The SLS Study Companion

School Superintendent Assessment

6021

www.ets.org/sls
Welcome to the SLS Study Companion

Prepare to Show What You Know

You have been working to acquire the knowledge and skills you need for your teaching career. Now you are ready to demonstrate your abilities by taking an SLS test.

Using the SLS Study Companion is a smart way to prepare for the test so you can do your best on test day. This guide can help keep you on track and make the most efficient use of your study time.

The Study Companion contains practical information and helpful tools, including:

• An overview of the SLS tests
• Specific information on the SLS test you are taking
• A template study plan
• Study topics
• Practice questions and explanations of correct answers
• Test-taking tips and strategies
• Frequently asked questions
• Links to more detailed information

So where should you start? Begin by reviewing this guide in its entirety and note those sections that you need to revisit. Then you can create your own personalized study plan and schedule based on your individual needs and how much time you have before test day.

Keep in mind that study habits are individual. There are many different ways to successfully prepare for your test. Some people study better on their own, while others prefer a group dynamic. You may have more energy early in the day, but another test taker may concentrate better in the evening. So use this guide to develop the approach that works best for you.

Your educational leadership career begins with preparation. Good luck!

Know What to Expect

Which tests should I take?

Each state or agency that uses the SLS tests sets its own requirements for which test or tests you must take for the teaching area you wish to pursue.

Before you register for a test, confirm your state or agency’s testing requirements at www.ets.org/sls/states.

How are the SLS tests given?

SLS tests are given on computer. Other formats are available for test takers approved for accommodations (see page 60).
What should I expect when taking the test on computer?
When taking the test on computer, you can expect to be asked to provide proper identification at the test center. Once admitted, you will be given the opportunity to learn how the computer interface works (how to answer questions, how to skip questions, how to go back to questions you skipped, etc.) before the testing time begins. Watch the What to Expect on Test Day video to see what the experience is like.

Where and when are the SLS tests offered?
You can select the test center that is most convenient for you. The SLS tests are administered through an international network of test centers, which includes Prometric® Testing Centers, some universities, and other locations throughout the world.

Testing schedules may differ, so see the SLS web site for more detailed test registration information at www.ets.org/sls/register.
Table of Contents

The SLS Study Companion guides you through the steps to success

1. Learn About Your Test ................................................................. 5
   Learn about the specific test you will be taking

2. Familiarize Yourself with Test Questions .................................. 12
   Become comfortable with the types of questions you’ll find on the SLS tests

3. Practice with Sample Test Questions ....................................... 16
   Answer practice questions and find explanations for correct answers

4. Determine Your Strategy for Success ....................................... 43
   Set clear goals and deadlines so your test preparation is focused and efficient

5. Develop Your Study Plan .......................................................... 46
   Develop a personalized study plan and schedule

6. Review Study Topics ................................................................. 50
   Detailed study topics with questions for discussion

7. Review Smart Tips for Success ................................................ 58
   Follow test-taking tips developed by experts

8. Check on Testing Accommodations ......................................... 60
   See if you qualify for accommodations that may make it easier to take the SLS test

9. Do Your Best on Test Day .......................................................... 61
   Get ready for test day so you will be calm and confident

10. Understand Your Scores .......................................................... 63
    Understand how tests are scored and how to interpret your test scores

Appendix: Other Questions You May Have .................................... 65
1. Learn About Your Test

Learn about the specific test you will be taking

School Superintendent Assessment (6021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Name</th>
<th>School Superintendent Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test Code</td>
<td>6021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
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| Number of Questions           | Section I: 120 selected-response questions  
Section II: 3 constructed-response questions |
| Format                        | Selected-response questions and constructed-response questions |
| Test Delivery                 | Computer delivered               |

### Test at a Glance

<table>
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<th>Content Categories</th>
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<th>Approximate Percentage of Examination</th>
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<td>I. Educational Leadership</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. Administrative Leadership</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. Integrated Knowledge and Understanding (Case Study)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Leadership</td>
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### About This Test

The School Superintendent Assessment measures whether entry-level superintendents have the standards-relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities believed necessary for competent professional practice. It assesses the knowledge and skills necessary for safe and effective practice that the new superintendent brings to the position.

The SSA is aligned with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders. The ISLLC standards have six areas of focus, including developing a vision of learning, creating a school culture and instructional program conducive to learning, promoting a safe and efficient learning environment, collaborating with families and community members, acting in an ethical manner, and understanding the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.

