

# **Deaf Education Aptitudes for Leadership (DEAL): Early Findings and Implications for Leadership Development**

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# Shared Research Agenda

- Leadership Assessment (DEAL)
- Diversity in Leadership
- Mentoring and Networking
- Deaf-Centered Guiding Practices
- Leadership Development/Developing Deaf Leaders

## Shared Research Agenda (cont'd)

- Sustainability
- Role in Community & Family Engagement
- Leadership Styles
- Collaborative Leadership
- Current Leaders and Their Responsibilities

## Our Research Questions & Aim

- 1. What personal and professional qualities make someone an effective leader in a Deaf school/program setting?**
- 2. What components are essential for a successful Deaf Education school/program?**

The aim of this study is to identify and explain the qualities, competencies, and leadership practices that characterize effective school leadership in Deaf Education.

# Methods

- 1. Two Groups: Educational Staff & Parents/Guardians/Families**
  - a. Educators: 6 Questions Survey (4 Demographics + 2 Open Ended)
    - i. Sent to Deaf Schools/Programs that have a designated Deaf Education administrator in 50 states + Puerto Rico
  - b. Parents: Focus Groups & Survey (1 Closed + 1 Open Ended)
    - i. Selected from 10 school sites to represent time zones (4), school types (residential, day, charter, mainstream, public, private, etc.)
- 2. Analysis**
  - a. Demographics: Descriptive Statistics
  - b. Open Ended: Coding then Frequency Counts
- 3. Triangulation with Educator, Parent, & Governing Board Data**

