

10. Please list any other knowledge bases you believe are important for service agency leaders, and indicate how important you believe they are (using the scale in question 9, above).

- Governmental Relations – Very Important
- Collaboration / Compromising to get things done – Essential
- Business essentials – Very Important
- Marketing – Very Important
- Entrepreneurship – Essential
- The National Association of Service Agencies
- Facilities Planning (Building & Construction)

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Cognitive Abilities

11. Please rank the importance of the following cognitive abilities for a Local Superintendent:

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Of little or no importance
Is a self-initiating learner.	5	8	4	0
Rewards individual and organizational learning.	2	14	2	0
Displays interests in many fields of study.	0	8	8	2
Sees relation of parts to the whole.	12	4	2	0
Expects problems, learns from them, and enjoys solving them.	14	4	0	0
Possesses and can articulate a clear vision for the organization.	16	2	0	0

12. Please list any other cognitive abilities you believe are important for local superintendents, and indicate how important you believe they are (using the scale in question 11, above).

- Enthusiasm regarding community involvement - Important
- Has passion for education and for leadership – Very Important
- Fundamental understanding of teaching and learning and what it actually looks like in a classroom.
- Display a genuine interest for welfare of employees – Very Important

13. Please rank the importance of the following cognitive abilities for a Service Agency Leader:

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Of little or no importance
Is a self-initiating learner.	8	7	2	0

Rewards individual and organizational learning.	8	10	0	0
Displays interests in many fields of study.	8	6	4	0
Sees relation of parts to the whole.	17	1	0	0
Expects problems, learns from them, and enjoys solving them.	15	3	0	0
Possesses and can articulate a clear vision for the organization.	17	1	0	0

14. Please list any other cognitive abilities you believe are important for service agency leaders, and indicate how important you believe they are (using the scale in question 13, above).

- Self-initiating worker Essential since the “work” is not always obvious or externally driven.
- Enjoys being of service to school leaders – Very Important
- Models entrepreneurship to staff – Very Important
- Possesses ability to show confidence and calmness in crises.

Interpersonal Skills

15. Please rank the importance of the following interpersonal skills for a Local Superintendent:

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Of little or no importance
Is friendly and approachable.	7	10	0	0
Demonstrates effective listening.	10	7	1	0
Shows concern for interests, needs, and goals of others.	8	8	1	1
Requires high standards of performance without worker stress.	6	9	3	0
Engender trust in the organization among staff, customers/patrons/clients, and legislators.	12	6	0	0

16. Please list any other interpersonal skills you believe are important for local superintendents, and indicate how important you believe they are (using the scale in question 15, above).

- Is able to articulate ideas to audiences in a clear concise manner remembering that the ultimate goal is to be understood rather than to impress.
- Understands the many facets of communication skills – Very Important

17. Please rank the importance of the following interpersonal skills for a Service Agency Leader.

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Of little or no importance
Is friendly and approachable.	7	10	0	0
Demonstrates effective listening.	10	7	1	0

Shows concern for interests, needs, and goals of others.	8	8	1	1
Requires high standards of performance without worker stress.	6	9	3	0
Engender trust in the organization among staff, customers/patrons/clients, and legislators.	12	6	0	0

18. Please list any other interpersonal skills you believe are important for a service agency leader, and indicate how important you believe they are (using the scale in question 17, above).

- Builds respect for clients of the organization by standards and behavior – Very Important
- In today’s educational climate, it is difficult to completely eliminate the element of stress.

Intrapersonal Skills

19. Please rank the importance of the following intrapersonal skills for a Local Superintendent:

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Of little or no importance
Has clear knowledge of own skills and abilities.	7	8	2	0
Personal values and goals are clear and consistently demonstrated.	10	6	1	0
Recognition of subordinates is preferred to personal recognition.	5	9	3	0
Team success is more important than individual success.	9	5	3	0

20. Please list any other intrapersonal skills you believe are important for local superintendent, and indicate how important you believe they are (using the scale in question 19, above).

