

**Leadership for a Learning Support System in
State Departments of Education:
Example Job Descriptions**

We receive frequent requests for examples of job descriptions for leadership of Learning Supports at state departments of education. This information resource provides several different examples of what currently is the case. The examples come from (1) the Iowa Department of Education (Learning Supports Consultant job description), (2) Hawaii Department of Education (Director Student Support Branch; Comprehensive Student Support Educational Specialist), and (3) California Department of Education (Director Learning Support and Partnerships Division).

At the same time, we take this opportunity also to reemphasize that current approaches to learning supports do not represent a coherent, cohesive, comprehensive approach that enables development of a *comprehensive learning supports system*. Developing such an approach represents a fundamental transformation with respect to student and learning supports. And this calls for redefining leadership roles and functions. With this in mind, we also include here a *prototype job description* for a department leader who would have the capabilities and would be held accountable for leading the way in transforming student and learning supports into a comprehensive system for schools throughout the state. We also include a prototype for the type of operational infrastructure which would be an appropriate context for this position.

This *Information Resource* was prepared by the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS at UCLA

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Example of Job Description from Iowa Department of Education

Learning Supports Consultant

(Learning Supports is 40% of role with another 40% devoted to Safe and Drug Free Schools and 10% general Department, Division, Bureau duties)

Responsibilities

Provide leadership to and coordination of statewide development of quality, comprehensive systems of learning supports for students K-12, including but not limited to:

- Coordinating efforts with other state and regional government and community agencies
- Providing direct technical assistance on learning supports to area education agencies and local schools districts
- Organizing and delivering staff development and other forms of technical assistance opportunities to appropriate educational personnel, community agency and service individual and other stakeholders
- Identifying or developing evidence-based resources for stakeholders to use in the development, organization and delivery of quality systems of learning supports

Qualifications

Master's Degree and five years of successful teaching and/or administrative experience in PK-12 and/or post secondary educational institution and possession of a valid Teaching Certificate

Or

Seven years of full-time post graduate experience in any one or a combination of the following areas: professional training, teaching or counseling experience in an educational setting; professional administrative experience in an educational setting; professional personnel administration including such areas as job analysis, performance appraisal system, selection devices or labor relations.

Additional useful experiences

- Leading and coordinating the work of broad-based stakeholder groups that include parents and community
- Federal grant writing and managing
- Data-driven decision making
- Facilitating group consensus and problem-solving
- Connecting work across multiple systems — education, mental health, youth development, health, human services, workforce development, juvenile justice
- Coordinating school-based youth services

Example of Job Descriptions from Hawaii Department of Education

I. Educational Director, Student Support Branch

(in the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support)

Duties Summary

Under the supervision of the Assistant Superintendent, Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support (OCISS), the Director of the Student Support Branch provides leadership, direction and technical guidance to all programs within the Branch which includes Extended Learning Opportunities and Student Support, Comprehensive Student Support Services, Special Programs Management and Athletics sections.

Duties, Responsibilities, Percentage of Time Spent

1. Provides leadership for the effective coordination in the development, implementation, and assessment of support services provided by the Student Support Branch. Directs the branch in establishing an array of services, including extended learning opportunities, monitoring of state and federal mandates, and professional development for student support and learning. (25%)
2. Provides leadership and gives direction to the branch when working within OCISS, with other state offices and complex area staff as student achievement is addressed through innovative supplemental educational programs and services. Provides technical assistance and consultation services to schools, districts, complex areas and complexes (20%)
3. Provides leadership oversight through staff utilization that includes, roles and responsibilities, selection and evaluation of personnel based on accomplishment of objectives. Develops branch priorities of program needs through staff involvement. Reviews, critiques and ensures staff accountability for all reports and documents prepared . (10%)
4. Directs and reviews research projects undertaken in the branch, and cooperates in the coordination with research projects of other institutions and agencies. Keeps abreast of new programs, national best practices, research studies that support the direction taken by OCISS, the branch, complex areas and schools. (10%)
5. Provides leadership to maximize collaboration among personnel within the Student Support Branch and to cross- collaborate with the Curriculum and Instruction Branch to develop partnerships in support of increasing student achievement. (10%)
6. Reviews fiscal management of sections and assumes overall management of branch fiscal functions. (5%)
7. Conducts ongoing assessment of programs through formative, summative and other system-wide data analysis in providing directions for programs modifications. (5%)
8. Represents the Department in community groups and organizations in matters pertaining to curriculum. Reviews and/or prepares testimonies to the Legislature, reports and presentation to the Board of Education and/or other assigned groups/individuals. (5%)
9. Serves as the Department's liaison on task forces and other committees, attends meetings as requested/required; represents the Assistant Superintendent at functions as requested. (5%)
10. Performs other related duties as assigned. (5%)