# Response Rates

## Educational Staff

- 358 Total
- 347 Complete Responses
- 204 Responses to Open-Ended Questions

## Parents/Guardians/Families

- Focus Groups: Low Attendance
- Survey: 25 Complete Responses

# Demographics

## Respondents

Admin Support

2.7%

Paraeducators

3.3%

Student Life

10.1%

Service Providers

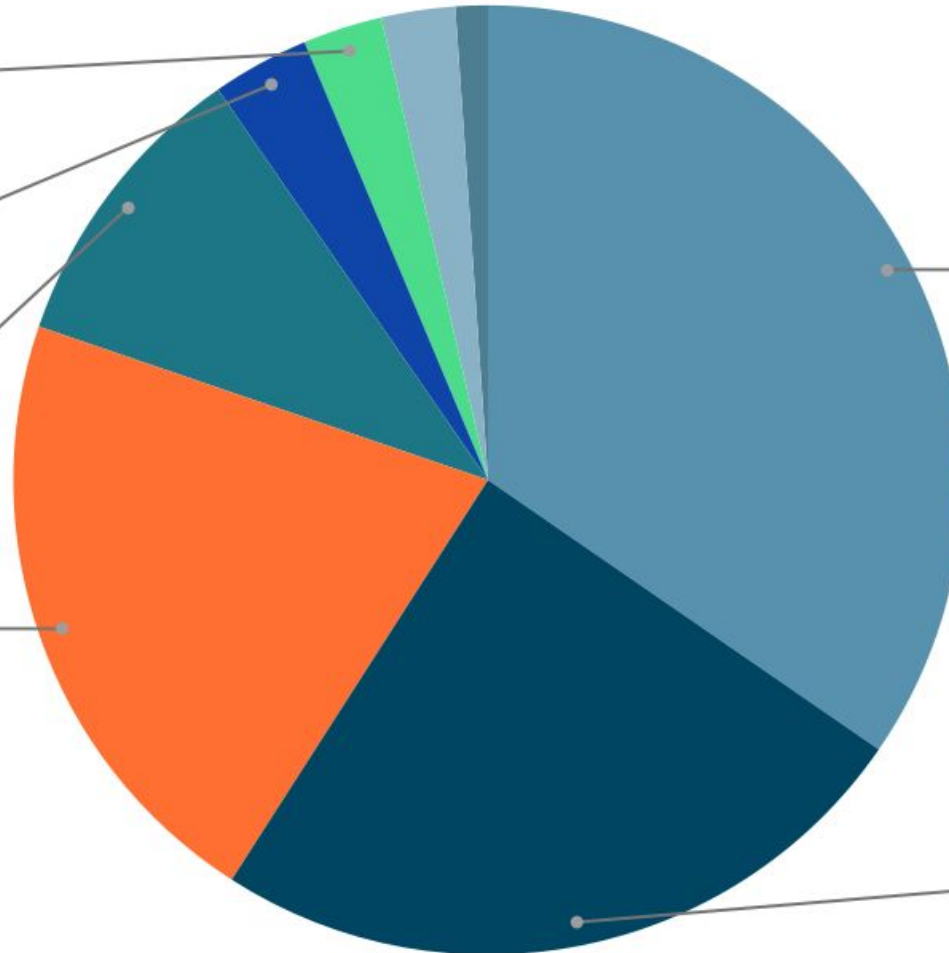
21.2%

Administrators

34.6%

Teachers

24.5%



# Demographics (cont...)

## Deaf/Hearing Status

Other

1.5%

Hearing