The test is three hours long and is comprised of 120 selected-response questions in Section I, which are focused on educational leadership, instructional leadership, and administrative leadership. In Section II, the test contains three constructed-response questions based on a case study that includes a scenario about a school district and multiple documents that provide insight into the situation in the district. The case study requires candidates to demonstrate the ability to synthesize and apply leadership skills to resolve issues or conflict.

This test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.
Test Specifications

Test specifications in this chapter describe the knowledge and skills measured by the test. Study topics to help you prepare to answer test questions can be found on page 50.

I. Educational Leadership
   A. Vision and Goals
      1. Knows strategies for engaging all stakeholders in the development of the district’s vision and goals
         a. asks critical questions
         b. identifies stakeholders
         c. knows how to give voice to diverse perspectives
         d. distributes responsibilities appropriately
         e. uses effective communication strategies to build consensus
         f. understands basic group processes
         g. administers a needs assessment
      2. Knows how to formulate goals and objectives using data and resources
         a. uses data to establish goals
         b. identifies resources for developing goals
         c. recognizes the importance of aligning goals with the district’s vision
      3. Knows how to develop and implement a plan to achieve district goals and objectives
         a. analyzes the status of current district goals and objectives
         b. develops a plan of action
         c. prioritizes critical goals and objectives
         d. differentiates short-term and long-term planning needs
         e. articulates the action plan
         f. implements a change-process model
      4. Knows how to monitor and evaluate progress toward district goals and objectives in order to sustain continuous improvement
         a. identifies accountability models that systematically monitor progress
         b. collects and analyzes quantitative and qualitative data in order to adjust programs and practices
      5. Is familiar with various resources used to support the implementation of a district’s vision and goals
         a. identifies human resources, financial resources, technological resources, facilities resources, and community resources
      6. Knows how to assess the effect of the culture and climate of the organization on student learning
         a. identifies culture and climate characteristics of high-performing schools
         b. assesses the existing culture and climate using tools such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews
         c. understands the impact of culture and climate on student learning
      7. Understands the need to recognize and celebrate the contributions of all stakeholders toward the achievement of the district’s goals and objectives
         a. understands and demonstrates the importance of recognizing contributions
         b. recognizes and acknowledges contributions of individuals and groups in goal attainment
   B. Ethics and Integrity
      1. Knows the basic principles of ethical professional behavior for educators
         a. identifies the following in the context of ethical professional behavior:
            – equality
            – equity
            – honesty
            – legality
            – consistency
      2. Knows how to implement policies and procedures that promote the ethical behavior of all district personnel
         a. interprets policies and procedures related to ethical behavior
         b. promotes professional standards of behavior and written codes of ethical conduct
         c. models ethical behavior
      3. Knows how to detect, monitor, and respond to ethical issues
         a. establishes a safe and secure accountability system
         b. identifies and addresses nonethical behaviors
         c. investigates promptly
         d. applies due process
4. Knows laws, policies, and procedures that protect the rights and confidentiality of students and staff
   a. identifies laws, policies, and procedures essential to:
      - employment
      - rights of students and staff
      - privacy
      - technology

C. Communication and Collaboration

1. Knows how and when to articulate positions on educational issues
   a. selects appropriate communication tools
   b. identifies appropriate communication strategies for various audiences
   c. serves as an advocate
   d. responds to educational concerns, needs, and topics

2. Is familiar with emerging issues and trends affecting education
   a. identifies societal issues (including but not limited to):
      - achievement gap
      - demographics
      - technology
      - family structures
      - mobility
      - diversity
      - global connections
   b. identifies educational issues (including but not limited to):
      - achievement gap
      - accountability
      - outsourcing educational services
      - school choice
      - tenure
      - availability of professional personnel
      - extended school day and school year
      - technology
      - performance-based pay

3. Knows how to communicate and collaborate with diverse stakeholder groups, both internal and external, in order to support the achievement of district goals
   a. identifies groups with diverse perspectives
   b. develops a sense of shared responsibility
   c. distributes tasks as appropriate

4. Knows how and when to facilitate collaborative decision making
   a. defines decision-making processes and procedures
   b. utilizes decision-making processes and procedures
   c. determines appropriate degree of transparency
   d. recognizes when decision making requires collaboration

5. Is familiar with how to identify, access, and collaborate with key local, state, and national entities in order to address educational issues
   a. identifies individuals, businesses, higher-education institutions, and other groups in the community who can help develop, implement, and support school-related programs

