

How to Survive Your First 30 Days as a Special Education Director

Presented by Peggy Romshek promshek@mpstigers.com
and Jenny Piening jenny.piening@nsdtitans.org

Places to Start

- *Job expectations (paperwork and staff responsibilities) at your district/school
- *Get to know your NDE representative <http://www.education.ne.gov/sped/contact.html>
- *Meet other Special Education Directors in your area
- *Write down questions as you think of them, then ask a trusted source for answers or insight
- *Get to know your staff and establish rapport

Survival Tips



SURVIVAL

When you are in deep trouble,
say nothing, and try to look like
you know what you're doing.

Find out what is expected of you as every district/position is different.

1. What paperwork are you responsible for?
2. What staff are you responsible for?
3. What is your role? Which IEP/MDT meetings do you need to go to?
4. What do others expect from you?
5. Sit down with other admins and find out what is expected
 - Survey Staff
 - Meet with former director

Survival Tips

Establish rapport

- With the other administrators you will be working with
- With the Special Education Teachers and paras
- With other teachers on staff
- With related service personnel – even if they are contracted
- With other Special Education Director's in the area
- With parents – especially the tough ones

Survival Tips

Organize yourself! Find a system that works for you!

- ❑ Get a calendar system.
- ❑ Start a list of contacts.
- ❑ Find a filing system that works for you.
- ❑ Print out forms calendar and make sure things are turned in on time.
- ❑ Use technology whenever you can. It is a big help.
- ❑ Remember you can't do it all!
 - ❑ Decide what is important and what has to be done.
 - ❑ Delegate what you can.

Put important due dates on your calendar and develop a plan for meeting these deadlines

Upcoming Dates:

-RDA meeting

<http://www.education.ne.gov/sped/index.html>

-NASES Meeting

<http://www.ncsa.org/events/nases-fall-workshop-o>



Survival Tips



http://www.education.ne.gov/sped/finance/Webinar_7-22-14.pdf

Special Education Finance Webinar Available to Watch

Familiarize Yourself with the Following

- NDE Portal
- SRS or IEP Record System
- School Record System

- Get to know the district/school buildings/ESU, etc
- Establish consistency
 - Between buildings if possible
 - With SPED staff
 - In paperwork and procedures
 - Communicate with staff on a regular basis
- Remember you are always being watched and judged.
- Be creative in serving student needs

Survival Tips

**It is important to
connect with other new
directors**

Meeting others starting out can be a big
benefit!

Invitation to Participate

All SPED directors in their first or second year of their role are invited to participate in the NASES New Member Program.

The Program is a partnership between NASES and NDE to support those new to the state, their district, or position.

What is NASES?

Nebraska Association for Special Education Supervisors is an affiliate association of NCSA (Nebraska Council of School Administrators).

Other affiliates include: NASA, NAESP, NSASSP, NASBO, and NARSA.

Regions

The state is divided into Regions:

- Region 1: Jenny Piening
- Region 2: Jane Byers
- Region 3: Stacie Hardy
- Region 4: TBA
- Region 5: Laura Barrett

NASES Exec Board

President: Brenda Tracy

President Elect: Sally Giittinger

Past President: Jane Moody

Secretary: Kris Elmshaeuser

CASE Representative: Lee Frye

NARSA Representative: Michaela Nelson

New Member Liaison: Peggy Romshek

Legislative Reps: Ellen Stokebrand/Jane Byers

New Member Program Benefits

- *You are provided a mentor based on your needs as an administrator, along with geographic location
- *Networking with new and veteran special education supervisors
- *Ongoing meetings, trainings, and other opportunities to build your professional knowledge

Highlights of Trainings Throughout the Year

- Trainings are mostly held in conjunction with NASES meetings throughout the year.
- Each member receives a notebook with useful information
- Topics for trainings are based on member needs. Past trainings include
 - SPED Finance
 - Staff Supervision

NASES Member Workshop

Will be October 2nd and 3rd at NCSA and NDE

- Program is held in conjunction with NDE
- Highlights
 - Panel Presentation by former New Members
 - Presentations by NDE on pertinent topics
 - Tour of NDE Offices and opportunity to meet staff
 - SRS Presentation
 - Finance Presentation

Brief History of the Program

- *Annual participation between 7-18 new members

- *Holds meetings in conjunction with NASES meetings in the fall, winter, and spring each year

- *Dedicated collaboration since the program's inception

Program Alumni

*Benefitted from contact with a mentor, workshop opportunities, provision of written materials, and attending regional meetings.

*Built a network and reference group for SPED issues.

Points to Ponder

Change

- Is difficult for many people
- Takes time
- Only make what changes you have to the first year, and then make the bigger changes the second and third years.

Administration can be a lonely world at times.

- Special Education can be even lonelier.
- Be careful about developing too close of friendships with staff.

Don't be afraid to ask questions!

- You don't have to know all the answers, but know where to find them.
- Be willing to take the advice that others give you!

Attend meetings!

- You need to stay up to date on SPED information. The best way to do this is to attend meetings.
- You need respite from your job, and attending meetings helps provide this plus you start to develop relationships with others in the same field.
- Work will be there when you get back!

Join professional organizations.

- This will help provide you with professional literature.
- Belonging to these organizations helps you network with others.



When making decisions or when dealing with conflict, take at least a day to think things over if you can.

- Not everything has to be done today.
- Even if you know what you are going to say, waiting helps you analyze your response and make sure you are right.
- Waiting also helps you become less emotionally involved.

Trust your gut!

- If you have to respond immediately, trust your gut! It is usually right!
- If you were not right, be willing to admit you made a mistake.



"I'm disappointed. If anyone should have seen the red flags, it's you."

Find mentors.

- Regular education administrators within the district
- Other special education administrators

Remember you can't make everyone happy.

- That is administration!
- That means you are doing your job!
- Make the decisions you feel are best for the situation. Even if people are not happy with you, hopefully, they will come to respect you for doing your job!

Stress Reduction Kit



Directions:

1. Place kit on FIRM surface.
2. Follow directions in circle of kit.
3. Repeat step 2 as necessary, or until unconscious.
4. If unconscious, cease stress reduction activities.

[way2do.com](http://www.way2do.com)

Questions??????



Choose your attitude about your job!