LEADERSHIP

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EdFuel's *Blueprint for Success* initiative aims to address a looming talent deficit in the education field, developing many more highly effective K-12 system leaders capable of managing complex and dynamic organizations. To support the field in strengthening talent pipelines, one element of this initiative is the development of competency maps that articulate the essential competencies (specific skills, knowledge, and relationships) for non-instructional roles in school district/network central offices. These maps will provide the foundation for an aligned, proactive approach to developing non-instructional school district/network leaders.

WHAT THIS MAP IS:

The *Blueprint for Success Leadership Competency Map* shows the essential cross-functional leadership skills necessary to work in school districts/networks. This document, developed in collaboration with leaders of school districts, charter school networks and field experts, represents the key abilities necessary for working in any role, within any function, in school districts/networks.

In addition to this competency map, EdFuel's *Blueprint for Success* includes seven functional competency maps (academics and instruction, advocacy, development, information and data, finance, operations, and talent) to show the knowledge, skills, and relationships necessary to manage school districts/networks. The *Leadership Map* should be viewed alongside each functional map to cover the full set of leadership and function-specific skills required.
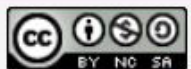
ORGANIZATION OF THIS MAP:

The Leadership Map is specifically designed to highlight the critical skills needed across all school district/network roles. Competencies fall within these categories:

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	EFFECTIVE TEAMING	SELF-MANAGEMENT
Leading effective organizations to set and deliver goals, make sound decisions, and navigate through complexity to achieve breakthrough results	Leading highly collaborative, talent-focused teams	Leading one's own personal growth through self-awareness and self-development.

This map is built upon certain foundational principles essential for success across all levels throughout the organization. These are:

- *Belief that all students can succeed*
- *Commitment to achieving breakthrough student results*
- *Commitment to uphold the organization's ethics and core values*
- *Commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion*

Each competency is described at four organizational levels. While organizational structures and titles will vary, the table below illustrates the levels:

COMPETENCY MAP LEVEL	SAMPLE JOB TITLES	DESCRIPTION
Individual Contributor	Associate, Analyst	• Executes tasks within specific, individual workstreams
Manager	Manager, Coordinator	• Leads a team within a department • Oversees projects and daily activities • Typically monitors a project or department budget in addition to team management responsibilities
Senior Manager/Director	Senior Manager/Director	• Leads a department or multiple teams across the department • Sets strategic direction for the department and oversees department budgets • Coordinates with other departments to incorporate organizational priorities into planning
Executive/Officer	Executive/Officer	• Functional leader of the organization and core member of organization's leadership team • Leads multiple departments or teams • Sets strategy and vision for organization, ensures that organization achieves short and long-term goals, and allocates resources effectively • Ensures alignment across the organization to achieve mission and drive student and school success

DESIGN PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDED DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPETENCY MAPS:

- **ACTION-ORIENTED:** Competencies are described in action-oriented language to encourage the design of developmental experiences and training approaches that will support individuals' growth in these areas.
- **ADDITIVE:** To avoid repetition, the competency levels build on one another, meaning that there is an expectation that senior level skills are also inclusive of those that precede it.
- **ANCHORED IN THE ENVISIONED FUTURE STATE:** As articulated in EdFuel's *Map the Gap* report, the education field is changing and dynamic; the competencies reflect what will be required of leaders over the next decade to achieve greater impact in this constantly-evolving field.
- **BEST IN CLASS:** Competency descriptions incorporate leading examples from best in class organizations in education reform and the private sector and reflect key findings from *Map the Gap.*
- **CUSTOMIZABLE TO DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS' VALUES:** The competencies are intended to be adaptable to each organization based on its own culture and values; therefore, the competency maps will not explicitly state a set of required values or elements of an organizational culture.
- **MODULAR:** The functions and levels within competency maps are not the same as job titles; organizations of various sizes and stages of maturity can group various competencies according to their unique organizational structures and roles.