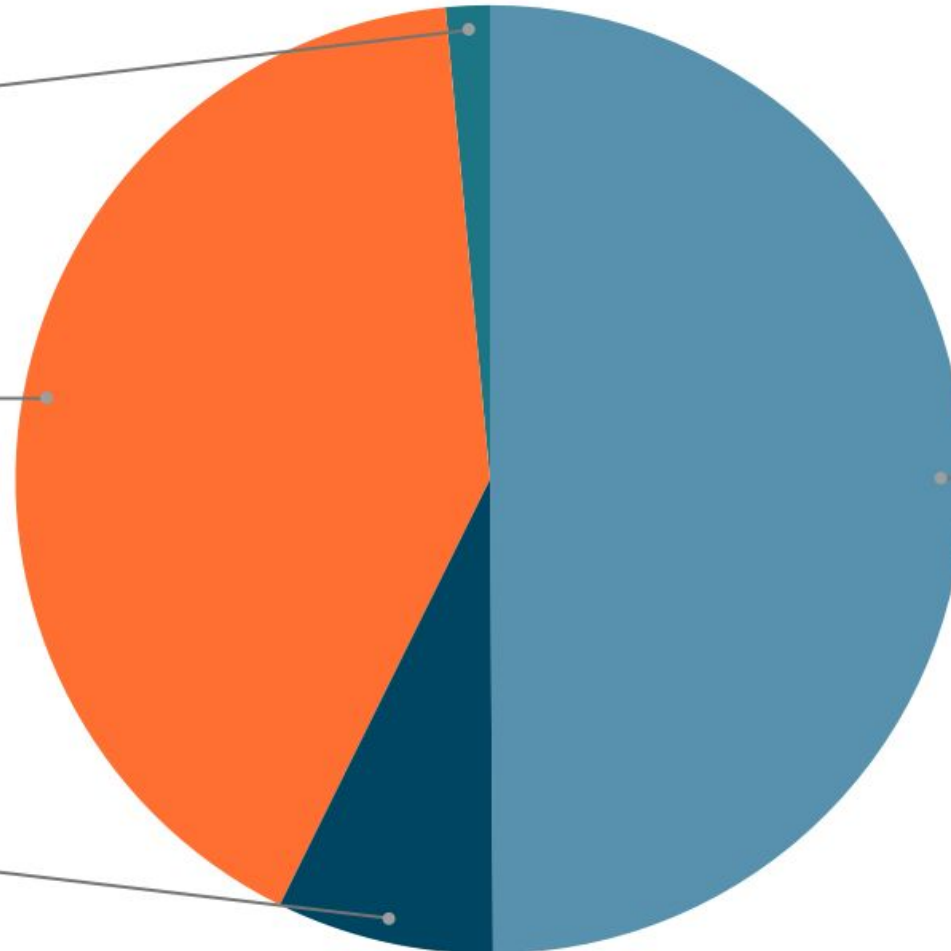
41.2%

HH

7.4%

Deaf

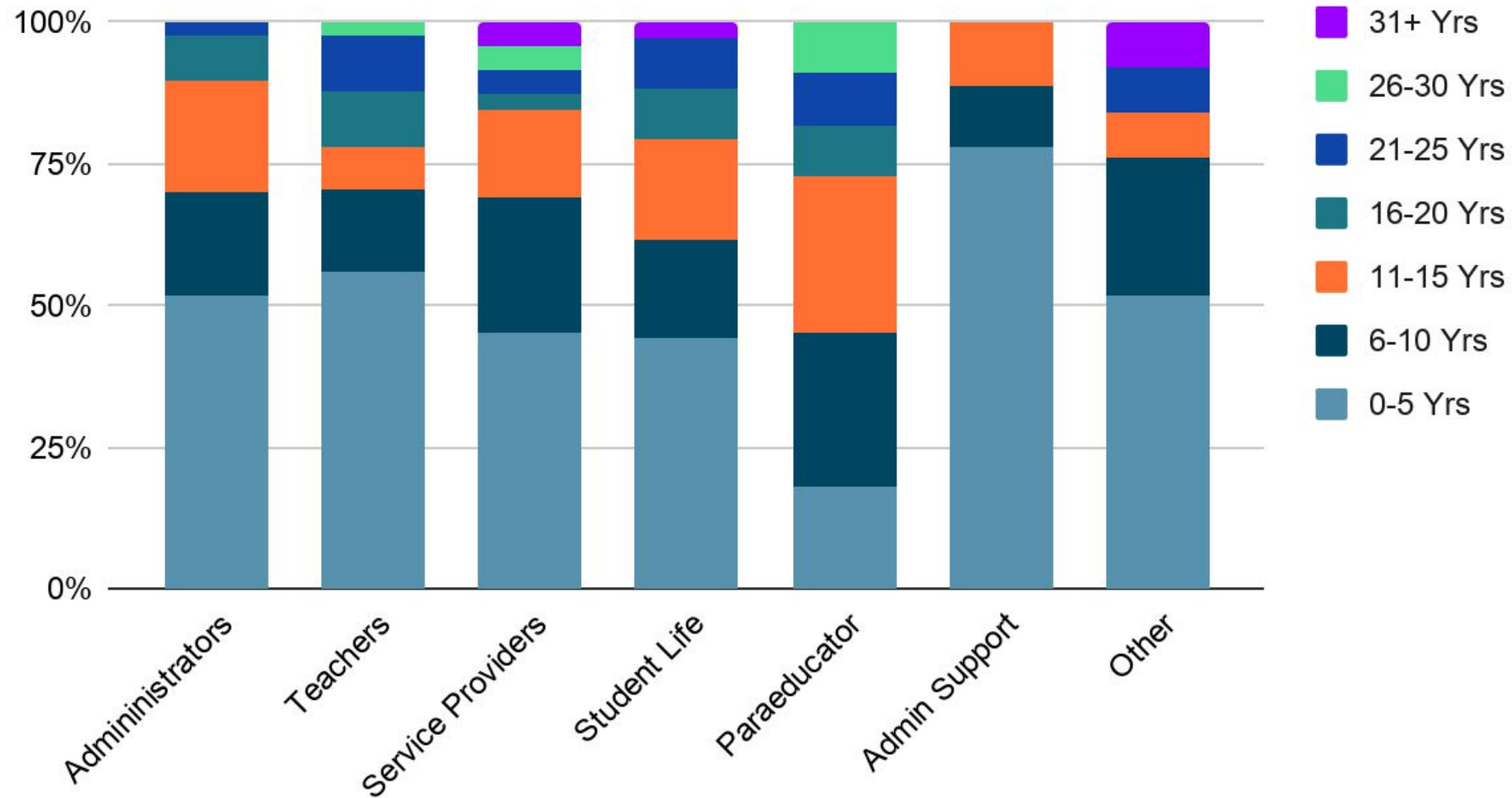
49.9%



Deaf/Hearing Status	Percentage
Deaf	49.9%
Hearing	41.2%
HH	7.4%
Other	1.5%

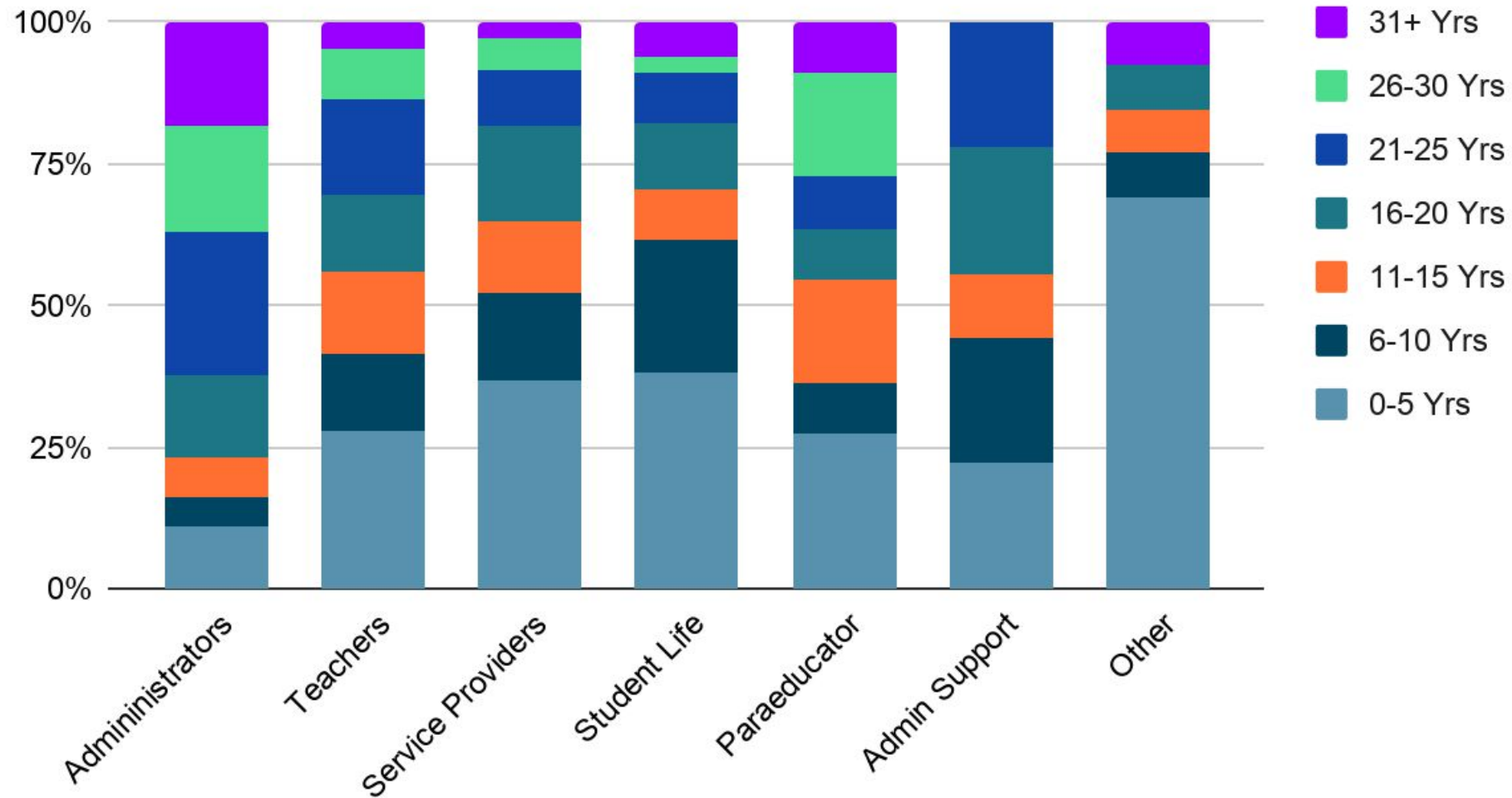
# Demographics (cont...)