6. Knows how to build partnerships that strengthen programs and support district goals
   a. promotes schools as community resources
   b. collaborates with partners
   c. develops a communication plan

7. Understands the roles, functions, and expectations of the superintendent and the board of education, and the expectations each has of the other
   a. identifies position and boundary limitations
   b. differentiates responsibilities
   c. communicates statutory roles
   d. employs strategies to separate roles

8. Knows how to communicate and collaborate with board members in a variety of contexts
   a. identifies and selects procedures for formal communication and collaboration
   b. identifies and selects procedures for informal communication and collaboration
   c. applies protocols to address board issues
   d. applies protocols to address individual board member issues
   e. understands the impact and implications of interactions with board members
9. Understands how to develop a public relations program to foster community and media relations
   a. identifies communication sources and outlets
   b. establishes positive working relationships with the media
   c. establishes a communication plan
   d. establishes collaborative communication channels

II. Instructional Leadership
   A. Teaching and Learning
   1. Knows how to facilitate and promote a culture of learning
      a. establishes shared mission, vision, values, and goals
      b. implements key elements that promote a culture of learning
      c. creates a safe and supportive climate for learning and teaching
      d. develops and sustains professional development activities that are aligned with district goals
   2. Knows how to evaluate and select programs, services, and resources to support the learning of all students
      a. examines the effectiveness of programs, services, and resources
      b. determines and addresses barriers to student learning
      c. investigates the equity and cultural responsiveness of programs
   3. Is familiar with multiple factors that affect teaching and learning
      a. identifies the factors that affect teaching and learning

4. Understands how the environment affects student learning
   a. identifies the culture and climate in district schools
   b. recognizes the effect of the school climate on learning:
      – physical climate
      – academic climate
      – social climate
   c. collaborates with school-level personnel to monitor and identify areas of strength and need
   d. implements procedures and policies to ensure a safe environment

5. Understands how organizational factors affect teaching and learning
   a. analyzes the impact on teaching and learning of:
      – staffing patterns
      – class-scheduling formats
      – course offerings
      – calendar: school day and school year
      – school organizational structures

6. Understands the importance of developing and implementing a district plan of student assessment
   a. distinguishes among the different forms and types of assessment and their purpose for measuring student learning
   b. determines the appropriate instruments and actions required to identify program strengths and needs

7. Understands how to gather and analyze student assessment data to monitor, evaluate, and improve student learning
   a. identifies relevant data sources
   b. applies data-informed decision-making processes to promote continuous improvement

8. Is familiar with the correlation between teacher effectiveness and student learning
   a. describes the research-based relationship between instruction and learning
9. Is familiar with best practices and research that support personal and professional growth of all staff
   a. identifies research-based professional development practices and activities for self and staff

10. Knows the importance of implementing a comprehensive and differentiated professional development program for all staff
    a. describes characteristics of effective professional development programs:
       - sustained
       - job-embedded
       - enhanced with follow-up support and coaching
       - aligned with district goals
    b. addresses the varied needs of novice and veteran staff

11. Knows the importance of providing ongoing support to facilitate professional growth
    a. determines practices that promote professional learning
    b. recognizes resources that support professional growth:
       - time
       - personnel
       - fiscal support
       - facilities
       - technology
       - materials

12. Is familiar with strategies for addressing the needs of diverse populations
    a. identifies strategies that address the needs of diverse populations
    b. identifies activities that support diverse populations

B. Curriculum and Instruction

1. Is familiar with the basic concepts of curriculum development and design
   a. identifies the components of a curriculum review and revision cycle
   b. recognizes the need for curriculum alignment with local, state, and national guidelines

2. Knows how curriculum design and delivery systems affect instructional quality and student learning
   a. identifies approaches to curriculum design and delivery
   b. recognizes connections between curriculum design and delivery and student learning
   c. describes the relationship between curriculum-delivery systems and student learning

3. Understands the role of technology in teaching and learning
   a. recognizes the importance of technology in supporting teaching and learning
   b. applies a variety of technologies for the purposes of:
      - communication
      - collaboration
      - organization
      - research

4. Understands the importance of monitoring and evaluating curriculum and instructional practices
   a. applies procedures and practices to monitor and evaluate curriculum and instructional practices
   b. connects the results of student performance to instructional practices
   c. uses data trends to monitor and evaluate instructional practices
III. Administrative Leadership

