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Council of Chief State School Officers

PSEL 2015 *and* Promoting Principal Leadership *for the* Success *of* Students with Disabilities

CEEDAR CENTER

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THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

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The CEEDAR Center works with states, universities, and education agencies. The CEEDAR Center is a national technical assistance center dedicated to supporting states in their efforts to develop teachers and leaders who can successfully prepare students with disabilities to achieve college and career-ready standards.

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2015, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) adopted the new Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (PSEL 2015). These standards replace the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards that have shaped the landscape of educational leadership for the last 20 years. PSEL 2015 defines leadership effectiveness in terms of the academic success and well-being of *each* student, drawing attention to students whose needs may require a more intentional focus on leadership development.

Perhaps no students benefit more from an effective principal than those with disabilities. When a principal cultivates a school environment where all students feel safe, supported, and included, students with disabilities and other struggling learners thrive. In years past, principals primarily focused on complying with various program requirements, laws, and regulations related to educating students with disabilities. Today that focus has expanded beyond compliance to one that taps the instructional capacity of principals to ensure that students with disabilities are ready for college and careers in the 21st century.

PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities is intended primarily for chief state school officers and their state education agency (SEA) staff. Its ultimate goal is to provide SEAs with actionable steps to promote practices and cultivate competencies for effective principal leadership where each child has an equitable opportunity to succeed with a particular focus on students with disabilities.

This document is supplemental to the PSEL 2015—it is not intended as a replacement. Specifically, this document provides guidance on how the PSEL 2015 can be applied to support inclusive principal leadership for the success of students with disabilities and highlights key competencies toward that end. In addition to its connection to PSEL 2015, this document closely relates to elements of the upcoming National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Standards and the 2015 Model Principal Supervisor Standards.

Other resources have explored various strategies to improve educator preparation and entry into the profession to serve students with disabilities. This document should be read with these earlier reports in mind, particularly the CCSSO's *Our Responsibility, Our Promise: Transforming Educator Preparation and Entry into the Profession* (2012) and *Promises to Keep: Transforming Educator Preparation to Better Serve a Diverse Range of Learners* (2014). Collectively, these documents serve as a suite of CCSSO resources aimed at promoting and supporting strong and inclusive school leadership.

Sources and Organization of this Document

CCSSO and The Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center convened the Principal Competencies Advisory Group from January through October 2016 to inform this document. The Advisory Group comprised principals; leaders from state and local departments of education; members of the higher education community; and representatives of professional associations serving educational leaders. These individuals guided the conceptualization, organization, and content of this document after providing initial input on the following three interrelated questions:

1. Which aspects of leadership practice in PSEL 2015 are particularly important for improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities?
2. Which key competencies—knowledge and skills—are associated with these aspects of practice?
3. How might SEAs and their stakeholders set policies and launch programs to cultivate these competencies and promote these practices?

CCSSO and CEEDAR shared initial draft guidance at several convenings of SEA leaders. The Advisory Group provided extensive revisions to ensure clarity and maximum impact. An in-depth review and synthesis of literature on principal leadership for serving students with disabilities compliments the working group's recommendations. This document focuses on literature that refers directly to principals rather than special education administrators, special education coordinators, and/or school-level non-administrative special education leaders.

The document is organized into three major sections. The first section summarizes areas of effective educational leadership represented in PSEL 2015 and draws upon the literature to identify those aspects particularly important for improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities. It contains several vignettes that depict real principals' leadership practices generated by the working group. The ten standards of PSEL 2015 are reproduced in Appendix A, and a full description of the standards, their elements, and a framework for their interpretation can be found on the CCSSO website.

The second section identifies key leadership competencies—knowledge and skills—that are integral to best serving students with disabilities and that align with the areas of practice identified in section one. The Advisory Group found certain values, mindsets, and dispositions critical for principals to have in order to best support students with disabilities. These are embedded throughout section one.

The third and final section discusses strategies and provides recommendations that chief state school officers and SEAs can employ to cultivate effective principal leadership that best serves students with disabilities.

SECTION I. PSEL 2015 – PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP IN SUPPORT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In this section, we examine principal leadership for serving students with disabilities and identify which aspects of PSEL 2015 are particularly important for supporting their success based on a review of the literature.

First, the literature is unequivocal about the importance of principal leadership for the success of *each* student including those with disabilities and other struggling learners. The principal is critical to ensuring that schools are places for inclusive and effective student learning and engagement.

Second, effective leadership for students with disabilities is similar to and derivative of effective leadership for *all* students. Principals need not adopt a new set of skills or practices to support students with disabilities. Rather, principals should vary and build upon existing skills and practices to address the unique needs and circumstances of students with disabilities, and provide the learning opportunities and services required for their success.

Third, like much of the literature on general educational leadership, the literature on principal leadership for students with disabilities focuses less on specific practices and more on overarching domains, principles, and qualities of practice. Specific practices are considered individualistic, situational, and context-specific, whereas overarching domains, principles, and qualities of practice can be adjusted to each student's particular and evolving needs.

The following sections expand on these notions.

STANDARD 1. MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

Standard 1 of PSEL 2015 calls on educational leaders to collaboratively develop and commit to a mission, vision, and set of core values that lead to the academic success and personal well-being of *each* student. It also calls on educational leaders to develop a shared understanding of and commitment to this mission, vision, and set of core values throughout the school community.

Many elements of Standard 1 are important to principal leadership as it relates to the success of students with disabilities. Among the most important elements articulated by the literature are working collaboratively with teachers and other stakeholders to identify and articulate a philosophy and vision that all children can learn; ensuring that all students have the right to be educated with their peers in age-appropriate general education classrooms; and recognizing that meeting the educational needs of all students is the responsibility of the school and the school system. The success of students with disabilities and inclusive educational opportunities should be articulated in this mission statement. Effective principals emphasize simultaneously the values of community and diversity, stressing recognition of individual differences while embracing solidarity of purpose. A school's vision should promote caring, cooperation, and collaboration among all who affect students' lives.