- No Responses

21. Please rank the importance of the following intrapersonal skills for a Service Agency Leader:

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Of little or no importance
Has clear knowledge of own skills and abilities.	11	5	2	0
Personal values and goals are clear and consistently demonstrated.	11	6	1	0
Recognition of subordinates is preferred to personal recognition.	13	5	0	0
Team success is more important than individual success.	16	2	0	0

22. Please list any other intrapersonal skills you believe are important for a service agency leader, and indicate how important you believe they are (using the scale in question 19, above).

- Likes himself or herself and demonstrates that by being self-confident – Very Important
- Sees humor in situations and uses humor to defuse situations when appropriate – Important

Group Facilitation Skills

23. Please rank the importance of the following group facilitation skills for a Local Superintendent:

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Of little or no importance
Manages meetings efficiently and effectively (everyone leaves feeling he/she has been heard).	6	8	4	0
Moves groups to consensus	6	6	5	1
Seeks investment of group in final decisions.	5	8	4	1

24. Please list any other group facilitation skills you believe are important for a local superintendent, and indicate how important you believe they are (using the scale in question 23, above):

- Understands the dynamics of working with a school board.

25. Please rank the importance of the following group facilitation skills for a Service Agency Leader:

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Of little or no importance
Manages meetings efficiently and effectively (everyone leaves feeling he/she has been heard).	11	6	1	0
Moves groups to consensus	11	5	2	0
Seeks investment of group in final decisions.	10	8	0	0

26. Please list any other group facilitation skills you believe are important for a service agency leader, and indicate how important you believe they are (using the scale in question 25, above.)

- When working with groups of customers, allows self to be less important than customers – Very Important

Leadership Skills

27. Please rank the importance of the following group facilitation skills for a Local Superintendent:

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Of little or no importance
Sees new opportunities for success and directs resources towards exploring these opportunities (is entrepreneurial).	1	6	6	5
Embraces change as a constant	4	8	5	1
Understands the political processes and works skillfully to shape those processes to the advantage of the organization.	7	7	4	0
Uses data as the touchstone for decision-making. Assessment is required for all programs, new and old.	9	6	3	0

28. Please list any other group facilitation skills you believe are important for a local superintendent, and indicate how important you believe they are (using the scale in question 27, above).

- No Responses

29. Please rank the importance of the following group facilitation skills for a Service Agency Leader:

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Of little or no importance
Sees new opportunities for success and directs resources towards exploring these opportunities (is entrepreneurial).	17	0	1	0
Embraces change as a constant	15	3	0	0
Understands the political processes and works skillfully to shape those processes to the advantage of the organization.	13	3	2	0
Uses data as the touchstone for decision-making. Assessment is required for all programs, new and old.	13	5	0	0

30. Please list any other group facilitation skills you believe are important for a service agency leader, and indicate how important you believe they are (using the scale in question 29, above).

- Data is important, but agencies need to react to the wishes of the constituents based upon their data.

OTHER SKILLS

31. Respondents are invited to list below any essential knowledge and/or skills missing from the list that should be included. Please include how important you believe they are to both local superintendents and service agency leaders.

- Having experience as a local superintendent is incredibly valuable in establishing credibility as an ESD superintendent. We never have the conversation surrounding “you don’t understand what our life is like.” ESA leaders need to be able to see how all the parts of the “educational machine” fit and operate together. Few local superintendents have that view.
- Likes his or her job and exhibits that with passion – Very Important for both groups.

Section II

	Knowledge Bases (Questions 7, 9)	
	<u>Local Supt.</u>	<u>ESA CEO</u>
School finance	1.5	2.1*
Organizational Theory	1.8	1.4
Leadership Theory	1.5	1.2
School Law	1.7	2.2*
Human Resource Theory	2.1	2.1
Evaluation and Assessment	1.8	1.6
Change Theory	1.8	1.3*
Strategic Planning	1.9	1.2*
Politics and Policy	1.9	1.5
Motivation Theory	1.8	1.7
Philosophy and Ethics	1.9	1.8
Inter-organizational Partnerships	2.6	1.1*
* Statistically significant		