A. Personnel

1. Knows major federal laws, regulations, and codes that cover human resource management
   a. identifies basic tenets of federal laws guiding human resource management
   b. applies current federal laws guiding human resource management

2. Knows the basic procedures for staffing
   a. identifies procedures for:
      – recruiting
      – placement
      – retention
   b. understands the implications of contractual agreements related to staffing

3. Knows how to assess and evaluate staff
   a. determines methods and techniques for assessing and evaluating staff:
      – conferencing
      – data analysis
      – observation
      – self-assessment
      – stakeholder feedback
   b. distinguishes between formative assessments and summative evaluations

4. Knows basic procedures for staff discipline, remediation, and dismissal
   a. applies ethical, legal, and due-process procedures in:
      – discipline
      – remediation
      – dismissal
   b. identifies basic tenets of due-process procedures

B. Finance

1. Knows basic procedures for financial record keeping, reporting, and accountability
   a. distinguishes local, state, and federal requirements for financial management
   b. identifies the process of monitoring financial accounts
   c. recognizes the importance of using standard accounting practices

2. Understands procedures for budget planning and management
   a. identifies and analyzes relevant data for use in budgetary decision making
   b. identifies and engages stakeholders in budget planning
   c. describes the process for budget planning at multiple levels
   d. facilitates the management of budgets according to law

3. Is familiar with strategies for obtaining and managing resources needed to achieve the district’s mission and goals
   a. identifies key strategies for obtaining resources:
      – securing grants
      – sharing services
      – consolidating purchases
      – securing sponsorship and advertising
      – establishing foundations
      – securing donations
   b. identifies key strategies for efficiently managing resources:
      – sharing or consolidating services
      – sharing human capital
      – conserving resources
      – auditing staff
      – utilizing technology
      – outsourcing building capacity of staff to meet the needs of all learners

4. Is familiar with strategies for financial planning to address future district needs
   a. identifies components of financial planning:
      – revenue forecasts
      – enrollment and staffing projections
      – bond issues
      – demographic trends
      – capital and facility needs
Step 1: Learn About Your Test

C. Management

1. Is familiar with how elements of facilities management affect the learning process
   a. identifies the relationship between facilities management and the learning process
   b. identifies elements of a facilities management plan
   c. identifies procedures and personnel needed for building maintenance, cost analysis, use of facilities

2. Is familiar with federal laws and regulations associated with facilities management and compliance
   a. identifies federal laws and regulations associated with facilities (including but not limited to):
      – ADA
      – OSHA
      – EPA
      – IDEA 2004 (IDEIA)

3. Knows how to implement a crisis management plan
   a. defines components of a crisis management plan
   b. identifies resources to use in implementing the plan
   c. communicates procedures, practices, and personnel required for crisis management implementation
   d. implements crisis management readiness and training activities

4. Knows how to evaluate the efficacy of a crisis management plan
   a. describes the steps in the evaluation of a crisis management plan
   b. examines the status of the current crisis management plan

5. Knows strategies for time management
   a. applies the elements of time management:
      – planning
      – prioritizing
      – scheduling
      – delegating
      – allocating
      – monitoring

6. Is familiar with the effect of the organizational structure of a district on day-to-day operations
   a. identifies the effects of the organizational structure on daily operations:
      – purchasing
      – scheduling
      – transportation
      – personnel

7. Understands the role of support services in the school system
   a. explains support services and recognizes their roles:
      – transportation services
      – food services
      – student support services
      – custodial services
      – safety and security services
      – information technology services

8. Understands the interdependent nature of the organizational system
   a. explains the cause-and-effect relationship of departments in the organization
   b. applies appropriate teaming strategies to build connectedness

9. Knows strategies for problem solving
   a. assimilates problem-solving strategies into daily operations:
      – identifies and investigates a problem
      – generates solutions
      – analyzes options
      – selects an action
      – implements the action
      – communicates the results of the action
      – evaluates the action
   b. supports multiple models for problem solving
2. Familiarize Yourself with Test Questions

Become comfortable with the types of questions you’ll find on the SLS tests

The SLS assessments include a variety of question types: constructed response (for which you write a response of your own); selected response, for which you select one or more answers from a list of choices or make another kind of selection (e.g., by clicking on a sentence in a text or by clicking on part of a graphic); and numeric entry, for which you enter a numeric value in an answer field. You may be familiar with these question formats from taking other standardized tests. If not, familiarize yourself with them so you don’t spend time during the test figuring out how to answer them.

