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## **Building the capacity of education department heads and training to meet the demands of educational innovation today**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Education and Training Department Head is the head of the Department of Education and Training (DOET), responsible to the People's Committee, the Chairman of the People's Committee at the district level, and the law for the implementation of the functions, tasks, powers, and all activities of the DOET. The article focuses on clarifying the functions, tasks of the DOET department head, the requirements for the DOET department head in the current context, and proposing a capacity framework for Education and Training department heads to meet the demands of educational innovation in the current context.

**Keywords:** DOET Department Head, Educational Innovation, Capacity Framework.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the context of fundamental and comprehensive educational innovation, including the overhaul of school networks, objectives, content, curriculum, textbooks, and teaching methods; innovation at various levels and types of education; modernization of educational infrastructure and technology; reforming the education process; and enhancing the quality of both teachers and educational administrators, significant opportunities and challenges are being posed for leaders and managers at all levels, including Education Departments.

It can be seen as an educational revolution across the entire national education system and all its constituent parts. The key aspect of the innovation process was identified at the 11th Party Congress as the reform of education management mechanisms and the development of the teaching and managerial workforce. The challenge of "innovating education management mechanisms, developing capacities for teachers and managers" is raising new issues regarding planning, selection/appointment policies, training, and development of education administrators based on standardized competency frameworks for leadership and management positions within the Education Department. However, currently, there is no specific framework for building capacities for leadership positions within the Education Department and equivalent positions; the development of managerial staff at all levels in the education sector, including Education Departments, has not genuinely been based on competency.

The article focuses on elucidating the roles and responsibilities of the Education Department head, the current demands placed on them, and proposes a competency framework for Education and Training department heads to meet the requirements of educational innovation in the current context.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

### **Some Basic Concepts**

#### ***Education and Training Department Head***

The Education and Training Department (DOET) is a specialized agency under the district-level People's Committee, assisting the district-level People's Committee in carrying out the state management function on education and training at the local level and implementing certain tasks, powers delegated by or authorized by the district-level People's Committee, the Chairman of the district-level People's Committee, and according to legal regulations. For the DOET to fulfill its functions and tasks as required, it necessitates departmental leadership with good character, strong professional competence, and the ability to meet the requirements and tasks assigned in the context of educational innovation.

The Education and Training Department head can be understood as the person in charge of the DOET, responsible to the People's Committee, the Chairman of the district-level People's Committee, and the law for the implementation of functions, tasks, powers, and all activities of the DOET. Departmental leaders and managers are the management subjects of the DOET, serving as commanders, leaders, guides, influencers, issuers of orders, and inspectors for DOET officials and specialists to successfully carry out the education cause in the district. They are both leaders and managers of the DOET and its affiliated educational institutions, subject to the guidance and management of the district-level Party Committee, People's Committee, and Director of the Department of Education and Training.

#### ***Competency Framework for Education and Training Department Heads***

A competency framework is a description of the necessary and sufficient competencies needed to successfully perform a job of a position, a group, a unit, or an entire organization (Dubois and Rothwell, 2004) The competency framework is the basis for human resource development (planning, recruitment, appointment, utilization, training – development, evaluation, rewards...); it provides the foundation for individuals to self-assess their own competencies, thereby making rational self-learning and self-development plans; at the same time, it serves as the basis for higher-level management agencies to assess the competencies of subordinates, thereby making appropriate management decisions.

Competency frameworks are typically tailored to specific job positions. They reflect the entire set of competencies that an individual needs to perform a specific job position within an organization. Within the scope of the thesis, the concept of a competency framework is understood as a collection of necessary competencies aimed at best meeting the job requirements of a specific job position.

For the Education and Training Department head, the competency framework consists of general and specific competencies that help them successfully perform their functions and duties in the most effective manner.

### **Functions, Duties, and Roles of the Education and Training Department Head**

The head of the Education and Training Department (DOET) is the leader of the DOET, responsible to the district-level People's Committee, the Chairman of the district-level People's Committee, and the law for the implementation of functions, duties, powers, and all activities of the DOET, as follows:

- With the function of deputy, executing orders, and tasks assigned by superiors, the DOET head performs the following tasks:

+ Advising the district-level People's Committee to submit to the People's Council at the same level for decision-making, plans, programs, and projects for the development of preschool, primary, and lower-secondary education in the locality, in accordance with the province's education development strategy and the local socio-economic development plan.

