

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP EMPLOYER INTERVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (February 2025)

During December of 2024 and January of 2025, I completed six Zoom interviews with employers of graduates of the Educational Leadership, Master of Education program at Keene State College. All six respondents are currently working in leadership positions in regional school districts in New Hampshire. All respondents were open and honest in responding to questions and all responded to all questions. The de-identified transcripts of the interviews begin on page three.

There seemed to be agreement on the following strengths of the Education Leadership program:

- Employers agree that graduates of the KSC Educational Leadership program exhibit a collaborative leadership style, reflected in the relationships they develop with peers, teachers, parents, and administrators.
- Graduates are leading data teams and professional learning communities to add new and innovative initiatives to the curriculum and co-curriculum to enhance student learning/success.
- Employers report that graduates have strong communication skills across a variety of communication methods including public speaking/presentations, newsletters, written letters/notifications, emails, and dialogue/conversation. Graduates are direct, honest and compassionate. Graduates have been successful at mediating challenging conflicts and lowering the intensity of conflicts.
- Graduates are present, often working into the evening and on weekends to support families. They are engaged with the school, families, and the local community. Their actions show they are invested in the success of all students and the importance of the entire community in that success.
- Graduates manage complex family/community dynamics balancing sensitivity and caring and with intelligence, flexibility, and thoughtful interventions to ensure fairness.
- Employers report that graduates are excellent at reviewing and analyzing data to make informed decisions and are invested in continuous improvement based on data informed decisions.
- Graduates are highly competent in the use of a variety of technologies and have a strong foundation in technology to migrate to new versions of older technology and integrate new technology.
- Employers report that graduates continually exhibit high standards, strong codes of ethics and professional dispositions. One employer stated that graduates show the “courage to lead” each and every day.
- All graduates persist in the field of education. Not all have pursued formal leadership positions but become the leader of their peers. Graduates are committed to the field and several employers reported that graduates have specific goals to move to higher level positions in the future.
- Employers consistently reported that graduates have a desire to continue to learn and grow. They request feedback on a regular basis and are accurately self-reflective when considering their own job performance.
- No employers reported decisions not to hire a KSC graduate. All seemed to have excellent experiences with graduates, and one shared that now when they see an applicant is a KSC graduate the application gets moved to top of pile for consideration.

Additionally, there was overall agreement on the following areas that could be improved:

- Graduates are skilled in finding research and other resources to improve curriculum but it's unclear that they have the knowledge/skills or bandwidth to engage in new research projects. This is an area where the Educational Leadership coordinator may want to call together employers to understand their needs in this area
- Graduates are comfortable with technology, but employers felt that enhanced training in the Google platform suite of tools could be helpful. One employer suggested that this might be a workshop the SAU could provide.
- As more K-12 schools move to competency-based education, it would be very helpful if graduates had expertise in this area. One employer suggested that this might be a place for collaboration between KSC and SAU29
- Employers reported that graduates had a strong understanding of legal issues in education and suggested that to help educators become better advocates, it would be helpful if professional understood more about how bills become laws and how/where to advocate for the best interests of students.
- An employer suggested that graduates would benefit from a module on the role of school policy in relation to laws and the importance of awareness/understanding of school policy on day one.
- Most graduates seemed to complete their course work in relation to their current work environment. Employers suggested collaborations with different school districts to diversify practical experiences.

- Several employers stated that graduates clearly understood how to develop and manage internal budgets, but that it would be helpful if employees better understood the budget development/town hall meeting process.

Other areas to explore:

- There was strong support for the KSC program from employers. Employers encouraged KSC to continue to look for flexibility and adapt the curriculum for busy adult learners.
- Employers expressed an openness and desire to create more partnerships with KSC, some of which were mentioned above. The KSC Leadership program is seen as an asset to the regional school districts and the employers are invested in participating in the program.
- Most employers had significant knowledge of graduates because they were already employees. It may be helpful to explore if there are employers without prior knowledge of graduates or if students participate in practicums outside their work school, we may want to interview those supervisors.