Effective principals bring this mission and vision to life by working collaboratively with faculty to develop a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to mission, vision, and values, and to shape practice accordingly. The end goal is for principals to leverage this school-wide mission to create and lead environments where each child has an equal opportunity to succeed, and where the expectation is that students with disabilities will improve and succeed. Principals should also build external support for the mission by bringing parents and other external stakeholders into the visioning process, and consistently engage them as partners in this work. As Standard 1 states, effective principals model and advocate for their schools' mission, vision, and values in every act of leadership.

STANDARD 1.

Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Effective Principals:

- Work collaboratively to develop a mission and vision for their school that supports the success of all students, including students with disabilities.
- Ensure a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to this mission and vision among faculty, and shape practice accordingly.
- Include parents and other external stakeholders in the visioning process and consistently engage them as partners in this work.

STANDARD 2.

Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Effective Principals:

- Adhere to ethical and professional norms and uphold the moral imperative to acknowledge inequities and promote equality.
- Possess an ethical mindset to identify, interpret, and manage the ethical dilemmas in leadership for students with disabilities and address them by embodying the values of justice and care, equality and equity, and community in service of each student.
- Lead with interpersonal and social-emotional competence, and develop productive relationships by communicating effectively, cultivating interpersonal awareness, and building trust.

STANDARD 2. ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL NORMS

Standard 2 focuses on ethics and professional norms of educational leadership and calls on educational leaders to act with integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, and perseverance, among other norms. Principals should model and promote ethical and professional behavior among faculty and staff.

This is especially important when it comes to ensuring the success of students with disabilities. Principals' "moral literacy" and responsibility are crucial in supporting the education of all students, including those with disabilities. The idea of moral purpose is associated with acknowledging inequities and promoting equality.

Also important are principals' value systems and ethical frameworks to identify, interpret, and manage the ethical dilemmas in leadership. These dilemmas can arise from laws, regulations, and external accountability pressures, and are often associated with allocating limited resources. Managing these ethical dilemmas that are likely to emerge requires principals to embody justice and care, equality and equity, and community.

It is also crucial to lead with interpersonal and social-emotional competence; principals should develop productive relationships by communicating effectively, cultivating interpersonal awareness, and building trust.

STANDARD 3. EQUITY AND CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

Standard 3 stipulates that educational leaders must strive for equity and employ culturally-responsive practices that promote the academic success and well-being of each student. Educational leaders should recognize each student's strengths, diversity, and culture, and ensure they have equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success.

The literature emphasizes that principals should hold asset-based rather than deficit-based perspectives of students and be able to recognize the possible relationships between disability, cultural differences, and social inequities. Standard 3 directs educational leaders to develop policies to address student misconduct in an unbiased manner, confronting and altering institutional biases that marginalize certain groups of students, create deficit-based schooling, and espouse low expectations associated with race, class, culture, language, gender, sexual orientation, and/or disability status.

Positive Behavioral Supports for Students with Disabilities

The U.S Department of Education recently released a Dear Colleague Letter which found that students with disabilities are at a greater risk of disciplinary removals that significantly interrupt their learning, often unnecessarily. These risks are elevated further for students of color with disabilities. During the 2013-2014 school year, ten percent of all students with disabilities ages 3 through 21 were subject to a disciplinary removal of ten school days or less, with students of color with disabilities facing higher rates of removal. These findings confirm the need to maintain school environments that are safe, supportive, and conducive to teaching and learning, where educators actively prevent the need for disciplinary removals by effectively responding to behavior problems in other ways.

Effective principals advocate for the success of each student, and identify, expose, and address sources of inequity, including low academic expectations for students with disabilities. Principals should ensure that faculty, staff, students, families, and the community are educated about inequities and foster the belief that most students with disabilities, when given access to effective education as well as appropriate accommodations and support, can achieve grade-level standards. Principals nurture discourse and critical conversations among the school community, giving voice to all stakeholders, promoting collaborative learning, and adopting inclusive decision-making processes. Effective principals also employ fair and transparent policies to address disciplinary issues for students with disabilities.

STANDARD 3.

Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Effective Principals:

- Ensure the academic success and well-being of each student, including students with disabilities, through equitable access to effective teachers, culturally responsive learning opportunities and supports, and necessary resources.
- Hold asset-based rather than deficit-based perspectives of students, and recognize relationships among disability, cultural differences, and social inequities.
- Recognize, confront, and educate others about the institutional forces and historical struggles that have impeded equitable educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

Principals should also recognize, confront, and alter institutional biases that are associated with disability. To achieve this, effective principals educate others about the institutional forces and historical struggles that have impeded equitable educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

Ensuring Equitable Access to Learning Opportunities

A newly appointed elementary school principal in a suburban district planned a professional development program with teachers at the beginning of the year. The school was set to receive a "Language Center" for transitional English language learners and a curriculum for students with autism from the district's central office. While the principal considered these important new resources, his top priority was for both groups of students to participate successfully in general education classrooms. So, rather than focusing this professional development program on implementing these new resources, he chose instead to concentrate on the larger priority: helping his faculty use evidence-based practices, implement schoolwide systems of positive behavioral supports, and be responsive to all students' strengths and needs, including English Learners and students with autism.

STANDARD 4. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

Standard 4 focuses on developing and supporting intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment for the academic success and well-being of each student. This standard calls on principals to align these systems across grade levels with school mission, vision, and values, and external standards. Principals should promote instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student. Principals should also ensure that instruction is intellectually challenging and authentic to student experiences and educational objectives, responsive to student strengths, evidence-based, and differentiated. Finally, principals should promote the effective use of technology for teaching and learning, implement valid student assessment systems, and use both formative and summative assessment data appropriately to monitor student progress and improve instruction.

The literature supports this approach for successfully educating students with disabilities, particularly in this time of high accountability. Effective principals set high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually challenging curriculum and instruction; and provide equitable opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum. They monitor and coordinate curriculum and instruction, and promote alignment within and among grade levels. Effective principal leadership for students with disabilities involves working collaboratively with teachers and helping to increase their capacity for effective instruction (see Standard 6). All learning and disciplinary environments should provide care and promote academic achievement (see Standard 5).