+ Guiding, organizing implementation, and inspecting compliance with professional regulations and practices; ensuring the quality of education; admissions, examinations, issuance of diplomas, and certificates; educational outreach, literacy promotion, building national standard schools, and fostering a learning society in the area.

+ They are responsible for accounting for educational activities, the quality of education, managing teachers and students, and implementing education development policies within their management scope before the People's Council, district-level People's Committee, Department of Education and Training, and the entire society.

+ They develop plans; coordinate with the Internal Affairs Department to carry out procedures, submit to the Chairman of the district-level People's Committee for decisions on the recruitment of education officials; allocate the number of personnel according to job positions; recognize, appoint, dismiss, transfer, change job positions, commend, and discipline heads and deputy heads of public educational institutions according to regulations.

- With the function of leadership and management, the head of the Education and Training Department performs the following tasks:

+ Directing individuals within the Department (deputy heads, departmental staff) to carry out assigned tasks as stipulated;

+ Directing educational institutions within the Department's management scope to effectively achieve educational goals and develop education in the district/county.

### **Role of the Education and Training Department Head**

#### ***Advisory Role***

- *The head of the Education and Training Department advises the district People's Committee on enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of state management in education and training in the locality:*

The Education and Training Department is a specialized agency under the district-level People's Committee, responsible for the results and quality of education within the department's management scope. As the head of the department, the department head plays a role in proposing and advising the district People's Committee on education-related issues in the district, such as plans, programs, projects for the development of preschool, primary, and lower-secondary education; legal documents on education within their jurisdiction; restructuring plans for preschools, primary schools, and lower-secondary schools in the area, tailored to the practical conditions of the locality to ensure the quality of education...

*- Advising the district People's Committee on developing human resource development plans for education:*

Based on the synthesis of the quantity and quality of the teaching staff and educational management staff in schools and educational institutions, as well as the requirements for the qualifications and competencies of the staff, the Education and Training Department head advises the district People's Committee on establishing long-term plans for education human resource development. Based on this, tasks such as recruitment, appointment, utilization, training, development, and remuneration can be implemented.

*- Advising the district People's Committee (DPC) on improving the national education system towards lifelong learning and building a learning society:*

Advising the DPC to restructure the educational institutions network aligned with the socio-economic development plan, human resource development plan in line with the direction of building an open education system; providing recommendations to the DPC to innovate financial policies and mechanisms, mobilize social resources for educational development; encouraging the establishment of scholarship funds, incentive programs to support underprivileged students, and to honor individuals and groups with outstanding achievements and contributions to the education sector.

### ***Directive Role***

*- Directing individuals and departments within the Education and Training Department to effectively carry out assigned functions and duties:*

As the head of the department, the Education and Training Department head is responsible for developing departmental activity plans; assigning tasks and organizing the workforce according to their capacities and assigned duties; regularly motivating, supervising, and monitoring the activities of department members, promptly addressing any errors or shortcomings, and promoting departmental activities in the right direction to ensure progress, quality, and effectiveness.

*- Directing subordinate units to innovate educational activities towards developing the qualities and capacities of learners.*

In hierarchical management, the Department of Education (DOE) is responsible for assisting the district people's committee in managing state-owned educational institutions (including those with investment from foreign organizations and individuals): Primary schools; multi-level secondary schools, excluding upper secondary level; ethnic boarding secondary schools; ethnic boarding secondary schools without upper secondary level; primary schools; preschool education institutions. The orientation of innovation in preschool and general education currently emphasizes the development of learners' qualities and competencies. As the head of the DOE, the department director is tasked with directing schools/educational institutions

under their jurisdiction to enhance innovation in goals, content, and teaching methods to promote the qualities and competencies of learners; focusing on directing the vigorous application of information technology and communication to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning.