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Supervision Received and Exercised

Under the general supervision of the Assistant Superintendent, Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support the Director exercises general supervision over the Student Support Branch which consists of four sections (Extended Learning Opportunities and Student Support, Comprehensive Student Support Services, Special Programs Management, Athletics) of educational specialists, state office resource teachers, and classified personnel....

Recommended Qualifications

Training and Experience: Graduation from an accredited college or university with a master's degree in education with specialization in one or more subject fields appropriate to the areas of assignment and nine (9) years of responsible professional work experience in education of which four (4) years shall have been in teaching and five (5) years in curriculum or program planning, as appropriate, of which two (2) years shall have involved the supervision of professional personnel; or any equivalent combination of training and experience which provides the following knowledge, abilities and skills.

Knowledge of: Foundations of curriculum and instruction; instructional media and computers; foundations of sound instructional practices; assessment and evaluation; principles of learning and individual differences; curriculum design and development; educational statistics; purposes, methods, subject matter and materials pertinent to the areas of assignment; laws, rules, regulations and administrative procedures pertinent to the areas of assignment; research developments, trends and current issues or problems pertinent to the areas of assignment; principles and practices of supervision and management; and principles and practices of educational leadership and school level administration.

Ability to: Manage department-wide support services programs that supports student learning; communicate effectively with others both orally and in writing; guide reasoned problem-solving and sound decision-making; effectively with state, departmental and other officials to accomplish program goals; maintain awareness of developments in the comprehensive support program areas; and facilitate improvements by managing transitions.

II. Education Specialist III, Student Support Branch, Comprehensive Student Support Services Section (in the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support)

Duties Summary

Under the general direction of the Educational Director, Position No. 60790, Student Support Branch, Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support, the Educational Specialist III provides leadership and direction in the planning, development, and evaluation of programs and personnel in the Comprehensive Student Support Services Section and the overall implementation of the Comprehensive Student Support System within the Department. The Educational Specialist III also prepares budget documents, provides consultative services, meets with program-related organizations and performs other duties as required or directed.

Duties, Responsibilities, Percentage of Time Spent

1. Provides leadership, general administrative and technical direction over personnel, programs, and services within the Comprehensive Student Support Services Section in addressing the implementation of Comprehensive Student Support System throughout the Department. (35%)

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2. Collaborates with others in the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support and especially the Special Education Section in the Curriculum and Instruction Branch to ensure that an array of prevention, early intervention, and tertiary student support services are available to all students within the schools. (15%)
3. Serves as the Department's external point of contact on matters relating to Comprehensive Student Support System. (15%)
4. Assist in the preparation and presentation of information, reports and testimony for the Comprehensive Student Support Services Section areas to various stakeholders such as Legislature, Board of Education, Department leadership, schools, parents and families, and public and private agencies. (10%)
5. Represents the Department on various public and private organizations and agencies related to the areas of student support services and concerns. (10%)
6. Serves as an active member of DOE cross functional teams related to improving instruction at the school level, such as AYP Response Team that conducts comprehensive needs assessment of a school, a monitoring team that documents the impact of federal program on instructional improvement at a school, or other assigned task, such as developing an implementation plan for new legislatively funded programs (10%)
7. Performs other related duties as assigned. (5%)

Supervision Received and Exercised

Performs duties and responsibilities under the general supervision of the Educational Director, of the Student Support Branch (Position No. 60790), Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support.