Years in Current Role



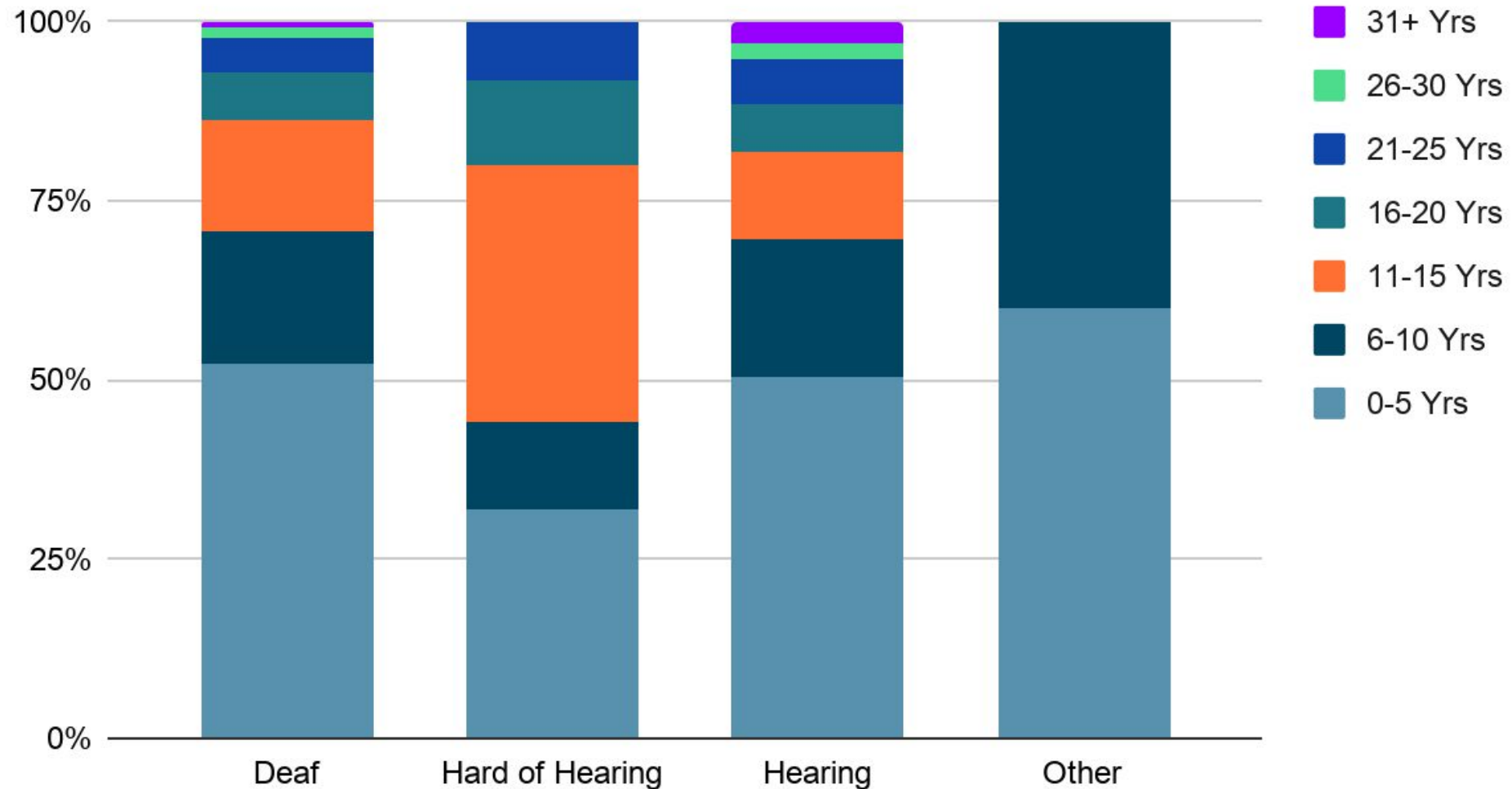
# Demographics (cont...)

Years Experience Total



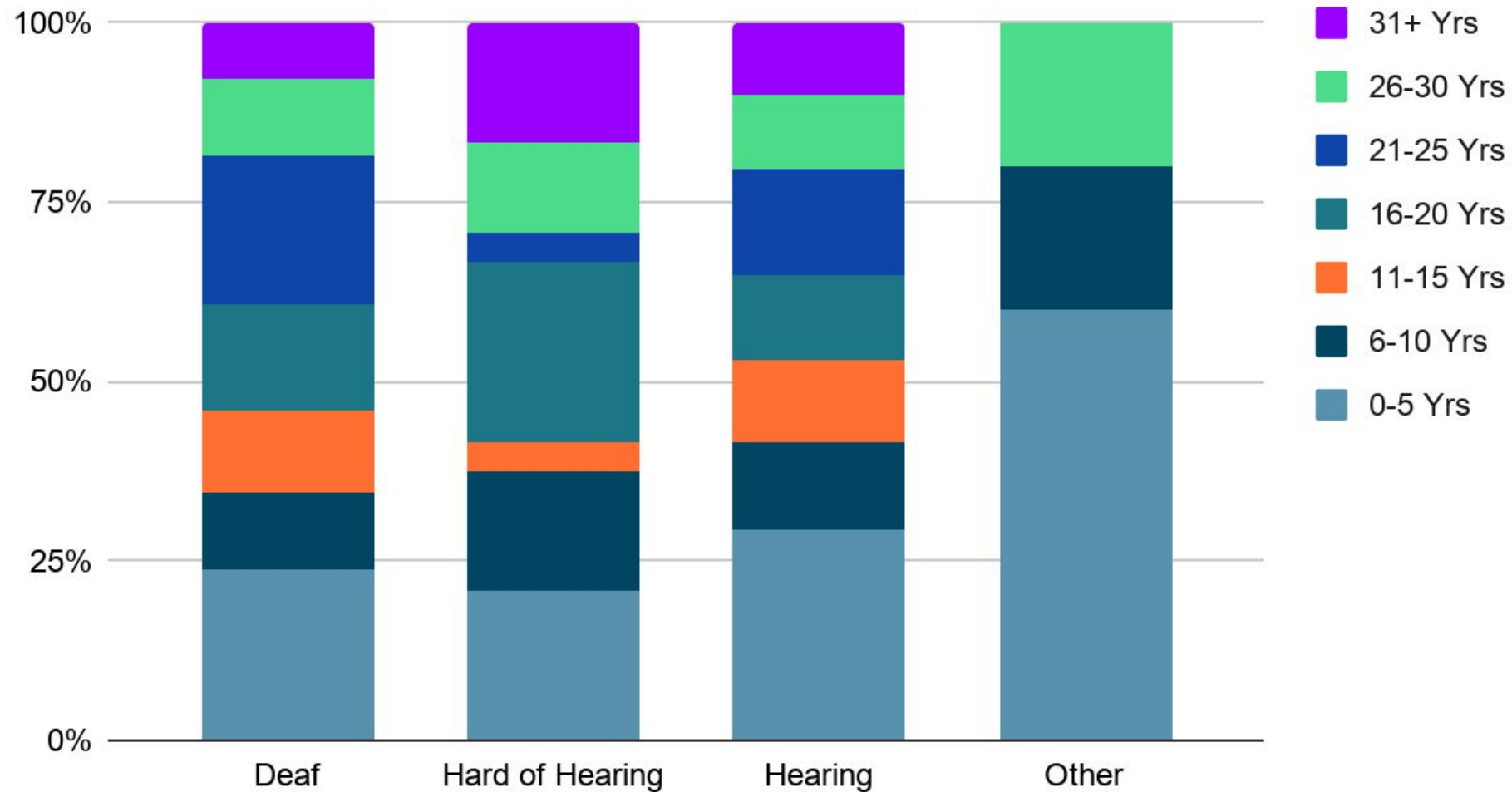
# Demographics (cont...)