- *Directing schools/educational institutions under the jurisdiction to innovate in examining, evaluating, and enhancing the quality assurance of education.*

Assessment and evaluation are crucial components in teaching and learning activities. Alongside curriculum, content, and teaching method innovations, schools need to enhance the modernization of assessment and evaluation methods for learners. The head of the Education and Training Department should direct schools to diversify assessment methods, emphasizing assessment through various means and different products. They should encourage the involvement of families in student evaluation. Additionally, they should guide schools to conduct educational quality accreditation as per regulations, report quality improvement results to competent authorities for timely adjustments and enhancements in educational quality.

- *Directing schools/educational institutions to innovate their school management practices.*

In educational management, the current requirement is to implement "school-based management," increasing the autonomy and responsibility of schools and emphasizing quality management. Accordingly, schools are granted increased autonomy in various aspects: personnel, finance, expertise, etc. The head of the Education and Training Department should advise on delegating autonomy and responsibility to schools; directing schools to enhance the role of the school council, implement supervision by stakeholders within the school and society; strengthen internal school inspection to ensure democracy, transparency, and openness.

### ***Coordination Role***

To fulfill the prescribed functions and duties, the head of the Department of Education must coordinate with various relevant parties, such as the Internal Affairs Department (to collaborate in the process of managing personnel matters such as recruitment, staffing, training, development, and salary disbursement...); the Financial Department (to collaborate in allocating financial resources for educational activities within the locality; managing income and expenditure in educational institutions...).

### ***Networking Role***

Based on the management level criteria, managers are classified into: grassroots level managers, intermediate level managers, and senior level managers. The head of the Department of Education is considered an intermediate level manager. They are responsible for translating the orientations, policies, strategies, overall objectives... of senior level managers into specific objectives, action plans, and implementation measures for grassroots level managers to execute; directing, guiding, coordinating, and evaluating the activities of grassroots level managers.

This can be specified as follows: The head of the Department of Education is responsible for translating the education policies of the Party, State, Ministry of Education and Training, and the plans of the Department of Education into specific objectives and plans for preschools, schools, and other educational institutions under local management authority and directing these units to implement them. The head of the Department of Education also advises the



leadership of the district People's Committee to institutionalize the orientations and policies of the Party, State, Ministry, and Department to be suitable for the local context. Therefore, the head of the Department of Education plays a role as a bridge between senior-level managers and grassroots-level managers.

### **The Demands of the Educational Reform Context Place Challenges on the Department of Education and Training Administrators**

- *Assuming an interpersonally dynamic role within the context of comprehensive educational reform:* Based on the roles, functions, and responsibilities of the Department of Education and Training administrators, as well as an analysis of the current demands of educational reform, the following personalized models of DOE administrators can be identified:

+ *The Head of the Department of Education and Training is an educator/educationalist.* As the head of the Department of Education and Training, overseeing the preschool and general education systems within the scope of management, the Department head must primarily be an educator or educationalist. Requirements for this role include: possessing strong political qualities, adhering strictly to the Party's principles, directions, state policies, laws, regulations of the sector, and local regulations; cultivating and upholding the qualities, honor, and reputation of educators; understanding the goals, requirements, content, and methods of education in preschool and general education programs as prescribed; identifying the position, role, and trends of development in preschool and general education within the context of comprehensive educational reform; attaining the standard level of training for educators as required; having solid knowledge in the subjects taught; understanding other subjects; and being able to use foreign languages and apply information technology in the performance of duties.

+ *The Head of the Department of Education and Training is a leader:* DOET is the leader of the department, directing the activities of officials within the department and educational institutions under its jurisdiction. In the role of a leader, the head of the DOET must have a strategic vision and future orientation. They should possess the ability to evaluate, analyze, and forecast the development of education and establish a strategic direction for the local education system. They must identify long-term, medium-term, and short-term priorities for the education sector in the locality, possess the ability to influence, attract, and mobilize people, as well as school principals to implement changes. They should be creative, decisive, make correct and timely decisions to develop the educational career in the locality.

+ *The Head of the Department of Education and Training is a manager:* The Head of the Department of Education and Training must have the capacity to develop departmental activity plans that align with the objectives, educational strategies, and local development directions. They need to construct medium-term and academic year plans for the education sector in the locality. They should be able to organize the implementation and supervise the execution of the department's plans and those of educational institutions. They must be capable of conducting training and development activities for the department's staff to meet the requirements for improving the quality and efficiency of operations, ensuring the sustainable development of the department. They should provide advice to the district/commune People's Committees regarding planning, appointment, dismissal, transfer, recruitment, utilization, evaluation, and proper

implementation of policies for the staff, teachers, and employees of educational institutions. They are responsible for directing teaching and educational activities, administrative and financial management, asset management, commendations, and ensuring educational quality. They need to guide educational institutions in creating a collaborative work environment, taking care of the physical and mental well-being, and providing opportunities for teachers, staff, and employees to unleash their potential and actively contribute to the local educational development endeavors.