Exercises general supervision over of the following personnel: Secretary II, Educational Specialist II, Primary/Prevention Intervention, Educational Specialist II, Positive Behavior Support, Educational Specialist II, Section 504/Home-Hospital Instruction, Educational Specialist II, School-Based Behavioral Health , Educational Specialist II, Hearing Impairment/Visual Impairment ,

Recommended Qualifications

Knowledge: Current knowledge of American education, educational leadership and administration, foundations of curriculum and instruction, assessment and evaluation, student support services and programs; educational statistics; purposes, methods, subject matter and, materials pertinent to the areas of assignment; principles of research; standards-based education; and mandates such as laws, policies, rules, and procedures pertinent to areas of assignment; and trends and issues related to areas of assignments.

Skills/Abilities: Skill and ability to provide leadership, guidance, supervision, and direction in the areas of assignment; develop, analyze, and evaluate plans, programs, and procedures; relate, collaborate and communicate effectively with others orally and in writing; operate equipment such as computers, multimedia equipment, business machines, and other technologies; facilitate and engage others in problem-solving and decision-making processes; effectively work with stakeholders within the Department and the community; manage

Example of Job Descriptions from California Department of Education

Director of the Learning Support and Partnerships Division

Under the direction of the Deputy Superintendent of the Curriculum and Instruction Branch, the incumbent serves as the principal policy and program advisor and manager of the Learning Support and Partnerships Division.

Duties, Responsibilities, Percentage of Time Spent

- (1) Oversees the development and management of the California Department of Education's (CDE) role in programs, initiatives, and special projects of high priority to the Governor, State Board of Education, Superintendent, and other agency secretaries. Examples include: (1) Integration of the Learning Support into the California education system that enables each student to achieve personal and academic success; (2) Implementation of No Child Left Behind State components as well as the following programs: Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Program, (3) Development, implementation and evaluation of the State After School Education and Safety program, the federal 21st CCLC Program, and the regional infrastructure of the California After School partnership; (4) Development of coordinated school health programs, including the provision of guidance on the appropriate administration of medication to students; (5) Development and implementation of effective student support programs, such as the foster youth services, counseling and mental health services, attendance improvement, bullying prevention, dropout prevention, classroom management, career counseling, and suicide prevention; (6) Development, implementation, and evaluation of K-12 service-learning under the 1993 national and Community Services Trust Act; (7) planning and implementation of educational options and alternative education programs, (8) Infusion of youth development into existing education systems and (9) Implementation of the Healthy Start Initiative, including the design of a system for accessing federal medical reimbursements and other sustainability strategies by local education agencies (LEAs) and their partners, (10) supporting the Superintendent's initiative to work collaboratively to close the academic achievement gap. (40%)
- (2) Provides policy and program leadership, supervision, and direction to six administrators responsible for approximately 100 permanent staff members in the Learning Support and Partnerships Division Office, the counseling and Student Support Office, the Safe and healthy Kids Program Office, the School Health Connections and Healthy Start Office, the After Schools Programs, and the Educational Options Office, in carrying out the Superintendent's role in interagency, multidisciplinary efforts regarding learning support initiatives. Leadership activities include conceptualizing, designing, implementing, and evaluating policies and programs regarding after school program initiatives, counseling and related student support services, service-learning, coordinated school health and related drug, alcohol, and tobacco programs, safe schools, comprehensive integrated services, youth development, and related services at California public schools. (30%)
- (3) In collaboration with other appropriate state and local agencies and department, works with the Deputy Superintendent to develop and coordinate programs of statewide, regional, and local assistance to school districts, county offices of education, and city and county governments to enable them to implement integrated learning support systems. These activities include assisting in designing regional consortia of county offices and school districts to implement healthy Start, the After School Education and Safety Program, the 21 CCLC Program, the Service-Learning Initiative, and in supporting county offices to coordinate the implementation of the federal Safe and Drug-Free School and Communities program and the State Tobacco-use Prevention Program. (10%)
- (4) Oversees the coordination of internal Department learning support and partnerships activities through representatives from each of CDE's key branches and divisions; e.g. Workgroup for Interagency School Health, compliance monitoring, and audits. (5%)
- (5) Represents the Superintendent on state organizations as appropriate. (5%)
- (6) Provides liaison to educational and external communities on learning support issues, keeping them abreast of state efforts, including them as appropriate in planning, implementation, and evaluation, and taking leadership in seeking foundation and corporate support where possible. (5%)
- (7) Proposes necessary changes in state and federal law and regulations, and monitors all children and youth's learning support and partnerships legislation and regulations to assure continued coordination of programmatic efforts and improved student achievement. 5%

Prototype Job Description

Assistant Superintendent for the Comprehensive Learning Supports

Because the component for development of a comprehensive learning supports system represents such a fundamental transformation with respect to student and learning supports, the following job description has been developed as a prototype.