## Years in Current Role



# Demographics (cont...)

## Years Total Experience



# Statistical Significance

**Is there a significant difference between Deaf\* and Hearing?**

**A. ...numbers in administrative positions?**

a. No ( $F=.731$ ,  $p=0.534$ )

**B. ...years of total experience?**

a. No ( $\chi^2=3.2945$ ,  $p=0.7711$ )

**C. ...years in current role?**

a. No ( $\chi^2=8.6757$ ,  $p=0.1927$ )

\*Including Hard of Hearing & DeafBlind

**What personal and professional qualities make someone an effective leader in a Deaf Education school/program setting?**



# Leadership Qualities: First Mentions (Top 5)

1. Deaf Cultural Competence
2. ASL Fluency
3. Deaf Education Expertise
4. Deaf Identity / Lived Experience
5. Cultural Responsiveness

# Top Leadership Qualities

1. Deaf Cultural Competence
2. Communication
3. ASL Fluency
4. Cultural Responsiveness
5. Deaf Community Engagement
6. Deaf Education Expertise
7. Relationship Building
8. Student-Centered Leadership
9. Strategic Decision Making
10. Active Listening
11. Collaboration
12. Staff Empowerment
13. Transparency

# Discussion #1

**What does this require of you as a leader or practitioner?**

**What components are essential for a  
successful Deaf Education  
school/program?**



## School Qualities: First Mentions (Top 5)

1. Language Access
2. Culturally Responsive Curriculum
3. ASL Fluency
4. ASL/English Philosophy
5. Sufficient Staffing

# Top School Qualities

1. Culturally Responsive Curriculum
2. Language Access
3. Family Engagement
4. Extracurriculars
5. Quality Student Support Services
6. Community Engagement
7. Qualified Staff
8. ASL Fluency
9. ASL/English Philosophy
10. Language-Rich Environment
11. Deaf Role Models
12. Sufficient Staffing
13. Whole-Child Education

## Discussion #2

**What implications does this have for your work moving forward?**

## Discussion #3

- 1. Why do you think educators prioritized these aspects over others?**
- 2. How will you intentionally act on this learning moving forward?**

## Next Steps - DEAL Framework

**West and Harrison plan to develop assessments of Deaf Ed leadership:**

1. Deaf Education Aptitudes for Leadership inventory
2. Deaf-Centered Superintendent assessment tools
3. Deaf-Centered Principal & Student Life Leadership assessment tools
4. Deaf-Centered leadership assessment resources for self-evaluation and self-study

# Shared Research Agenda (Revisited)

- **Leadership Assessment (DEAL)**
- **Diversity in Leadership**
- **Mentoring and Networking**
- **Deaf-Centered Guiding Practices**
- **Leadership Development/Developing Deaf Leaders**

## Shared Research Agenda (cont'd)

- **Sustainability**
- **Role in Community & Family Engagement**
- **Leadership Styles**
- **Collaborative Leadership**
- **Current Leaders and Their Responsibilities**

## Wanting to host Student Teachers?

Have teaching jobs  
to post?