+ *The Head of the DOET is a social activist:* The Head of the DOET must have an understanding of the trends and current issues in the socio-economic, cultural, political, and national security environments impacting education and educational institutions at the local level. They should be capable of fostering close relationships and consensus among political and social organizations, individuals, and stakeholders to support the local development of education and training. They need to create a conducive work environment, providing the best conditions for collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders to address educational issues in the context of international integration. Additionally, they should be able to guide and direct educational institutions in building and developing relationships with the community, fostering partnerships, sharing responsibilities for school and community development, and building a learning society.

- *Proactively and flexibly adapting to the current demands of educational innovation:* Educational innovation is an essential requirement stemming from the characteristics of the economic, cultural, social, and technological context. In the role of a local education "leader", the Head of the DOET must always adopt a mindset of readiness to adapt to the demands of innovation. They should provide guidance and direction to officials and staff of the department and educational institutions, fostering changes and adjustments to activities in line with the new context. This approach aims to enhance the quality of education and training in the locality.

### **Requirements for the Qualities and Competencies of the DOET Head**

#### ***Legal Basis Defining the Requirements for the Qualities and Competencies of the Head of the DOET***

- Decree No. 127/2018/NĐ-CP dated September 21, 2018, of the Government, stipulating the state management responsibilities in education;

- Circular No. 12/2020/TT-BGDĐT, dated May 22, 2020, guiding the functions, tasks, and powers of the Department of Education and Training under the People's Committees of provinces, centrally-run cities, the Division of Education and Training under the People's Committees of districts, towns, and cities directly under the provincial authority;

- Circular No. 10/2019/TT-BGDĐT of the Ministry of Education and Training, regulating the title standards of the heads and deputy heads of the Department of Education and Training under the People's Committees of districts, towns, cities under the provincial authority, cities under the direct central authority, dated August 9, 2019;

- Decree No. 37/2014/NĐ-CP, Decree regulating the organization of specialized agencies under the People's Committees of districts, towns, cities under the provincial authority;

- Decision No. 4856/QĐ-BGDĐT of the Ministry of Education and Training, Decision on the issuance of the Training Program for Department Heads, Deputy Department Heads of Education and Training, dated December 17, 2019;

- Requirements for the implementation of the 2018 general education curriculum.

### ***Job Description and Duties of the Head of the DOET***

For the Head of the DOET, the job description, functions, and duties are mandatory requirements according to the current job position plan. The implementation and guidance for developing the job position plan have been reflected in numerous documents, including Circular No. 15/2023/TT-BGD-ĐT, which provides guidance on the job positions of specialized education professionals; Laws on civil servants; Laws amending and supplementing certain provisions of the laws on civil servants and Notary Publics... The job description and duties of the Head of the Department of Education and Training can be described and specified as follows:

*Chairing and coordinating with relevant agencies to implement the state management function of the district People's Committee on education according to the government's decentralization:*

- Chairing the drafting of documents instructing the implementation of policy mechanisms, laws, and regulations of the provincial People's Committee on educational activities at the local level, to be submitted to the district People's Committee.

- Drafting decisions, directives, planning documents, five-year plans, annual plans, and programs, as well as content related to the reform of state administrative procedures in the education sector at the local level, to be submitted to the district People's Committee.

- Developing and implementing plans to carry out the project to innovate the curriculum and textbooks of general education in the district in accordance with the province's plan.

- Developing a project to rearrange and reorganize preschool, primary, and secondary education institutions in the area, in line with local practical conditions and ensuring the quality of education, to be submitted to the district People's Committee.