Understanding Computer-Delivered Questions

Questions on computer-delivered tests are interactive in the sense that you answer by selecting an option or entering text on the screen. If you see a format you are not familiar with, read the directions carefully. The directions always give clear instructions on how you are expected to respond.

For most questions, you respond by clicking an oval to select a single answer from a list of answer choices.

However, interactive question types may also ask you to respond by:

- Clicking more than one oval to select answers from a list of answer choices.
- Typing in an entry box. When the answer is a number, you may be asked to enter a numerical answer. Some questions may have more than one place to enter a response.
- Clicking check boxes. You may be asked to click check boxes instead of an oval when more than one choice within a set of answers can be selected.
- Clicking parts of a graphic. In some questions, you will select your answers by clicking on a location (or locations) on a graphic such as a map or chart, as opposed to choosing your answer from a list.
- Clicking on sentences. In questions with reading passages, you may be asked to choose your answers by clicking on a sentence (or sentences) within the reading passage.
- Dragging and dropping answer choices into targets on the screen. You may be asked to select answers from a list of choices and drag your answers to the appropriate location in a table, paragraph of text or graphic.
- Selecting answer choices from a drop-down menu. You may be asked to choose answers by selecting choices from a drop-down menu (e.g., to complete a sentence).

Remember that with every question you will get clear instructions.

Perhaps the best way to understand computer-delivered questions is to view the Computer-delivered Testing Demonstration on the Praxis web site to learn how a computer-delivered test works and see examples of some types of questions you may encounter.
Understanding Selected-Response Questions

Many selected-response questions begin with the phrase “which of the following.” Take a look at this example:

Which of the following is a flavor made from beans?
(A) Strawberry
(B) Cherry
(C) Vanilla
(D) Mint

How would you answer this question?

All of the answer choices are flavors. Your job is to decide which of the flavors is the one made from beans.

Try following these steps to select the correct answer.

1) **Limit your answer to the choices given.** You may know that chocolate and coffee are also flavors made from beans, but they are not listed. Rather than thinking of other possible answers, focus only on the choices given (“which of the following”).

2) **Eliminate incorrect answers.** You may know that strawberry and cherry flavors are made from fruit and that mint flavor is made from a plant. That leaves vanilla as the only possible answer.

3) **Verify your answer.** You can substitute “vanilla” for the phrase “which of the following” and turn the question into this statement: “Vanilla is a flavor made from beans.” This will help you be sure that your answer is correct. If you’re still uncertain, try substituting the other choices to see if they make sense. You may want to use this technique as you answer selected-response questions on the practice tests.

Try a more challenging example

The vanilla bean question is pretty straightforward, but you’ll find that more challenging questions have a similar structure. For example:

Entries in outlines are generally arranged according to which of the following relationships of ideas?
(A) Literal and inferential
(B) Concrete and abstract
(C) Linear and recursive
(D) Main and subordinate

You’ll notice that this example also contains the phrase “which of the following.” This phrase helps you determine that your answer will be a “relationship of ideas” from the choices provided. You are supposed to find the choice that describes how entries, or ideas, in outlines are related.

Sometimes it helps to put the question in your own words. Here, you could paraphrase the question in this way: “How are outlines usually organized?” Since the ideas in outlines usually appear as main ideas and subordinate ideas, the answer is (D).
QUICK TIP: Don’t be intimidated by words you may not understand. It might be easy to be thrown by words like “recursive” or “inferential.” Read carefully to understand the question and look for an answer that fits. An outline is something you are probably familiar with and expect to teach to your students. So slow down, and use what you know.

Watch out for selected-response questions containing “NOT,” “LEAST,” and “EXCEPT”
This type of question asks you to select the choice that does not fit. You must be very careful because it is easy to forget that you are selecting the negative. This question type is used in situations in which there are several good solutions or ways to approach something, but also a clearly wrong way.

How to approach questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages
When answering questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages, provide only the information that the questions ask for. In the case of a map or graph, you might want to read the questions first, and then look at the map or graph. In the case of a long reading passage, you might want to go ahead and read the passage first, noting places you think are important, and then answer the questions. Again, the important thing is to be sure you answer the questions as they refer to the material presented. So read the questions carefully.

How to approach unfamiliar formats
New question formats are developed from time to time to find new ways of assessing knowledge. Tests may include audio and video components, such as a movie clip or animation, instead of a map or reading passage. Other tests may allow you to zoom in on details in a graphic or picture.