Have staff (current or  
hiring now) you want  
to join MSDE?

Interested in the  
Administration  
degree and/or  
research?

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Dr. Nathan Harrison is the husband to Mackenzie and father to three children. He is a lecturer in the Dept. of Deaf Education at NTID, and focuses on digital teaching and learning, D/HH pedagogy, bilingual instruction, and Deaf Educational Leadership. He has been a director/principal (EDS, UT), curriculum director (UT), assistant director (JMS, UT), assistant principal and math teacher (NMSD). Nathan has degrees in Math & Science Education (BS; USU), Bi-Bi Deaf Education (MEd; USU), and Educational Leadership (EdD; UNM). In 2024, Dr. Harrison left PK-12 to work in teacher preparation.

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# Full List of Leader Qualities (In Order)

1	Deaf Cultural Competence	11	Collaboration	21	Flexibility	31	Compassion	41	Interpersonal Skills
2	Communication	12	Staff Empowerment	22	Leadership Experience	32	Follow-Through	42	Organization
3	ASL Fluency	13	Transparency	23	Lifelong Learning	33	Instructional Leadership	43	Special Education Knowledge
4	Cultural Responsiveness	14	Advocacy	24	Humility	34	Presence	44	Accept Feedback
5	Deaf Community Engagement	15	DHH Teaching Experience	25	Family Engagement	35	Proactive Problem Solving	45	Adaptability
6	Deaf Education Expertise	16	Open-Minded	26	Accountability	36	Supportive / Strategic Visibility	46	Community-Centered Leadership
7	Relationship Building	17	Empathy	27	Deaf Identity / Lived Experience	37	Integrity	47	Growth Mindset
8	Student-Centered Leadership	18	Vision	28	Emotional Intelligence	38	Positive School Culture	48	High Academic Expectations
9	Strategic Decision Making	19	Language Development Knowledge	29	Fiscal Management	39	Teamwork	49	Inclusive Leadership
10	Active Listening	20	Commitment to DEI	30	Approachability	40	Community Engagement	50	Legal Knowledge

# Full List of Leader Qualities (In Order)

51	Passion	61	Fairness	71	Compassion	81	Ethical Leadership	91	Written English Fluency
52	Patience	62	Language Rich Environment	72	Conflict Resolution	82	Government Relations	92	Administrative Credentials
53	Professional Development Leadership	63	Mentorship	73	Continuous Cycle Improvement	83	Humor	93	Anti-Tokenism Advocacy
54	Self-Reflective	64	Motivated	74	Even Temperament	84	Mission-Driven	94	Behavioral Knowledge
55	Supportive Supervision	65	Multimodal Communication	75	Honesty	85	Operational Leadership	95	Best Practices in Deaf Education
56	Active Engagement / Involvement	66	Respectful	76	Innovation	86	Pedagogical Knowledge	96	Caring Leadership
57	Bilingual	67	School Systems Knowledge	77	Positive School Environment	87	Reliability	97	Commitment to Student Success
58	Consistency	68	Stakeholder Engagement	78	Respect for Deaf Identity	88	Resilience	98	Creative Thinking
59	Cultural-Linguistic Leadership	69	Accessibility	79	Role Model	89	Safety & Well-Being Leadership	99	Crisis / Safety Leadership
60	Deaf Education Field Issues Awareness	70	Classroom/School Awareness	80	Trust Building	90	Staff Coaching / Mentoring	100	Curiosity

# Full List of Leader Qualities (In Order)

101	Data-Driven Decision Making	111	High Work Ethic	121	Shared Leadership	131	Barrier Identification & Support	141	Deaf-Centered Leadership
102	Deaf-Hearing Liaison	112	Individualized Education	122	Social Emotional Learning Awareness	132	Belonging-Centered Leadership	142	Deaf Empowerment
103	Diplomatic	113	Leadership Effectiveness	123	Technology Awareness	133	Bilingual Knowledge	143	Deaf Leadership
104	Emotional Regulation	114	Leadership Potential	124	Timely Communication	134	Boundaries	144	Deaf Role Models
105	Empower Deaf Staff	115	Morale Building	125	Time Management	135	Business Knowledge	145	Deaf School Context Understanding
106	Friendliness	116	Multitasking	126	Trauma-Informed Leadership	136	Capacity Building	146	DEAF-HEART
107	Governance Relationship	117	Open-Door Leadership	127	Welcoming Personality	137	Clear Expectations	147	Delegation
108	Hands-On Engagement	118	Outreach	128	Above-and-Beyond	138	Critical Conversations	148	Directness
109	Heart-Centered Leadership	119	Positive Attitude	129	Anti-Audism	139	Critical Thinking	149	Discernment
110	Hearing Loss Impact Knowledge	120	Professionalism	130	Authenticity	140	DeafBlind Knowledge	150	Encouraging