*Implementing personnel management for specialists at the DOET, teachers, educational administrators, and staff in public educational institutions under the district People's Committee according to legal regulations:*

- Developing plans, recruiting, arranging, assigning tasks, monitoring, supervising, and evaluating the performance of specialists at the Department of Education and Training;

- Monitoring the job position plan of affiliated schools/educational institutions, determining the number of personnel in affiliated units, and planning recruitment and utilization of appropriate personnel accordingly;

- Coordinating with the Internal Affairs Department Head to carry out procedures, submit to the Chairman of the district People's Committee: Decisions on appointment, re-appointment, dismissal, rotation, removal from positions, recognition, non-recognition of school boards of educational institutions under the district People's Committee;

- Participating in the recruitment of teachers, educational administrators, and staff in public educational institutions under the district People's Committee according to legal regulations when delegated authority;

- Monitoring the use of personnel (assignment, task allocation according to expertise, capacity) in affiliated schools/educational institutions within the management scope;

- Advising on and organizing training plans to enhance the capacity of teachers, educational administrators, and staff in public educational institutions under the district People's Committee according to job requirements and needs after approval by the competent authority;



- Participating in the appointment, evaluation, classification, commendation, and discipline of teachers, educational administrators in public educational institutions under the district People's Committee.

*Participating in educational financial management within the management scope as regulated:*

- Deciding on the allocation and budgeting of educational funds to educational institutions under the district People's Committee when approved by the authorized authority;

- Coordinating with the Finance and Planning Department at the same level to determine and balance the annual state budget expenditure for education in the locality, and submitting it for approval by the authorized authority;

- Providing guidance and conducting inspections on the use of state budget and other lawful revenue sources for education in educational institutions under the district People's Committee.

*Directing the management of educational institutions under the district People's Committee as regulated:*

- *Directing the management of teaching and educational activities in educational institutions under the district People's Committee as regulated:*

+ Directing the innovation of preschool and basic education programs and contents towards developing the qualities and competencies of learners.

+ Directing the innovation of teaching methods of teachers, ensuring that teachers use teaching methods appropriate to the diverse learning styles, needs, interests, and readiness levels of each student.

+ Directing the organization of experiential activities for students as required by educational innovation.

+ Directing the innovation of assessing student learning outcomes and development according to the requirements of developing the qualities and competencies of students in the new general education program.

- *Directing financial management in educational institutions under the district People's Committee as regulated:*

+ Directing schools/educational institutions under the jurisdiction of the district to develop financial budget plans at the beginning of the academic year.

+ Directing schools/educational institutions under the jurisdiction of the district to organize budget implementation, expenditure and revenue management, financial reporting, financial auditing, and financial transparency according to regulations.

+ Directing and guiding the efficient use of financial resources to enhance the comprehensive quality of education in schools/educational institutions.

+ Directing the mobilization of legal financial resources according to regulations to enhance the comprehensive quality of education in schools/educational institutions.

+ Providing guidance and support to educational institution managers in financial management.

- *Directing the management of education quality in educational institutions under the district People's Committee as regulated:*

+ Directing the development and implementation of self-assessment plans for education quality in educational institutions under the district People's Committee as regulated.

+ Directing the development and implementation of improvement plans for quality enhancement, addressing weaknesses based on the self-assessment results of educational institutions under the district People's Committee as regulated.

+ Providing guidance and support to nursery and basic education institution managers on education quality management.

+ Periodically reporting assessment results of education quality and improvement outcomes of nursery and basic education institutions to relevant authorities as prescribed.

*Conducting inspections and supervision as regulated:*

- Directing specialized inspections according to the guidance of the DOET.

- Coordinating with district inspections and inspections by the DOET in inspection and supervision activities regarding education and training at the local level.

- Addressing complaints, accusations, and suggestions related to education and handling violations according to legal regulations and assignments from the district People's Committee.

*Implementing reporting and publicizing the local education sector as prescribed:*

- Regularly updating information on the teaching staff and educational management personnel within the jurisdiction into the education sector's database.

- Fulfilling timely and complete reporting obligations on the organization and activities of education according to the guidance of the DOET and the district People's Committee.