Tests may also include interactive questions. These questions take advantage of technology to assess knowledge and skills in ways that standard selected-response questions cannot. If you see a format you are not familiar with, read the directions carefully. The directions always give clear instructions on how you are expected to respond.

QUICK TIP: Don’t make the questions more difficult than they are. Don’t read for hidden meanings or tricks. There are no trick questions on SLS tests. They are intended to be serious, straightforward tests of your knowledge.

Understanding Constructed-Response Questions
Constructed-response questions require you to demonstrate your knowledge in a subject area by creating your own response to particular topics. Essays and short-answer questions are types of constructed-response questions.

For example, an essay question might present you with a topic and ask you to discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the opinion stated. You must support your position with specific reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Take a look at a few sample essay topics:

- “Celebrities have a tremendous influence on the young, and for that reason, they have a responsibility to act as role models.”
- “We are constantly bombarded by advertisements—on television and radio, in newspapers and magazines, on highway signs, and the sides of buses. They have become too pervasive. It’s time to put limits on advertising.”
- “Advances in computer technology have made the classroom unnecessary, since students and teachers are able to communicate with one another from computer terminals at home or at work.”
Keep these things in mind when you respond to a constructed-response question

1) **Answer the question accurately.** Analyze what each part of the question is asking you to do. If the question asks you to describe or discuss, you should provide more than just a list.

2) **Answer the question completely.** If a question asks you to do three distinct things in your response, you should cover all three things for the best score. Otherwise, no matter how well you write, you will not be awarded full credit.

3) **Answer the question that is asked.** Do not change the question or challenge the basis of the question. You will receive no credit or a low score if you answer another question or if you state, for example, that there is no possible answer.

4) **Give a thorough and detailed response.** You must demonstrate that you have a thorough understanding of the subject matter. However, your response should be straightforward and not filled with unnecessary information.

5) **Reread your response.** Check that you have written what you thought you wrote. Be sure not to leave sentences unfinished or omit clarifying information.

**QUICK TIP:** You may find that it helps to take notes on scratch paper so that you don't miss any details. Then you'll be sure to have all the information you need to answer the question.

For tests that have constructed-response questions, more detailed information can be found on page 5.
3. Practice with Sample Test Questions

Answer practice questions and find explanations for correct answers

Sample Test Questions

This test is available via computer delivery. To illustrate what the computer-delivered test looks like, the following sample question shows an actual screen used in a computer-delivered test. For the purposes of this guide, sample questions are provided as they would appear in a paper-delivered test.

While planning units for science instruction, a teacher includes weekly quizzes, a project, and end of chapter tests. Which of the following best describes the primary purpose for including such activities while planning instruction?

☐ To determine students’ prior knowledge
☐ To monitor students’ progress
☐ To forecast students’ success rate in state tests
☐ To compare student achievement with that of previous classes

Answer the question above by clicking on the correct response.
The sample questions that follow illustrate the kinds of questions in the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.

Directions: Each of the questions or statements below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

1. Which of the following has the authority to adopt policies that will best ensure accountability for school districts?
   (A) The district superintendent
   (B) The district school board
   (C) The members of the district’s policy subcommittee
   (D) The general public through referendum

2. A superintendent works with the principal and staff members of a low-performing middle school to implement the following research-based recommendations:
   1. Support change with strong leadership.
   2. Maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction.
   3. Make visible improvements early in the process.
   4. Build a committed staff.

   Which of the following is the primary purpose of the recommendations above?
   (A) Increasing the likelihood of a successful turnaround
   (B) Improving teacher-administrator communication
   (C) Establishing credibility in the community
   (D) Alerting other schools of the need to maintain high standards

3. A district parent-teacher organization invites the new superintendent to attend a round table meeting. After accepting the invitation, the superintendent learns that the group has disregarded requests made by the previous superintendent on several occasions. As a result, the organization’s working relationship with the school district is poor. At the round table meeting, the superintendent should
   (A) listen, observe, and look for common themes arising during the event
   (B) review his or her goals, set the tone of his or her tenure, and control the discussion
   (C) speak praise of the group, review his or her expectations, and learn the written rules of the group
   (D) discuss the problems with the previous superintendent, implement control measures, and informally discuss the rules governing the group

4. Which of the following best identifies a characteristic of a highly effective school?
   (A) A structure for ongoing monitoring of student performance and strong accountability
   (B) A variety of professional development activities offered to novice and veteran staff
   (C) A centralized administration directing school operations
   (D) Teacher autonomy when implementing curriculum standards in the classroom

5. Which of the following strategies best engages stakeholders in the process of creating a shared vision?
   (A) Asking parents to draft a preliminary vision statement for the administrative leadership to review
   (B) Offering parent meetings where the superintendent presents the developed vision and goals
   (C) Assessing the district’s readiness through input from employees early in the development process
   (D) Involving employees and community members directly in the process so each has a voice
6. Which of the following strategies would best build a staff committed to turning around a low-performing school?

