

The Political Role of the Superintendent: Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Each dimension requires a specific set of knowledge, skills and dispositions essential for superintendents to navigate politics successfully. In the chart that follows, we highlight key examples.

	MICRO (Self)	MESO (School District & Local Community)	MACRO (National & State)
KNOWLEDGE	Identity + Typical local constituent groups + Major educational issues		
	Understanding of how identity and values influence leadership	Awareness of typical constituent groups and how they work Including school board, local government, union, local news media, student groups, parent organizations, and advocacy groups	Understanding of federal and state education policies, laws, and school finance Awareness of education issues in national and global media
SKILLS	Critical examination + Proactive leadership* + Sense making		
	Examining self as leader Exhibiting emotional intelligence Practicing cultural responsiveness	Visioning and Communicating Political mapping Movement building and mobilizing Ongoing relationship building	Influencing, interpreting and implementing education laws and policies Learning across communities
DISPOSITIONS	Grounded + Present + Cognizant		
	Resilient Curious Centered	Transparent Courageous Visible	Informed Active Connected

*We believe these skills represent the “core” of political leadership in education.