POTENTIAL AUDIENCES AND USES OF THE COMPETENCY MAP:

The *Leadership Competency Map* is designed to equip school districts/networks and the field level organizations that support them to build and strengthen leadership pipelines. The following is a non-comprehensive set of audiences and potential applications of this map:

- An individual—either within or outside the education field—can reference the map to understand the nature of the work and competencies required for education roles, and as a guide to potential opportunities to better understand and develop such skills
- Departmental leaders could use the map as the basis for a competency-based evaluation system for their staff and for an aligned set of development opportunities to bolster the department's performance
- Districts and charter school network leaders can reference the map to understand potential capacity or capability gaps within their organizations
- Education nonprofit organizations—especially those focused on talent development—can use the maps to tailor their programming and professional development to the specific needs of individual functions, and to the specific needs of individuals as they grow within functions

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STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

- Strategic thinking
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Change leadership
- Project management
- K-12 systems thinking
- Business and operations expertise

EFFECTIVE TEAMING

- Trust and collaboration
- Communication and influence
- Developing others
- Cultural competence
- Conflict resolution

SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Growth mindset
- Empathy
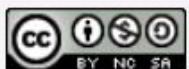- Motivation and courage
- Openness to change

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- Belief that all students can succeed
- Commitment to achieving breakthrough student results
- Commitment to uphold the organization's ethics and core values
- Commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion

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COMPETENCY	INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR	MANAGER	SENIOR MANAGER/DIRECTOR	EXECUTIVE/OFFICER
STRATEGIC THINKING	• Conducts research and analysis to inform insights • Connects work to organization's larger strategy	• Directs team to surface insights from multiple sources • Contributes perspectives to strategy development • Translates plans into team priorities and activities	• Translates strategy into actionable plans and timelines, and drives effective allocation of resources • Draws insight from multiple sources to shape vision and strategy	• Sets vision, goals, and strategy • Defines objectives and translates into clear priorities • Aligns resources against areas of highest impact • Promotes rigorous use of data, analysis, and experience to shape vision and strategy
PROBLEM SOLVING	• Shows initiative in generating ideas and solutions • Anticipates risks and alerts manager	• Identifies challenges and guides team toward solutions • Creates space for productive debate and alternative perspectives • Encourages innovation and creativity from team • Identifies risks and ways to mitigate	• Applies multiple techniques to develop solutions for organization or department • Ensures environment that encourages innovation and creativity • Takes calculated risks to find right solutions • Evaluates solutions with a focus on scale and sustainability	• Models versatility in addressing analytic and strategic issues across the organization • Promotes innovation, creativity and resourcefulness • Takes calculated risks to improve organizational outcomes • Resolves challenges with an eye toward what is required to scale and sustain solutions
DECISION MAKING	• Performs research and analysis that supports decision making • Owns and stands by individual decisions	• Makes timely, effective team decisions and aligns team resources accordingly • Owns and stands by team decisions	• Makes timely departmental decisions, considers implications, and ensures execution • Recommends course of action for organizational decisions informed by research, data, and constituent perspectives • Owns and stands by department decisions	• Makes decisions that drive best outcomes for students • Ensures decision making is timely, effectively executed, and designed to maximize organizational resources • Ensures leadership team considers vertical and horizontal implications of decisions within organization and broader community • Holds leadership team accountable for decisions and progress against them

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COMPETENCY	INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR	MANAGER	SENIOR MANAGER/DIRECTOR	EXECUTIVE/OFFICER
CHANGE LEADERSHIP	• Executes change efforts within area of responsibility • Acts as a sponsor for change with peers and within team • Surfaces issues and elevates to manager	• Implements change efforts within team and area of responsibility • Acts as a sponsor for change to team and stakeholders • Assesses issues and elevates to leadership team	• Articulates case for change and translates into actionable plans • Champions case for change with department and stakeholders • Manages internal political dynamics around change efforts • Seeks stakeholder input, elevates issues and makes recommendations to address	• Sets organizational directive for change efforts, catalyzing leadership team to achieve change at scale • Anticipates and manages internal and external political dynamics around change efforts • Champions change efforts and recruits sponsors from relevant constituent groups
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	• Delivers high-quality work in a timely, prioritized way • Compares actual progress to planned milestones and adjusts approach	• Manages projects from end to end, identifying and monitoring project milestones and holding team accountable for achieving results • Paces work to allow time for course correction and ensures on-time completion and quality of team deliverables • Delegates effectively, ensuring that team resources are mapped to priority deliverables	• Delegates projects, roles, and tasks and builds shared ownership • Develops plan to achieve priorities and ensures that deliverables are on time and on budget • Develops project management processes and coaches staff on using them • Sets quality standards for project management and monitors progress • Intervenes as needed with department and teams to ensure projects achieve desired results	• Designs projects to achieve long-term priorities and meet short-term needs • Ensures organization's priority projects are delivered on time and on budget • Holds high standards for project management and models these standards for the organization