Creating Access to Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction

For years, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) at a large suburban high school were not permitted to take honors or Advanced Placement® (AP) courses. This changed when the new principal opened these classes to all eligible students and provided proper accommodations so that students with disabilities could succeed. This principal also discovered that the College Board supports students with IEPs by providing accommodations not only for AP exams, but also for the SAT. ACT provides similar accommodations for its college entrance exam. This was the beginning of a different approach by which the principal helped parents and students with IEPs learn how to advocate for the accommodations they need to be successful.

Principal leadership for students with disabilities requires particular attention to student monitoring and assessment in instruction. Effective principals promote appropriate, clear, and valid monitoring and assessment systems. These

STANDARD 4.

Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Effective Principals:

- Communicate high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction; and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum using a multi-tiered system of support.
- Work collaboratively with classroom teachers to help them develop their capacity for effective instruction.
- Ensure that evidence-based approaches to instruction and assessment are implemented with integrity and are adapted to local needs.
- Promote appropriate, clear, and valid monitoring and assessment systems where teachers receive meaningful information about how students respond to instruction and where information is relevant to instructional improvement.

systems should provide valid, meaningful information to teachers about how students respond to instruction, relevant to instructional improvement. There are a number of evidence-based frameworks and approaches to instruction and assessment that schools and districts may adopt to benefit students with disabilities, such as a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), Response-to-Intervention (RtI), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI). Whatever frameworks, specific approaches, and strategies schools and districts adopt, principals are responsible for ensuring that they are implemented with fidelity and are adapted to local contexts.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTTS) in Michigan

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) defines MTSS as a framework designed to ensure each and every learner that enters a classroom will have his or her individual needs met through high-quality instruction. In addition, the integration of an MTSS framework within the Michigan Continuous Improvement Process is an essential component for improving academic achievement for all learners. To effectively implement the eleven essential elements of the Michigan MTSS framework, the MDE Office of Education Improvement and Innovation (OEII) partnered with the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA). This grant-based partnership focused on building sustainability around MTSS within the regional service agencies that support LEAs.

STANDARD 5. COMMUNITIES OF STUDENT CARE AND SUPPORT

Standard 5 focuses on leadership to cultivate inclusive learning communities to support each student. It emphasizes leaders' responsibility to build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of each student and creates and sustains an environment in which each student is encouraged to be an active and responsible member of the school community.

Moreover, leaders are called on to develop coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners. Standard 5 recognizes leaders' work to develop adult-to-student, student-to-peer, and school-to-community relationships that support student academic, social, and emotional development; promote student engagement and positive conduct; and infuse the learning environment with the cultures and languages of the school's community.

Consistent with the intent of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), principals can improve conditions for teaching and learning by reducing the following:

- Incidents of bullying and harassment in schools
- Overuse of discipline practices (such as suspensions and expulsions)
- Use of aversive behavioral interventions (such as restraints and seclusion)

Particularly crucial is promoting and supporting inclusive school environments that foster acceptance, valuing, caring, and belonging in adult-student and student-peer relationships. Principals should ensure that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate.

Principals should cultivate a positive social environment for all students at the school level—one that promotes safety, engagement, and supports learning. They should support teachers as they create supportive and inclusive classroom environments.

Providing Students with Additional Time

The principal of a large rural high school created an hour in the middle of the day called "Power Hour" to extend classroom learning for all students. Teachers and students use this time to practice for and take classroom assessments, to review challenging concepts, and to complete academic projects. This extra time enables students with disabilities to take on more rigorous coursework and receive the academic and social support they need to be successful.

STANDARD 5.

Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Effective Principals:

- Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of each student and encourages them to be active, responsible members of their community.
- Ensure that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate.
- Promote inclusive social environments that foster acceptance, care, and sense of value and belonging in adult-student and student-peer relationships.
- Support teachers as they create productive and inclusive environments in their classrooms and throughout the school.

STANDARD 6.

Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Effective Principals:

- Hire and retain highly effective special education and general education teachers with a school-wide vision and a set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Provide multiple sources of high-quality, meaningful professional learning and development opportunities, and participate alongside their staff.
- Identify strategies to motivate their staff and encourage, recognize, and facilitate leadership opportunities for teachers and staff who effectively educate students with disabilities.

STANDARD 6. PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Standard 6 focuses on educational leaders' work to recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and staff. It also focuses on leaders' responsibility to plan for and manage staff turnover and provide opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of new personnel.

Several aspects of this standard are identified as particularly important for principals serving students with disabilities. First, principals should hire and retain highly effective special education and general education teachers with a school-wide vision and set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities. Also important is the principal's responsibility to provide multiple sources of high-quality, meaningful professional learning and development opportunities for special education and general education staff that is linked to strong instructional practices and evaluation. Professional learning should address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students with disabilities; develop skills in collaboration and communication; and support engagement with community agencies and parents of students with disabilities. Principals should participate in professional development alongside teachers.

Additionally, principals evaluate teaching practice—a responsibility that cannot be overlooked within this broad responsibility of building the professional capacity of school staff. Principals must examine the training programs and rubrics they use, and account for any bias that may inadvertently discount best practices for diverse learners or diminish an educator's success when working with students with disabilities.

Creating Opportunities to Learn about Disabilities

A principal at a rural high school supported her special education teachers in leading a workshop for the school's administrative team, general education teachers, and support staff that took them through a series of scenarios to experience life with a learning disability. Participants demonstrated emotional reactions to the workshop, reflecting the challenges that students with disabilities experience every day. The principal learned alongside her faculty, communicating to her the importance of understanding the strengths, challenges, and needs of students with disabilities.

Developing teacher, staff, and parent leadership must be a priority for principals. Effective principals create structures and processes that provide special education and general education teachers with opportunities to take on leadership roles. At the same time, principals should avoid delegating leadership roles in ways that create overload or role conflicts, potentially compromising teachers' work or weakening principals' leadership.