The position calls for a person capable of leading the department's efforts to fully integrate in schools throughout the state a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. This transformative work requires knowledge and skills related to formulating relevant policy, weaving together fragmented intervention approaches and resources, reworking operational infrastructure, and strategically planning and facilitating cost-effective and sustainable systemic changes at all education agency levels.

Functions

- Provides leadership and is accountable for staff and work groups who map, then analyze needs, resources, and disaggregated data, and finally make recommendations to enhance cohesion and coherence throughout the department with respect to developing a comprehensive learning support system that can be implemented and sustained by schools. The analysis and recommendations are to focus on weaving together all student and learning supports into a comprehensive system and fully integrating the system with all department school transformation and improvement activity. Specific recommendations also are to focus on eliminating redundancy, generating economies of scale, redeploying resources, setting priorities for filling gaps, redefining roles, functions, and accountabilities, and other ways to enhance cost-effective results.
- Provides leadership and is accountable for development of the department's
 - >policy for a comprehensive learning support system to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.
 - >prototype for a comprehensive and cohesive school-based learning supports system
 - >prototype for an integrated operational infrastructure at regional, district, and school levels and for school-community collaboration for developing a comprehensive and cohesive school-based learning supports system
- Provides leadership and is accountable for development and integration of the department's strategic and action plans for
 - >implementing, sustaining, and going to scale with a comprehensive learning supports system
 - >working with regional units and districts and other state agencies to establish a comprehensive learning supports system in schools
 - >capacity building related to establishing a comprehensive learning supports system at all levels
 - >formative evaluation, information gathering and management, and accountability for establishing a comprehensive learning supports system at all levels
- Provides leadership and is accountable for implementation and evaluation of all of the department's plans for establishing a comprehensive learning supports system in schools
- As part of carrying out all functions, is a convener, catalyst, advocate, and social marketer for establishing a comprehensive learning supports system

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Examples of Specific Duties and Responsibilities

- Represents establishment of a comprehensive learning supports system at decision making, administrative, and planning tables (e.g., to address policy development and implementation, budget allocations, systemic changes and daily operations, infrastructure development, capacity building, communication and information management processes, evaluation and accountability)
- Ensures effective communication, coordination, and integration among those involved directly with establishing a comprehensive learning supports system and with all involved with school transformation and improvement
- Provides support, guidance, visibility, public relations, and advocacy for maintaining a high level of interest, support, and involvement with respect to establishing a comprehensive learning supports system
- Reviews, guides, and monitors progress and long range plans, anticipates and identifies problems and provides rapid problem solving, ensures capacity building, and acts as a persistent catalyst for ongoing establishment of a comprehensive learning supports system

Knowledge and Abilities

Knowledge of federal and state education policy, current legislation, and funding streams

Understanding of best practices related to developing and implementing a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students

Understanding of best practices related to school transformation and improvement

Understanding of best practices for accomplishing large scale, sustainable systemic changes

History of working collaboratively with professionals and other stakeholder groups

History of building consensus among professionals and other stakeholder groups

Solid oral and written communication and analytical skills

Top level leadership, judgment, and problem-solving skills

Ability to work effectively across units in the department and across agencies

Ability to multi-task and produce effective results

Ability to work effectively under pressure

Evidenced concern for and commitment to improving schools for all young people, particularly from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and those with disabilities