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COMPETENCY	INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR	MANAGER	SENIOR MANAGER/DIRECTOR	EXECUTIVE/OFFICER
K-12 SYSTEMS THINKING	• Understands organization's position within the broader K-12 system • Conducts research and shares findings from education research, policy, and practice	• Situates team's work within larger K-12 system and operates within relevant regulations and policies • Stays current on education research, policy, and practice, with focus on what drives student outcomes • Applies learnings to team's work	• Navigates within larger K-12 system, setting strategy and making decisions with this context in mind • Identifies local, regional, and national education trends and positions organization for success • Incorporates relevant insights from research, policy and practice into department's strategy and programs	• Understands K-12 systems and what it takes to lead and manage complex education organizations to achieve results • Actively contributes to the K-12 education field, developing a network of practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and thought leaders • Delivers breakthrough insights and processes to improve student outcomes at scale and avoids reinventing the wheel
BUSINESS AND OPERATIONS EXPERTISE	• Understands organization's business and operations as context for role and function	• Understands organization structure, functional areas and business model and how to work within them to achieve team's goals • Manages team to deliver results within business and operational realities	• Understands and anticipates cross-organizational implications of departmental decisions • Implements processes that strengthen department's operations • Makes financial decisions and allocates resources to meet department-level goals	• Makes decisions to maximize organization's results rather than benefit a department or team • Creates systems and processes that promote integration across the organization • Leads efforts to build and sustain a viable organization • Leads financial planning and allocates resources to advance organizational goals

COMPETENCY	INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR	MANAGER	SENIOR MANAGER/DIRECTOR	EXECUTIVE/OFFICER
TRUST AND COLLABORATION	• Demonstrates genuine interest in developing relationships with others • Cultivates trusting, respectful, professional relationships with colleagues over time • Demonstrates ability to find common ground and build rapport • Works well with others and uses internal projects to build relationships and engage team	• Develops and maintains relationships across organization and school network • Identifies and removes barriers to working with other teams and departments • Fosters sense of team identity and purpose	• Develops and maintains relationships with key constituents • Seeks partnership and counsel from leaders inside and outside the organization • Fosters and facilitates collaboration within and across departments • Works with and through others to achieve departmental goals	• Fosters a culture that encourages productive relationships with key constituents to advance organization's impact and goals • Models highest level of personal and professional trust with members across organization • Builds sense of shared purpose among leadership team and holds accountable for collaboration within and across departments
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFLUENCE	• Articulates organization's vision and strategy clearly to others • Conveys key messages to team and internal stakeholders across variety of mediums • Listens actively to verbal and nonverbal cues and identifies underlying perspectives and needs	• Adapts communication to needs of audiences to build sense of shared purpose and progress work forward • Influences team and others in department to achieve goals	• Delivers compelling messages across mediums to range of internal and external audiences • Adapts communications as needed to influence others to achieve results	• Publically represents organization, providing inspiration and building engagement and support • Models communication style attuned to stakeholder dynamics and adapts to meet needs of organization leaders, key stakeholders, and constituent groups • Successfully persuades stakeholders within and outside organization to support organization's goals and achieve student outcomes

COMPETENCY	INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR	MANAGER	SENIOR MANAGER/DIRECTOR	EXECUTIVE/OFFICER
DEVELOPING OTHERS	• Takes initiative to develop self and peers • Serves as a resource to junior or new team members • Delivers timely, direct, and actionable feedback to colleagues	• Invests in building team talent, understanding personal goals, and enabling professional growth • Provides needs-based coaching to team members and delivers tough messages with empathy • Acts as sounding board and support for peers and team as they develop • Models and holds team accountable for achieving at high levels	• Develops departmental talent, providing stretch opportunities to develop future leaders • Provides effective feedback so individuals and teams can improve • Mentors peers and direct reports to achieve full potential • Serves as advisor and coach for function-specific competencies • Translates high expectations into actionable development goals for departments and teams	• Sets organizational imperative for talent, ensuring that leadership team invests in attracting, developing and retaining top talent • Serves as organizational role model in delivering direct and actionable positive and constructive feedback • Identifies and mentors current and emerging leaders across the organization, with eye towards leadership succession • Acts as coach and sounding board for leaders within organization and builds their capacity to develop and retain staff • Cultivates an organizational culture of high expectations for staff at all levels
CULTURAL COMPETENCE	• Seeks and includes diverse range of perspectives in research, analysis and recommendations • Contributes productively as a member of a diverse team	• Encourages team to seek and share diverse perspectives to inform decision making and planning • Ensures team is proactive in seeking and listening to both internal and external constituents to inform its work	• Promotes the value of diversity and inclusion across the organization and department • Ensures perspectives from within organization and from constituent groups are reflected in decision making and planning • Embeds diversity and inclusion policies and priorities within every department and team, ensuring there is shared ownership across the organization • Engages the community, including parents and students, as key partners in the organization's work	• Creates an organizational culture that embraces the importance of seeking and listening to diverse perspectives, both within and outside of the organization • Seeks to build an organization that reflects the community it serves • Creates and enforces talent policies that support diversity and inclusion as an organizational priority