Creating Opportunities to Learn about Disabilities

An elementary school principal and several teachers invited assistive technology experts to demonstrate tools that would give students with disabilities better access to the curriculum. Nurses and physical therapists taught staff members about students' physical needs and accommodations, such as optimal room arrangements for students in wheelchairs. In the process of deepening their understanding and improving classroom practice, general education and special education teachers came to recognize and appreciate each other's expertise and began working more closely together.

Finally, effective principals take time to reflect on their own leadership and how they engage in personal and professional development, particularly concerning the education of students with disabilities.

STANDARD 7.

Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Effective Principals:

- Encourage teachers to set high expectations for and engage in active self-assessment and reflective learning in order to promote mutual accountability.
- Maintain a just and democratic workplace that gives teachers the confidence to exercise responsible discretion and be open to criticism.
- Promote collaborative cultures focused on shared responsibility for achieving the mission and vision of the school, and for the success of students with disabilities.
- Communicate clear expectations for collaboration within and among established teams of teachers without micro-managing, and encourage experimentation among teams.
- Manage tensions and conflict while developing conditions for productivity, including effective professional development, practice, and support to staff.

STANDARD 7. PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF

Standard 7 focuses on the importance of fostering a professional community for teachers and staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being. Educational leaders should establish workplace conditions for teachers and professional staff conducive to effective professional development, practice, and support of student learning. Key factors of success for this standard include establishing a sense of collective responsibility and mutual accountability for the success of each student, and for the school as a whole. To achieve this, principals should encourage teachers to set high expectations for self-assessment and reflective learning.

Effective principals maintain a just and democratic workplace that helps teachers collaboratively analyze the academic and social success of each student, and ensure their students are making progress towards career- and college-ready standards. Principals should be genuinely concerned with their teachers' well-being. They can demonstrate this by being open to teachers' suggestions, and giving acknowledgement, praise, and constructive critique to promote confidence and the safe space to make mistakes.

Effective principals also cultivate teacher learning communities that bring together general education and special education teachers to work for the success of all students, including those with disabilities. Principals should promote a collaborative culture focused on shared responsibility for achieving the mission and vision of the school, including the commitment to improve achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities, and set expectations for continued professional learning.

Creating Time for Teacher Collaboration

The principal of a suburban high school dedicates Tuesday mornings for teachers to collaborate on instructional plans to ensure student success. It is particularly important that special education teachers have this time to discuss the needs of individual students with disabilities among themselves and with general education teachers. The principal makes it her priority to protect this valuable collaboration time.

To achieve these goals, principals can increase teacher capacity to use student data to improve instruction, intervention, and support. They can also develop and support teacher teams that enable dialogue, inquiry, learning, and decision-making. Principals should communicate clear expectations for collaboration within and among teams without micro-managing, and they can encourage experimentation among teams. Principals should also manage tensions and conflict while developing conditions for productivity.

STANDARD 8. MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

Standard 8 focuses on engaging families and communities to promote each student's academic success and well-being. Effective principals maintain a positive presence in the community and engage regularly in two-way communications about the school and its students, which is particularly important for students with disabilities.

Effective principals partner with families to support student learning and understand and employ the community's cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote each student's success. More broadly, effective principals build and sustain productive partnerships with the public and private sectors to promote school improvement and student learning.

Engaging Parents in Student Support

A newly appointed elementary principal in a rural district invited key stakeholders to discuss, adopt, and commit to implement tiered prevention and intervention for students with disabilities. During the course of this work, the principal realized that a connection between schools and families in the district was lacking. With an eye toward families of students with disabilities, the principal proposed a family and community engagement plan. The plan included monthly parent and community forums to establish two-way communication; school visits so parents could observe programs and suggest improvements for how to better serve their children; and outreach to students' homes by school staff to build relationships and increase support.

In particular, principals should create partnerships with families of students with disabilities, including building students' agency and advocacy, encouraging parents to play an active and productive role in developing and reviewing IEPs, including instruction and assessment. Parents and guardians can provide insight about their children's specific strengths and needs that allows teachers to better understand their students, make educationally sound instructional decisions, and interpret and assess student progress. Parents can also act as collaborators and advocates for teachers and for the school. Finally, principals can actively engage community members who speak a second language to overcome possible language barriers.

STANDARD 8.

Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Effective Principals:

- Create partnerships with families of students with disabilities and engage them purposefully and productively in the learning and development of their children in and out of school.
- Engage families to provide insight about their children's specific disabilities that allows teachers to better understand their needs, make educationally sound instructional decisions, and assist in interpreting and assessing student progress.

STANDARD 9.

Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Effective Principals:

- Manage their budgets and develop strong relationships with central offices in order to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources and that students with disabilities have access to appropriate transportation, classrooms, services, accommodations, and extracurricular activities.
- Ensure that external resources are aligned with their schools' goals and support core programs and services for all students.
- Assign roles and responsibilities to optimize staff capacity to address each student's learning needs, especially students with disabilities.
- Develop and effectively manage school structures, operations, and administrative systems that support students with disabilities.

STANDARD 9. OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Standard 9 charges educational leaders with the effective and efficient management of school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being. Educational leaders should seek, acquire, and manage fiscal, physical, human, and other resources to promote student success and be ethical and accountable stewards of these resources by employing responsible and effective budgeting and accounting practices.

To succeed, principals must develop strong working relationships with central offices as well as with the school board, local businesses, community agencies, philanthropic organizations, and other sources of support. Once acquired, effective principals need to ensure that external resources are aligned with their schools' goals and objectives and support their core programs and services for all students.

Effective principals also promote relationships among feeder and connecting schools for enrollment management and curricular and instructional articulation.

Strategic Management of Staff Resources

The principal of a rural high school adopted a full-inclusion model, reconfiguring staff responsibilities so students with disabilities could receive instruction in general education classrooms. Previously, students with disabilities were taught separately by special education teachers. Under the new model, special education teachers are assigned a group of students entering ninth grade to serve in a facilitative support role in general education classrooms. Teachers continue to work with the same group of students until they graduate, at which time they pick up a new group of incoming ninth graders.