(A) Providing teachers with a well-maintained facility
(B) Providing training on curriculum alignment with state standards
(C) Replacing staff opposed to effective turnaround efforts
(D) Hiring newly graduated teachers to provide a fresh view of education

7. A superintendent wants to ensure seamless learning for students transitioning from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school. Which of the following support structures best meets the superintendent’s needs?

(A) Professional learning communities
(B) Collaborative cohorts
(C) Vertical teaming
(D) Inquiry-based staff development

8. Ms. Jazmine, a new superintendent, sets a goal to increase collaboration among central office staff and principals during her first year. A few weeks into the school year, she learns that on two different occasions a principal has encouraged other principals to undermine her efforts to implement a new district-wide teacher evaluation process. Which of the following is the superintendent’s best initial action for addressing the situation?

(A) Offering the principal an opportunity to express an opinion about the new evaluation process directly to her
(B) Meeting with the principal to document the incidents and communicate her expectations
(C) Placing a letter of reprimand for insubordination in the principal’s personnel file
(D) Ignoring the situation at present and waiting to see if the negative talk stops on its own

9. Which of the following initiatives should a superintendent implement to best support data-driven decision making?

(A) Using grading systems based on each teacher’s evaluation of completed work and participation
(B) Developing staff-development programs based on documented problems to improve student learning
(C) Planning staffing decisions based on each teacher’s long-term commitment and availability
(D) Making budget decisions based entirely on continuing programs administered at the school in the previous year

10. Which of the following sets of data will be most helpful to a superintendent preparing a comprehensive district budget?

(A) Demographic changes for the state, projections in migration patterns for the United States, and shifts in urban settings
(B) National and state economic projections of employment rates, interest rates for home mortgages, and consumer spending
(C) Student enrollment projections, revenue and expenditure projections, cash flow projections, and debt service projections
(D) Projections of labor availability, the number of teachers graduating in high-need subject areas, and the number of college graduates
11. A superintendent learns that local college-readiness assessment data indicate that graduating seniors in the district lack basic language proficiency skills upon entering college. Which of the following actions taken by the superintendent would best engage others in addressing the district's problem?

(A) Requesting that the local community college add a remedial reading and writing course to address the deficiencies identified by the assessment

(B) Proposing that a private tutoring company provide services at reduced cost to seniors who fail to meet the state assessment standards

(C) Holding a press conference to obtain community support for raising funds to purchase a literacy program for seniors

(D) Convening an action committee that focuses on determining the reasons for and solutions to the gaps identified by the assessment data

12. Which of the following practices implemented by school leadership in a district best promotes improving student performance?

(A) Gathering evidence connected to individual school goals and using the data to drive future instructional decisions

(B) Requiring each school to undergo an annual instructional program audit and ranking the district’s schools based on the audit’s results

(C) Organizing professional development around state assessment scores by teacher and monitoring the individual implementation of the strategies presented

(D) Evaluating all district principals based on the passing rates of their students and the annual evaluation scores of the teachers in their school

13. The parents of three homeschooled children request to have their children participate in the district’s interscholastic athletics program. Before responding to the parents, the superintendent should

(A) estimate the cost of the children’s participation

(B) notify the athletic director that children new to the district will be joining the athletic teams

(C) review current state law concerning the rights of homeschooled students

(D) require evidence from the parents that indicates the children’s home instruction is equivalent to that of public school

14. A superintendent is changing the existing high school schedule of daily 45-minute class periods to alternating 90-minute blocks. This change is based on research that suggests that most high school teachers following a 45-minute class schedule

(A) use team-teaching approaches more frequently than teachers in alternating blocks

(B) use more lecture and didactic teaching methods than teachers in alternating blocks

(C) report that student attendance is better in daily short sessions than in alternating blocks

(D) report increased student achievement in daily short sessions than in alternating blocks
15. Which of the following actions by a superintendent would best ensure that the agreed upon, nonnegotiable district goals for improving classroom instruction and student achievement are implemented in every school?