Education and Experience

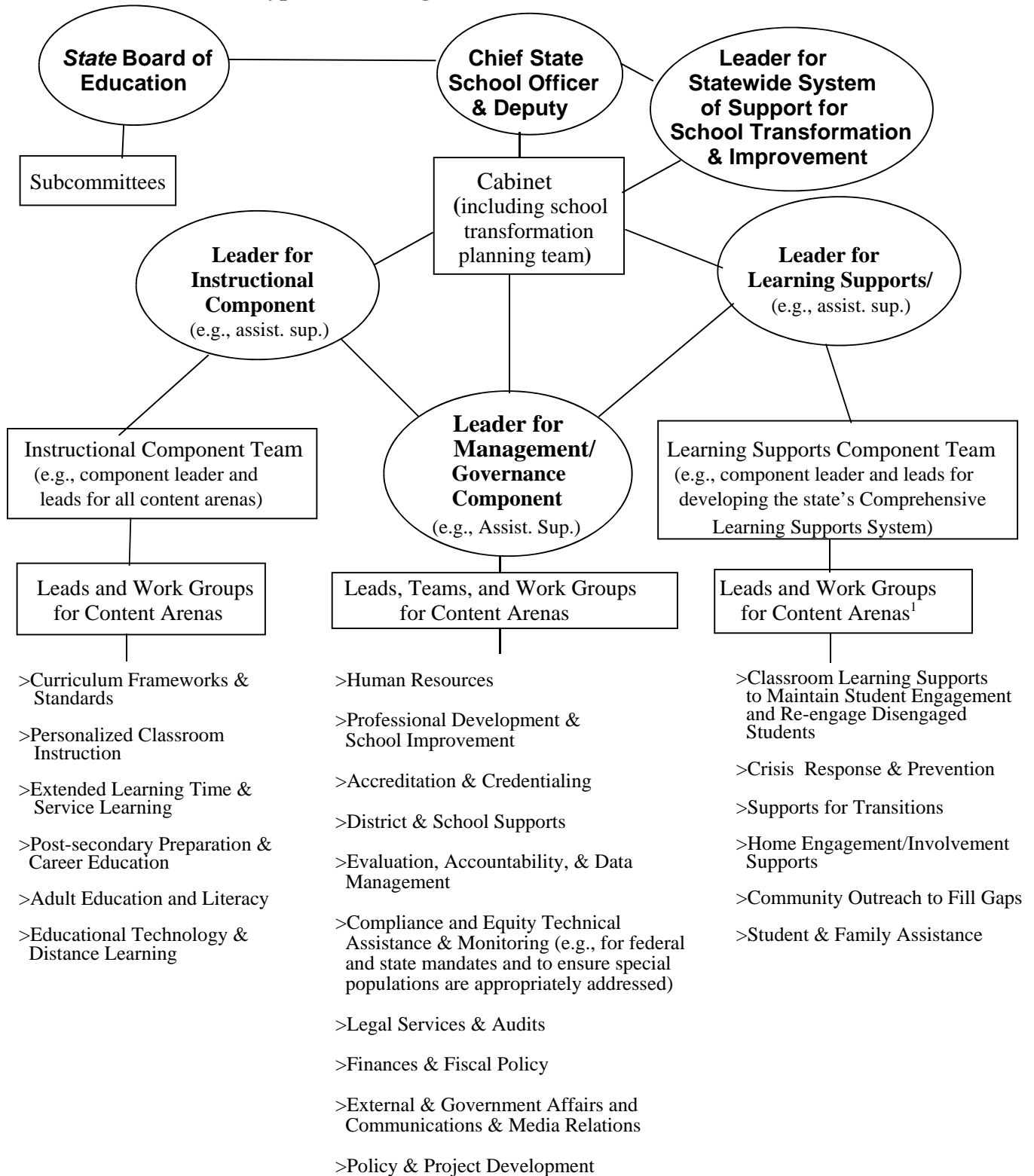
Minimum five years experience related to high level organizational leadership (state education agency experience preferred)

Master's degree in education, public policy, or psychology (or equivalent experience) preferred

Minimum of 3 years work experience related to providing student/learning supports in public schools preferred

Minimum of 3 years teaching in public schools preferred

Prototype for an Integrated Infrastructure at the SEA Level



1. All resources related to addressing barriers to learning and teaching (e.g., student support personnel, compensatory and special education staff and interventions, special initiatives, grants, and programs) are integrated into a refined set of major content arenas such as those indicated here. Leads are assigned for each arena and work groups are established to guide development of each of the six content arenas into a comprehensive system of learning supports. Such development is done along an intervention continuum conceived as encompassing systems for promoting development and preventing problems, responding as early after onset as feasible, and providing treatment for students with chronic, severe, and pervasive problems.