Additionally, effective principals assign roles and responsibilities—such as developing schedules, coordinating workloads, and managing administrative responsibilities—in a way that optimizes staff capacity to address each student's learning needs, especially students with disabilities. Beyond instructional time, principals should provide time for teachers and staff to collaborate and plan their work in various team settings (e.g., IEP teams, grade-level teams) and to provide supplemental services and extracurricular support to students.

Finally, effective principal leadership involves the development and effective management of school structures, operations, and administrative systems that support students with disabilities. Principals should establish effective communication systems among teachers, faculty, staff, families, communities, and between the school and central office. Effective principals support the creation of data systems that provide meaningful evidence about student progress for planning, decision-making, and school improvement, and modify policies and standard operating procedures such as student grading policies, scheduling, and disciplinary processes, to support students with disabilities.

STANDARD 10. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Standard 10 charges educational leaders to act as agents of continuous improvement to achieve the school's mission and promote each student's academic success and well-being. Effective principals prepare the school and community for change, establish an imperative for improvement, develop mutual commitment and accountability, and help develop the knowledge, skills, and motivation for all to succeed. Principals should emphasize the "why and how" of change so that all staff are motivated and empowered to own improvement initiatives and share responsibility and accountability for their success.

In this vein, effective principals develop the capacity of their teachers and staff to assess emerging educational trends and research findings that might guide improvement efforts. Staff should also be able to identify, implement, and evaluate evidence-based programs. As discussed in Standards 6 and 7, principals should engage all teachers and staff in professional learning, specifically an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, strategic goal-setting and planning, implementation, and evaluation. More broadly, effective principals adopt a "systems" perspective and promote coherence among various improvement efforts, encouraging teachers and staff to lead and continuously evaluate the effectiveness and coherence of improvement efforts themselves.

Using Data to Improve Instructional Interventions and Monitoring

A high school principal in an urban district worked with teacher leaders to perform an annual end-of-year needs assessment. They reviewed data on different subpopulations of students, including students with disabilities, such as grades, attendance, disciplinary reports, and state test scores. The principal and these teacher leaders concluded that both general education students and students with disabilities needed additional support in English, language arts, and reading. The school's mission, vision, and core values included a strong emphasis on school-wide literacy. Together, the principal and teacher leaders began to investigate new, more intensive instructional interventions for students with disabilities. They also enacted Response to Intervention monitoring and monthly performance benchmark checks for all students.

Finally, principals are responsible for providing fiscal, human, and informational resources needed for successful improvement. Several forms of administrative support relevant to school improvement were discussed earlier under Standard 9. Particularly important is finding time for faculty and staff to engage effectively in change, participate in professional development, and implement new programs and practices. Principals can generate additional time by adapting organizational structures; adjusting roles, responsibilities, and schedules; and revising operating procedures. Principals must also manage the politics of change, especially engaging and challenging dissension, to bring coherence to different improvement initiatives. Principals should ensure that the particular needs of students with disabilities are intentionally addressed within the school's broader plans for improvement.

STANDARD 10.

Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Effective Principals:

- Emphasize the "why" and "how" of improvement and change; staff should be motivated and empowered to own improvement initiatives and share responsibility and accountability for their success.
- Provide learning opportunities for teachers and staff to equip them to participate in strategic processes of improvement, and to take part in implementing effective programs and practices for students with disabilities.
- Address teacher capacity needs around the identification, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based interventions, and ensure that necessary conditions for teaching and learning exist in order to prepare students with disabilities for success in college, career, and life.
- Ensure that the particular needs of students with disabilities are intentionally addressed within the school's broader plans for improvement.

LEADERSHIP KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Effective Principals:

- Develop a general working knowledge and understanding of different types of disability and the individual needs of each student, and collaborate with special education teachers and related service personnel toward that end.
- Familiarize themselves with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal law governing how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to students with disabilities, as well as different types of programs and services for students with disabilities, including but not limited to IEPs.
- Shift from compliance towards a more balanced focus on compliance *and* results in order to ensure positive outcomes for students with disabilities.

SECTION II. PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

The literature identifies principal leadership competencies that are particularly important for serving students with disabilities. As mentioned earlier, competencies refer to the knowledge and skills that drive leadership practice. Much of the information about these competencies is drawn from secondary observations, inferences, and implications based on investigations of or commentaries on principals' leadership practices.

Principal competencies identified in the literature can be organized into two primary domains: (1) leadership knowledge and understanding and (2) leadership skills. Each domain is necessary but insufficient on its own to enable effective leadership practice. Additionally, some competencies may be more difficult to develop than others. Whether it is easy or challenging to develop one of these competencies should not detract from each one's importance. Instead, challenges should prompt principals to consider alternative methods for mastery than they might be used to.

Leadership Knowledge and Understanding

A synthesis of leadership knowledge necessary as a base for initial licensure has been captured in *Promises to Keep*. The literature does not call on principals to be disability experts, but principals should have a general working knowledge and understanding of the disability landscape including various laws and regulations concerning the education of students with disabilities. Principals should form networks of support that include professionals with expertise on specific types of disabilities, particular programs and practices, laws and regulations, and so forth. This domain includes the following sub-domains: (1) content knowledge; (2) procedural knowledge; and (3) knowledge of self.

Promises to Keep: Core Threshold Knowledge Base for Initial Licensure

Principals should be able to:

- Use student performance data to make school-wide decisions about instructional focus and resource allocation
- Analyze data and communicate needs to families and stakeholders across a range of cultures and languages
- Develop systems to monitor fidelity of instructional practices and interventions
- Create a culture of data-sharing
- Advocate for and adhere to the legal requirements for disability determination and education of students with disabilities

Promises to Keep: Core Threshold Knowledge Base for Initial Licensure
(Continued)

- Actively lead and develop systems that encourage collaboration between teachers around student needs and instructional practices
- Understand and support a continuum of instructional support for students
- Facilitate professional development opportunities and communities around a multi-tiered system of support, evidence-based practices for struggling learners, and data-based decision-making
- Create a shared vision and mission around educating students who struggle and students with disabilities
- Create an infrastructure to enable a multi-tiered system of support (e.g., schedules, data-teams, data reviews, fidelity checks)

Content knowledge. Principals should develop general working knowledge and understanding about the nature, characteristics, and indicators of different types of disabilities, and the particular needs of their students by collaborating with special education teachers and related personnel. Principals should recognize how needs vary even within the same disability population at different stages of child development, how disability has historically intersected with other issues of diversity, and how those intersections persist today.