# Full List of Leader Qualities (In Order)

151	Engaged Leadership	161	Inspirational Leadership	171	Non-Micromanaging Leadership	181	Resourcefulness	191	Supervision Management
152	Evidence-Based Leadership	162	Kindness	172	Optimism / Hope	182	Self-Confidence	192	Support Language Learners
153	Fearlessness	163	Language/Literacy Knowledge	173	Politeness	183	Servant Leadership	193	Supportive Leadership
154	Forward-Thinking Leadership	164	Leadership Competency	174	Principled Leadership	184	Service Coordination	194	Teacher Role Awareness
155	Future-Focused	165	Leadership Knowledge	175	Proactive Leadership	185	Skill / Competence	195	Unbiased
156	Goal Setting	166	Leadership Training	176	Proactive Staffing	186	Strategic Leadership	196	Understand Family Perspectives
157	Governance Knowledge	167	Listening Technology Knowledge	177	Professional Boundaries	187	Student Empowerment	197	Understand Deaf+ Students
158	IEP Knowledge	168	Modalities Knowledge	178	Progress Monitoring	188	Student Growth Commitment	198	Understanding
159	Institutional Awareness	169	Networking	179	Psychological Safety	189	Student Life Curriculum Development	199	Value Deaf Perspectives
160	Intelligence	170	Non-Authoritarian Leadership	180	Recruitment / Hiring Best Practices	190	Succession Planning	200	Value Stakeholders

# Full List of School Qualities (In Order)

1	Culturally Responsive Curriculum	11	Deaf Role Models	21	Deaf Community Engagement	31	SPED	41	Multilingual/Multimodal Pedagogy
2	Language Access	12	Sufficient Staffing	22	Multimodal	32	Technology Access	42	Advocacy
3	Family Engagement	13	Whole-Child Education	23	Transition Programming	33	Effective Leadership	43	Cultural Competency
4	Extracurriculars	14	Robust Professional Development	24	Certified TOD	34	Assessment Plan	44	Deaf-Centered Curriculum
5	Quality Student Support Services	15	Evidence-Based Practices	25	Comprehensive IEP Systems	35	Deaf Education Expertise	45	Deaf+ Support
6	Community Engagement	16	Student-Centered Culture	26	SEL Instruction	36	Deaf Space Design	46	Governance
7	Qualified Staff	17	Deaf Culture	27	Data Progress Monitoring	37	Mental Health Supports	47	Inclusive School Climate
8	ASL Fluency	18	High Academic Expectations	28	Appropriate Staff-Student Ratio	38	Vision	48	Mainstream Options
9	ASL/English Philosophy	19	Positive School Culture	29	Early Childhood Outreach	39	Certified Interpreters	49	Pedagogical Knowledge
10	Language-Rich Environment	20	Interdepartmental Collaboration	30	Related-Service Providers	40	Fiscal Management	50	Relationship-Building

# Full List of School Qualities (In Order)

51	Stakeholder Engagement	61	Sustainable Resources/Systems	71	Data-Informed Planning	81	Instructional Resources	91	Standards Aligned
52	Trauma-Informed Practices	62	Transparency	72	Deaf Events	82	Interpreter Access	92	Student Progress Monitoring
53	Checks and Balance	63	Workload Balance	73	Deaf Inclusion	83	Intervention	93	Teacher Mentoring
54	Deaf+ Students	64	Academic Supports	74	Deaf Staff	84	Lifelong Learners		
55	Experiential Learning	65	Alumni Engagement	75	DEI	85	Networking		
56	High Behavioral Expecations	66	ASL Instruction	76	Educational Audiology Collaboration	86	Peer Connection		
57	LEA Support	67	ASL/English/Math Emphasis	77	Healthcare Advocacy	87	Real-World Application		
58	Literacy Emphasis	68	Awareness of Educational Landscape	78	Hearing Allies	88	Retention		
59	Mission	69	Caring Staff	79	Inclusive & Safe Environment	89	Routines		
60	Staff Empowerment	70	Critical Mass of Deaf Peers	80	Instructional Coaching	90	Social Opportunities		