*Carrying out other tasks assigned by the Chairman of the district People's Committee and as prescribed by law.*

***Building the competency framework for the Director of Education and Training to meet the current demands of educational innovation.***

Based on the study of legal documents and the inheritance of research results from other authors, and relying on the personality model of the Director of Education and Training, the competency framework (broadly defined to include qualities and abilities) of the DOET can be summarized as follows:

- *Criterion 1: Political qualities, professional ethics:* Mastering the Party's guidelines, policies, and laws of the state in the field of education and training and related areas to apply them to the leadership and management of the education sector at the local level; Serving as a role model in ethics, lifestyle, strictly adhering to the Party's guidelines, policies, and laws of the state; Maintaining a professional and creative work ethic; Being honest, straightforward, passionate about the profession, and responsible in managing the Department of Education and Training and educational institutions.

- *Criterion 2: Professional competence:* Understanding early childhood education programs (development trends, goals, content, methods, etc.); Familiarity with secondary education programs (goals, content, methods, forms, assessment criteria); Meeting the standards of professional training as regulated; Effectively implementing and deploying positive teaching and educational methods; Proficiency in using foreign languages and applying information technology in education management.

- *Criterion 3: Leadership competence:* Identifying the national and regional educational development context; Analyzing and forecasting the local educational development situation; Establishing a visionary strategic direction for local educational development; Designing and directing the implementation of long-term, medium-term, and short-term plans; Providing

efficient and timely advice for decisions to develop local education in response to the demands of educational innovation; Shaping organizational culture and school culture; Adapting flexibly to innovation; Making decisive, innovative decisions.

- *Criterion 4: Management competence:* Developing annual education plans for the local education sector; devising operational plans for the Department of Education and Training (DOET) that align with the educational goals, strategies, and local development orientations; Organizing the departmental structure and developing the DOET's workforce; Carrying out recruitment, selection, training, development, evaluation, and proper implementation of policies for the DOET's staff; Motivating and encouraging the DOET's staff to fulfill their assigned tasks; Establishing machinery and developing the workforce of preschools and schools to meet the requirements of implementing new educational programs; Advising the district People's Committee (DPC) on planning, recruitment, selection, training, development, evaluation, and proper implementation of policies for the staff, teachers, and employees of subordinate educational institutions; Directing and guiding preschools and schools in implementing teaching and educational objectives, content, and programs; Directing the implementation of educational outreach activities in the area; Directing preschools in renewing preschool education programs; directing schools in innovating school management and developing school education programs; directing interdisciplinary themed teaching; directing the organization of experiential and career orientation activities for students; Managing finances and assets; Directing the accounting department to develop financial and asset plans, ensuring balanced measures to fulfill the department's tasks; Coordinating with the District Planning and Finance Department to draft annual education budget proposals for approval by the competent authorities; Directing and guiding educational institutions to establish internal spending regulations and oversee their implementation; Directing the socialization of financial resources as per regulations; Developing operational procedures and administrative procedures of the department according to current regulations and meeting administrative reform requirements; Directing and implementing a serious, objective assessment of the performance of departmental staff and staff, teachers, and employees of educational institutions in the area as per regulations; Instructing and guiding departmental staff and staff, teachers, and employees of educational institutions in the application and exploitation of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching and education management; Instructing and guiding educational institutions and schools to conduct self-assessments of education quality as required; Participating in external evaluations of educational institutions.

- *Criterion 5: Social engagement competence:* Ability to establish and develop collaborative relationships between the Department and local authorities; establish relationships with political-social organizations, individuals, and relevant parties to support the local education and training development; Participate in social activities at the local level; Build and develop relationships for the Department and community support.

- *Criterion 6: Self-development competence:* Self-learning, self-research.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the context of educational innovation, Department Heads of Education and Training need to enhance their awareness and understanding of the requirements for educational innovation at all levels, actively develop professional competence, innovate organizational and

managerial approaches, as well as adopt an action-oriented mindset. Additionally, Department Heads of Education and Training must serve as agents of innovation, guiding each step of adaptation for preschool and general education institutions to flexibly adjust to changes. They should direct educational institutions to implement educational innovations effectively, fulfill assigned functions and tasks, and align with the practical conditions of schools and localities. The current standards for Department Heads of Education and Training are still too general and do not adequately reflect the specific requirements to meet the current context of educational innovation. Therefore, proposing a competency framework for Department Heads of Education and Training is a highly significant endeavor for developing the workforce of state management agencies and for the individual Department Heads themselves.

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