Principals should familiarize themselves with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal law governing how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to students with disabilities, as well as IEPs. In addition, principals should have foundational understanding of effective inclusion, monitoring systems for performance and placement, facilitative services, personnel management processes, and appropriate discipline strategies specific to students with disabilities.

Furthermore, principals should be well-versed in the laws and regulations concerning the education of students with disabilities, including federal- and state-mandated policies, legislation, and court decisions that impact special education. The literature emphasizes the need for principals to understand legal obligations, including timelines and various substantive and procedural requirements to comply with regulations.

Principals should develop technical knowledge of past and present issues concerning the education of students with disabilities, and how these issues might be further contextualized for their unique students and school. This necessitates a contextual understanding of the learning, behavioral, and instructional needs and challenges presented by students' disabilities; staff members' needs and interests; and the needs and priorities of families and communities.

- Understand legal obligations, including timelines and various substantive and procedural requirements, to comply with various regulations regarding students with disabilities.
- Know how to lead instruction, monitor instructional progress including data analysis, and create organizational conditions to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities.
- Possess self-knowledge to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, personal and professional identities, self-interests, assumptions, and biases.

Finally, effective leadership for students with disabilities has expanded in recent years beyond a primary focus on compliance with program requirements, laws, and regulations, to include a more balanced focus on compliance and results, in order to ensure improved achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities. There is now a greater focus on instructional and change leadership, and the other aspects of leadership outlined in this report.

Procedural knowledge. Procedural knowledge refers to the knowledge required to get things done. The literature identifies many areas of procedural knowledge that can be applied to serving students with disabilities.

Principals need to know how to lead instruction, monitor instructional progress, and create organizational conditions to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities. They also should be able to implement and analyze particular programs, processes, and practices to address the unique needs of students with disabilities, such as MTSS, PBIS, pre-referral interventions, and nondiscriminatory evaluation strategies. Similarly, principals need to know how to translate laws and regulations to inform programs and services to effectively serve students with disabilities.

Procedural knowledge also applies to principals' ability to foster learning and development among faculty and staff; develop positive, collaborative relationships with and among faculty, staff, and families; cultivate trust, communication, and information sharing; develop and manage teams; and foster shared leadership and decision making. In addition, principals need procedural knowledge specific to guiding improvement; implementing and sustaining innovative programs and practices; reorganizing and restructuring student services; and supporting advocacy efforts.

Knowledge of self. Finally, it is important for principals to possess self-knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses, personal and professional identities, self-interests, assumptions, and biases. This allows principals to think and act in ways that are genuinely in the best interests of all students, including those with disabilities.

Leadership Skills

A third domain of principal competency concerns leadership skills, or the ability to use knowledge and understanding to effectively engage in practice and accomplish objectives. The literature identifies three areas of skills or sub-domains that are important to principal leadership for students with disabilities: (1) cognitive skills; (2) interpersonal and intrapersonal skills; and (3) organization and management skills.

Cognitive skills. The literature on principal leadership for students with disabilities stresses several types of cognitive skills. Several types of cognitive skills are important for principals to possess to best serve students with disabilities. They must be able to critically analyze, infer, and identify areas of inequity; define problems with student identification and classification; and assess the effectiveness of programs and services for students with disabilities. Similar skills are important for assessing staff capabilities and performance and the demands that impact their ability to effectively serve students with disabilities.

Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Interpersonal skills include communication and relationship building. Principals must be able to communicate effectively with teachers and families about matters concerning students with disabilities and build trust among stakeholders. Principals must be able to establish a shared vision for serving students with disabilities; lead

local deliberations; reach consensus on priorities for individual students and the school as a whole; manage politics effectively; and motivate members of the school community.

Principals should take a similar approach toward engaging staff. Listening, observing, and giving feedback are skills that can encourage teachers to reflect on their own practice, provide the psychological safety for recognizing problems and addressing them, and engender the trust that is necessary to ask for assistance.

Additionally, there are two important areas of *intra*personal skills for successful leadership of students with disabilities. The first is self-knowledge, including self-assessment, self-correction, and self-regulation applied to the evaluation of the principal's own thinking, assumptions, and behaviors. The second area involves philosophical and moral discretion to help guide practice and identify and manage personal, professional, and ethical dilemmas.

Organizational and management skills. Organizational and management skills include planning, coordinating, and multi-tasking; organizing and retrieving information (e.g., data, records); and developing budgets and managing capital. Also important is the ability to manage and navigate the complexities of special education and operate effectively in uncertain or ambiguous situations. Similarly, principals must be able to identify and implement strategies appropriate to the highly varied and constantly changing needs and circumstances of students, and work effectively across the boundaries of home, school, and district.

Principal Leadership Competencies: Summary

1. **Leadership knowledge and understanding**
   a) Content knowledge
   b) Procedural knowledge
   d) Knowledge of self
2. **Leadership skills**
   a) Cognitive skills
   b) Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills
   c) Organizational and management skills

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities:

Effective Principals:

- Critically analyze, infer, and identify areas of inequity; define problems with student identification and classification; and assess the effectiveness of programs and services for students with disabilities.
- Possess necessary interpersonal skills to build trust among stakeholders and communicate effectively with teachers, families, and staff about matters concerning students with disabilities.
- Possess organizational and management skills including planning, coordinating, and multi-tasking; organizing and retrieving information (e.g., data, records, IEPs); and developing budgets and managing capital.
- Possess skills of self-assessment, self-correction, and self-regulation applied to the evaluation of one's own thinking, assumptions, and behaviors as well as philosophical and moral discretion to help manage ethical dilemmas.