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COMPETENCY	INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR	MANAGER	SENIOR MANAGER/DIRECTOR	EXECUTIVE/OFFICER
CONFLICT RESOLUTION	• Shows initiative in resolving conflicts within team	• Facilitates team conflict resolution, ensuring needs are heard and work can proceed	• Mediates complex conflicts and coaches others to mediate • Identifies sources of conflict for department and prevents escalation • Provides cover within department, encouraging teams and individuals to raise issues in service of student impact and organizational effectiveness	• Leads organization through conflict, facilitating resolutions that protect the organization's interests and prioritize student needs • Uses conflict productively to surface and address organizational challenges • Provides cover for leadership team, supporting controversial and tough decisions

SELF-MANAGEMENT

COMPETENCY	INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR	MANAGER	SENIOR MANAGER/DIRECTOR	EXECUTIVE/OFFICER
GROWTH MINDSET	• Continuously seeks to improve individual work, demonstrating candor and ability to identify weaknesses • Finds lessons in failures and successes of others • Proactively seeks and acts on feedback	• Creates team culture that embraces candor and reflection and facilitates continuous improvement • Seeks lessons from other teams and departments to improve own team's outcomes • Seeks and acts on feedback to improve self and team	• Facilitates departmental culture that reflects on results, identifies challenges and shares mistakes made • Creates and implements systems to facilitate regular reflection and continuous improvement • Continuously seeks to learn from leaders, departments, and teams throughout organization to improve • Models self-awareness and use of feedback to improve self and department	• Creates organizational culture that consistently focuses on improving individual, team, and organization-wide performance • Proactively identifies and acknowledges mistakes made (individually and throughout organization) and reflects meaningfully on causes, using them as a learning experience for self and the organization • Seeks ideas and feedback from staff at all levels and appropriately incorporates input
EMPATHY	• Acts with genuine interest and caring for others • Demonstrates trust in peers and managers, assuming best intent	• Considers experience and needs of others both within and outside of organization in all aspects of their work • Listens to team members and incorporates their input into decisions • Trusts team members to effectively implement tasks, experiment, and improve outcomes	• Seeks and considers input from department and external stakeholders in making decisions and recommendations • Creates trusting departmental culture that empowers and supports team leaders to own decisions, experiment and take risks	• Thoughtfully considers experiences and likely reactions of stakeholders when making and communicating decisions • Demonstrates concern for various stakeholders, creating an environment of mutual trust and sense of shared purpose

COMPETENCY	INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR	MANAGER	SENIOR MANAGER/DIRECTOR	EXECUTIVE/OFFICER
MOTIVATION AND COURAGE	• Takes initiative to solve problems and to achieve results beyond what it expected • Supports organizational risk-taking in individual actions • Demonstrates optimism in the face of challenges	• Strives to lead team in achieving results beyond what is expected • Maintains focus and will to take risks in pursuit of breakthrough results for students • Brings a pragmatic approach to team's work, while remaining motivated to pursue systems change	• Sets high expectations for department and teams and models willingness to put oneself on the line to achieve breakthrough results • Fosters a culture of accountability and ownership • Empowers team members to take risks and address challenges head on	• Motivates and inspires organization around a shared vision for impact • Leads organization by example, putting self on the line in pursuit of breakthrough results for students • Demonstrates personal accountability and encourages this behavior in others • Fosters culture of optimism and perseverance in the face of challenge and opposition
OPENNESS TO CHANGE	• Demonstrates comfort with ambiguity • Adapts to changes in daily work and throughout the organization	• Remains focused on team goals amidst a changing context • Flexes team approach based on new and changing information	• Leads department in adapting to change, flexing approach while remaining focused on outcomes • Explains changing dynamics for team and develops shared understanding	• Models ability to adapt to new information or changing context, while remaining focused on outcomes • Embraces change as an opportunity for growth and learning

METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH:

There are many excellent resources today that point to different models of leadership. This project draws from the best-in-class thinking on what is needed for 21st century leadership, from best-in-class for-profit models and case studies, as well as from education organizations' ongoing work on leadership development. The overarching categories reflect themes across key sources, although specific language and wording may vary. We also drew on thinking from EdFuel's *Map the Gap* report and Bridgespan's leadership practice.

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