	Cognitive Abilities (Questions 11, 13)	
	<u>Local Supt.</u>	<u>ESA CEO</u>
• Self-initiating Learner	1.9	1.6
• Rewards indiv. & organizational Learning.	2.0	1.6*
• Interested in many fields of study.	2.7	1.8*
• Sees relation of parts To whole.	1.4	1.1
• Problems – expects, enjoys and learns from them.	1.2	1.2
• Has clear organizational Vision.	1.1	1.1

* Significant difference

Interpersonal Skills (Questions 15, 17)

	<u>Local Supt.</u>	<u>ESA CEO</u>
▶ Friendly/approachable	1.7	1.3
▶ Effective listener	1.7	1.2*
▶ Concerned for needs, goals of others	1.8	1.2*
▶ Requires high standards without employee stress	2.0	1.5
▶ Engenders trust in the organization from all	1.4	1.2

* Statistically significant. All others are close to significance

Intrapersonal Skills (Questions 19, 21)

	<u>Local Supt.</u>	<u>ESA CEO</u>
*Has clear knowledge of own skills and abilities.	1.7	1.5
*Personal values and goals are clear and consistently demonstrated.	1.5	1.4
*Recognition of staff is preferred to personal Recognition.	1.9	1.3
*Team success is more important than individual success.	1.6	1.1

Group Facilitation Skills (Questions 23, 25)

	<u>Local Supt.</u>	<u>ESA CEO</u>
● Manages meetings effectively.	1.9	1.4*
● Moves group to consensus.	2.1	1.5*
● Seeks investment of group in final decisions.	2.1	1.4*

* All three items are significantly different.

Leadership Skills (Questions 27, 29)

	<u>Local Supt.</u>	<u>ESA CEO</u>
● Is entrepreneurial.	2.8	1.1*
● Embraces change as a constant.	2.2	1.7*
● Understands and uses political processes.	1.8	1.4
● Uses data for assessment.	1.7	1.3

* Significantly different

Section III

Interview Responses

1. WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NECESSARY TO MAXIMIZE SUCCESS AS A SERVICE AGENCY DIRECTOR?

- ▶ Ability to conceptualize the big picture (vision) and dream what is possible.
- ▶ Understanding of systems and systems thinking. (2 responses)
- ▶ Ability to work with people. (Like a conductor, you need to know which players to bring together and when.)
- ▶ Ability to network.
- ▶ Focus on delivering what districts say they need, not what the ESA wants to deliver.
- ▶ Ability to offer ideas and suggestions in such a way that the constituents discover them as their ideas. (Seek accomplishment, not credit.)
- ▶ Excellent communication skills (2 responses).
- ▶ Real empathy with the problems facing local superintendents and their staff. (Repeated –at least four- comments in answer to this question that previous experience as a local superintendent is invaluable, almost essential.)
- ▶ Knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment (more important here than in a local district)
- ▶ Flexibility.
- ▶ Political “savvy” and knowledge about how state government works (2 answers).
- ▶ Human Resources principles (how to recruit, assign, train and evaluate staff.)

2. ARE THERE SKILLS THAT ARE NECESSARY TO OPERATE SUCCESSFULLY IN YOUR PARTICULAR ENVIRONMENT?

- ▶ Knowledge of processes required to build a shared vision with districts. (Large ESA)
- ▶ Deploying the many talents in the agency most effectively. (Large ESA)
- ▶ Leading by ideas, not personality. (Large ESA)
- ▶ Entrepreneurial abilities. State financing systems place different requirements for this skill. (Mentioned by several respondents.)
- ▶ Most districts, large or small, need similar services. Only difference is delivery system and scale of needs. (Serves large and small districts.) Challenge is to be fair to all.
- ▶ Ability to build relationships with government agencies and the business community.
- ▶ Balancing roles as a state officer, a compliance officer in the constituency, and an entrepreneur of programs and services.