SECTION III. WHAT SEAS CAN DO

The purpose of this guidance document is to use the Professional Standards for Education Leaders 2015 to promote effective principal practice for students with disabilities, and to assist SEAs in supporting inclusive principal leadership. State Departments of Education (SEAs) have both an opportunity and a responsibility to promote effective principal leadership for the success of students with disabilities.

There are a variety of levers that SEAs can use to achieve this goal including: (1) setting goals and expectations; (2) improving principal licensure; (3) improving leadership preparation; (4) promoting meaningful professional development and evaluation; and (5) providing targeted supports to districts and schools for developing and promoting principal leadership for students with disabilities.

Setting Goals and Expectations

- **Use policy agendas and a position of leadership to communicate a compelling vision for the role of the principal in school success and improvement along with specific goals and expectations that clearly indicate a commitment to serving all students, including students with disabilities.** These goals and expectations can be captured in other policy actions, such as licensure requirements and/or principal preparation program approval, and should communicate to all stakeholders, including principals and the public, the nature and quality of leadership and improvement expected in schools throughout the state.
- **Adopt and promote PSEL 2015 and highlight those aspects most relevant to leading inclusive schools and supporting students with disabilities.** This action is foundational to using levers like licensure and program approval to implement the above expectations.
- **Create structures that allow principals to sharpen their ability to lead inclusive schools.** SEAs can arrange state and regional convenings so principals can draw upon the wisdom of their peers; encourage principals to participate in professional associations; and bring the higher education community and other stakeholders together to address leader preparation and ongoing support to develop and promote alternative models of principal leadership that can bring these visions to life.

Improving Principal Licensure

- **Define and implement a core knowledge base for all school leaders for initial licensure that includes the knowledge necessary to meet the needs of students with disabilities.** This recommendation is found in the document *Promises to Keep: Transforming Educator Preparation to Better Serve a Diverse Range of Learners.* SEAs may develop, validate, and enforce requirements for initial licensure, such as graduation from an accredited program, professional educational experience, and demonstrated competency through licensure examinations. For the latter, SEAs can require all administrator candidates to demonstrate in licensure exams that they can create conditions for the success of diverse learners.

- **Introduce incentives for the ongoing development of effective principal practices and competencies that support the success of students with disabilities.** Create licensure systems that are competency-based and raise the requirements for licensure renewal across time. Use ESSA, IDEA, and other federal funding streams to encourage effective special educators and others with a special education background to pursue a career as a principal.

Improving Leadership Preparation

- **Establish and/or implement program approval processes and criteria that include the content, coursework, and the length and quality of field experiences necessary for serving students with disabilities.** State program approval processes can also articulate criteria and assessment processes for admission to certification programs (e.g., prior knowledge, experience, particular skills, or dispositions), establish progress monitoring procedures and protocols, and ultimately determine whether programs are preparing candidates to meet licensure requirements. SEAs can require that preparation programs build into their evaluation processes the requirement for a robust body of evidence that shows they are able to prepare principals to effectively support students with disabilities.

- **Provide various incentives to encourage greater innovation in principal preparation across providers with an explicit focus on fostering inclusive school leadership, and encourage new partnerships toward that end.** SEAs can incentivize better preparation for principals serving students with disabilities with financial inducements, grant programs, and networking or joint learning opportunities across providers. SEAs can also use various competition strategies to promote improvement including opening the preparation program market to non-traditional providers (e.g., private education organizations, school districts, professional associations) that can meet the same program approval criteria. SEAs can also partner with school districts, professional associations, universities, and other organizations to create pipelines into the principalship that recruit teachers and other school personnel (e.g., counselors) who have demonstrated they can effectively serve students with disabilities.

- **Adopt and promote the Professional Standards for Education Leaders (PSEL) 2015 to influence initial principal preparation and adopt standards for school leader preparation programs.** SEAs can adopt and promote the PSEL 2015 and use this guidance document to highlight those aspects of the standards most relevant for inclusive school leadership and supporting students with disabilities. This can in turn inform preparation program offerings, especially when these standards also serve as a foundation for certification and licensure requirements of program graduates. In creating accreditation processes and criteria, SEAs may also adopt standards for school leader preparation programs—notable options include the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Standards of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) 2016. SEAs may also require that leadership preparation programs be nationally accredited through independent bodies such as the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

- **Use program review, evaluation, and data collection processes to hold leadership preparation programs accountable for the effectiveness of their graduates, including their ability to lead inclusive schools.** These processes will also provide feedback that can facilitate the continuous improvement of preparation programs. If programs fall short with regard to principal leadership for students with disabilities, SEAs can examine that feedback as part of the program evaluation process and work with the preparation provider to take appropriate action.

Promoting Meaningful Professional Development and Evaluation

- **Provide and promote effective systems of in-service support, evaluation, and professional development for principals at the state and local levels, focused on leadership for students with disabilities.** These systems should allow for continuous improvement and collaboration around the skills and knowledge that matter most for successful leadership of students with disabilities, and be grounded in best practices for adult learning. Such systems might include mentoring and coaching; personal development plans for principals with a focus on educating students with disabilities; and/or the institution of evaluation systems that include performance criteria relevant to serving students with disabilities. SEAs can provide resources to support the implementation of both state- and locally-developed principal professional development and evaluation programs.

- **Involve external organizations to supplement principal professional development opportunities beyond the state and local levels, particularly those that have strong, evidence-based results.** SEAs can also support a consortium of organizations to provide technical assistance to LEAs for principal professional development and evaluation. Both SEAs and regional service centers can develop and support networks of LEAs, colleges and universities, professional associations, and non-profit organizations, among other entities, to provide learning and development opportunities and marshal resources well beyond those that could be afforded by SEAs and LEAs alone.

- **Consider developing and using micro-credentials to ensure principals pursue competency-based professional development opportunities that hone their skills in supporting students with disabilities.** States can determine how to use micro-credentials as part of re-licensure requirements for practicing principals or as part of alternative preparation programs for fast-tracked, promising candidates to ensure they hone their skills for creating inclusive schools.