- ▶ Figuring out how to servicing a rural area with little attention of help from the state.
- ▶ Building consensus among large and small districts. (Diverse service area)
- ▶ Competing with a large number of non-profits that also provide similar services.
- ▶ Adaptability (“Ability to turn on a dime.”) 2 responses

3. WHAT ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DID YOU HAVE TO DEVELOP AFTER TAKING THE POSITION AS AN ESA CEO?

- ▶ Learn about the legislative process and the legislative personalities.
- ▶ Learn how to market to assure financial security of the organization.
- ▶ Manage staff development programs. (Person had a background in the business side of a local district.)
- ▶ Learn to LISTEN and learn to DELEGATE! (No longer the only final solution giver.) Learning to lead without control.
- ▶ Use more of background in curriculum and instruction than in local district leadership position.
- ▶ Think more globally.
- ▶ Focus more on the future while locals were focused on the present.
- ▶ Learn to work with new constituencies (including multiple superintendents)
- ▶ Learn how to get staff to understand that the agency is a cross between a business and an educational agency. Need both a business plan and an educational plan. (2 responses)
- ▶ Two respondents who moved from one state to another had to learn legal and financial issues.
- ▶ Learn to develop a “servant’s heart.”

4. IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, DID YOU HAVE TO ADJUST YOUR BEHAVIOR AS A SERVICE AGENCY DIRECTOR FROM YOUR PREVIOUS POSITION?

- ▶ No change. Job is easier since it’s easier to get a common focus throughout the organization. Both positions require the building of capacity of staff.
- ▶ I had to build confidence among staff and local superintendents that I could do the job. In a local district, staff is more ready to assume that you are competent as a leader.
- ▶ Be less outspoken about solutions. Learn how to build consensus more effectively. Leading shifts from a power source to a shared vision source. Learn how to play “second fiddle.” (3 responses)
- ▶ Delegate more. Don’t feel that all achievements are dependent on you.
- ▶ Learn patience, especially in entrepreneurial work.
- ▶ Build a broader perspective. Focus on what’s good for all, not just one organization.
- ▶ Build entrepreneurial skills. (2 responses)
- ▶ Learn how to generate financial resources, which are largely fixed at a local district.

5. DOES YOUR BOARD VIEW SUCESSION PLANNING AS ONE OF ITS REPNOSIBILITIES? ARE YOU DOING ANYTHING TO ASSIST IN SUCCESSION PLANNING?

- ▶ No. (Five respondents)
 - They feel it’s their job and would view intervention by current superintendent as inappropriate.
 - State commissioner has a major role in selection may be cause of board’s apparent lack of interest.

- Board hasn't discussed the issue, perhaps because of state tradition that only LEA superintendents are selected for these positions.
- ▶ Our board is made up of local superintendents. Deputy will probably get the job. (One CEO is having discussion with the board now. One is unlikely to be asked for opinions.)
- ▶ Our organization always hires every position with the expectation that the person has the knowledge and skills to move up the ladder to the next position. Recently hired a new deputy with succession in mind (2 districts).
- ▶ The board talked about the subject at the urging of the CEO. (2 responses.
- ▶ Virtually all respondents indicated that they had a process for identifying, developing and promoting talent at positions below CEO.

6. IN YOUR VIEW DOES AESA HAVE A ROLE IN HELPING TO DEVELOP THE NEXT GENERATION OF AESA LEADERS? IF SO, WHAT SHOULD THE ORGANIZATION BE DOING?

- ▶ No significant role for AESA.
- ▶ The local CEO can have an important role by bringing subordinate leaders to AESA conferences, sharing literature, etc. (2 responses)
- ▶ We're too small to participate in AESA.
- ▶ I don't know what AESA does for me now. (Seven year service agency director.)
- ▶ Can help boards with candidate search and selection (2 responses).
- ▶ Expand executive in residence program. (5 responses)
- ▶ AESA can do a better job of offering professional development, especially on a regional basis.
- ▶ State level executive training programs are more promising.
- ▶ Expand summer workshop to a week or a week-and-a-half.
- ▶ Expand opportunities for networking.