Providing Targeted Supports to Districts and Schools

- **Provide direct services and resources to districts and schools around effective, inclusive school leadership and devote resources to increase local capacity to do the same.** Direct services might include financial resources and information, or research clearinghouses to proliferate information about leadership practices for students with disabilities. SEAs can sponsor research and documentation as a direct source of information to guide local initiatives concerned with the preparation, development, and support of principal leadership. In addition, SEAs should provide data and direct technical assistance to schools and school districts on matters of design and implementation for specific leadership development initiatives.

- **Lower or remove barriers that prevent principals from effectively serving students with disabilities.** SEAs should assess the programmatic and regulatory demands they make on districts and schools, encourage adherence to the necessary demands, and moderate or eliminate those that are unnecessary or overly complex. SEAs should examine state-level programs and policies that may shift or impose hidden costs that encroach on LEA funds. These hidden costs can create fiscal stress, necessitate trade-offs with other local initiatives, and compromise the basic functionality of the preparation program. Similar cost considerations should apply to state programs and policies involving higher education, and other entities that support principals.

- **Promote coherence among various programs and policies, and establish stability and predictability in the resources provided and demands made on LEAs.** SEAs can organize themselves more systematically to reduce the redundant and often fragmented demands they make on LEAs. Strategies include providing adequate time for LEAs to respond effectively to state-level regulations and policies; resisting the rapid introduction of too many new initiatives; and securing longer-term stability in financial and other forms of support. While this is difficult to achieve in an ever-changing political and economic environment, these strategies will help SEAs cultivate stability in their relationships with LEAs.

What SEAs Can Do: Summary

1. Set goals and expectations for principal leadership as it relates to the education of students with disabilities.
   a) Adopt and extend professional practice standards.
   b) Develop philosophy, visions, and principles of effective practice.
   c) Develop models of principal leadership to bring visions to life.
2. Improve principal licensure.
   a) Develop programs of initial certification and licensure.
   b) Develop requirements for renewal.
3. Improve leader preparation.
   a) Develop programs for accreditation and approval.
   b) Adopt standards for preparation programs.
   c) Provide incentives and resources for program improvement and innovation.
4. Promote meaningful principal professional development and evaluation.
   a) Develop state-level programs.
   b) Encourage and support development of local programs.
   c) Provide support for implementation of state and local programs.
5. Support schools and school districts to develop and promote principal leadership.
   a) Provide direct services and resources.
   b) Develop local capacity.
   c) Reduce barriers to local initiatives and implementation.

CONCLUSION

When principals lead schools where students feel safe, supported, and included, all students can learn and thrive—particularly those with disabilities. SEAs have both an opportunity and a responsibility to support principal preparation and development to best serve students with disabilities, and support their ongoing academic success and well-being in school. This guidance document concludes with three additional recommendations for how SEAs can work effectively across the five areas of action discussed above.

1.Think and act systemically. Developing and supporting effective leadership to improve outcomes for students with disabilities is a complex, contextual, and dynamic enterprise that defies one-time, one-size-fits-all solutions. The most effective approaches to develop and promote effective inclusive principal leadership apply different levers and multiple strategies in a mutually influential manner. It is these strategic combinations of incentives, regulations, and opportunities for capacity development that facilitate the largest benefit for students with disabilities. This means that SEAs need to think and act systemically—inclusive principal leadership development must be a career-long enterprise, not something that can be completed in initial preparation programs.

SEAs will also need to think and act situationally. They need to employ the most effective strategies for a particular setting to ensure equitable opportunities for every child, and facilitate coherence among strategies relative to their objective and context. As circumstances change and as objectives are achieved, SEAs will need to adapt their strategies accordingly.

SEAs should promote coherence among various programs and policies, including those that support leaders and students with disabilities (i.e., through state plans under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), IDEA, and State Systemic Improvement Plans). Thinking and acting systemically and flexibly applies not only to policies and programs but also to the ways in which SEAs are organized and operated. For example, it would be very difficult for SEAs to develop and manage effective strategies without being organized systemically. SEAs should collaborate across departments and programs to ensure effective inclusive leadership development for district and school leaders.

2. Adopt robust "theories-of-action." Support for effective principal leadership for students with disabilities comes from robust "theories-of-action" that specify clear goals and objectives, strategies to achieve them, and risks. The most effective theories-of-action are grounded in evidence, research, and the wisdom of practice. LEAs, professional associations, higher education institutions, and other entities that develop and support principal leadership should share in the responsibility for such planning.

The discipline imposed by robust theories-of-action will help SEAs design and adopt effective programs and policies. Theories-of-action can help SEAs understand which policy levers are most conducive to achieving certain objectives in certain contexts, and test the efficacy of those proposed policies and programs.

SEAs must accompany their theories-of-action with strategies for implementation and continuous monitoring and improvement. When theories-of-action show flaws, or when outcomes fail to accrue, SEAs will need to examine both their theories-of-action and their theories-*in*-action and adjust accordingly.

3. **Continuously improve.** To achieve the goals set out by their theories-of-action, SEAs must adopt processes and organizational supports for continuous improvement. This recommendation applies many of the elements of Standard 10 of PSEL 2015 to educational leadership at the state level. Programs and policies, as well as SEAs' own organization and operational strategy, should undergo ongoing inquiry and scrutiny. SEAs can establish cycles of inquiry and improvement to change and adapt as necessary. SEAs may also partner with school districts to facilitate networks of learning and improvement.

To continuously improve, SEAs should examine their internal capacities for data management and analysis to support their intended outcomes for students with disabilities. SEAs should also develop organizational structures, cultures, and policies conducive to inquiry and improvement.

SEAs recognize their responsibility to promote effective inclusive leadership practices that support the success of students with disabilities. This document provides guidance on concrete strategies SEAs can deploy to accomplish this goal.

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APPENDIX A

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) 2015

Standard 1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of *each* student.

Standard 2. Ethics and Professional Norms

Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote **each** student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 5. Community of Care and support for Students

Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of *each* student.

Standard 6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel

Effective educational leaders develop and professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community

Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 9. Operations and Management

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 10. School Improvement

Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

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APPENDIX B

CEEDAR Principal Competencies Advisory Group

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