(A) Establishing a communication plan to guarantee that all staff members in each building are aware of the identified goals
(B) Allocating additional funds for professional development programs to promote the consistent use of research-based instructional practices
(C) Adopting a single instructional model that all teachers employ for classroom instructional design and planning
(D) Making sure that building-level administrators engage in behaviors that provide both implicit and explicit support for the identified goals

16. When leading a small school district, a superintendent should consider outsourcing which of the following aspects of technology to a commercial organization because of the considerable expertise and resources needed to manage it?

(A) Web site content selection
(B) Intranet file management
(C) Web-site hosting and management
(D) Professional development

17. To deal with overcrowding, a school board decides to revise the attendance boundaries of the district’s two high schools. Due to limited communication, the board’s decision causes an uproar in the community. Which of the following steps would best improve public relations with the community and minimize community dissension in the future?

(A) Scheduling a meeting between the superintendent and the school board to analyze the community’s reaction to their decision
(B) Establishing a proactive public relations plan that includes procedures for addressing school- and community-related issues
(C) Hiring an outside public relations consultant to handle school- and community-related issues and crises as they occur
(D) Allowing parents and community members to comment after decisions have been made that affect them

18. In addition to overseeing the operation of public schools and making sure applicable laws are carried out, state education agencies are responsible for which of the following?

(A) Submitting educational policy for review and passage by state legislatures
(B) Providing a state school board designee to serve on superintendent selection committees
(C) Overseeing the selection and approval of local school board members
(D) Distributing state funds to school districts within the established parameters
19. Stage 1: Identify desired results
   Stage 2: Determine acceptable evidence of learning
   Stage 3: Design learning experiences and instruction

The three stages of planning listed above are most closely associated with which of the following approaches to curriculum design?

(A) Strategic planning
(B) Backward planning
(C) Performance-based planning
(D) Unit planning

20. A superintendent wants to improve the effectiveness of the district’s new-teacher mentoring program which currently assigns each new teacher to a single mentor-teacher. To best improve the program, the superintendent should take which of the following actions?

(A) Reallocating the cost of a mentor-teacher assignment toward the cost of staff development classes that occur twice a year
(B) Asking a group of teachers in a specific content area to act as cohorts to the mentors
(C) Providing multiple mentors to each new teacher for support in critical-need areas
(D) Allocating an instructional coach and administrator to each new teacher

21. A superintendent provides training to district principals on strategies for building professional capacity in their schools. Which of the following best identifies an action by the principals that would most likely build professional capacity through collaboration within their schools?

(A) Requiring teachers to generate solutions to school-based problems
(B) Delegating to teachers the responsibility of monitoring progress toward district goals
(C) Inviting teachers to participate in a book study to investigate the benefits of shared decision making
(D) Establishing professional learning communities to promote shared inquiry among teachers

22. Which of the following actions would best address a new superintendent’s goal of improving students and teachers’ understanding of cultural responsiveness in the community?

(A) Implementing an integrated curriculum that promotes an appreciation of individual similarities and differences
(B) Adopting formal school- and district-level policies to promote involvement of families who reflect the diversity of the school population
(C) Establishing a district-level multicultural association to provide an open forum for sharing ideas and planning district events
(D) Engaging teachers in thought-provoking and innovative professional development activities that promote a deeper knowledge base for differentiated instruction
23. The superintendent hosts a reception to recognize the achievements of the staff at a campus who earns an excellent rating on the state-mandated assessment. This action will most likely result in

(A) an increased level of trust in district leadership
(B) an increased understanding of teacher collaboration
(C) the establishment of a learning community
(D) a repeat of the behaviors that resulted in student success

24. A superintendent mentors a newly appointed elementary principal who is concerned that there is insufficient time in the day to complete tasks and responsibilities requiring individual attention. Which of the following is an inefficient time management practice of many new principals?

(A) Supervising the arrival and departure of students
(B) Scheduling time at the beginning and end of the day to respond to e-mail
(C) Having an open-door policy throughout the day
(D) Setting aside a period of time each day to visit classrooms

25. Which of the following actions by a superintendent best ensures that the local board of education makes sound curriculum policy decisions?

(A) Developing an understanding with the board that curricular policy is not their responsibility
(B) Educating board members on curriculum-related issues on a regular basis
(C) Discussing curriculum policies in depth at a formal meeting to ensure policy approval
(D) Encouraging board members to participate in district curriculum writing activities

26. 1. Guaranteed and viable curriculum
   2. Challenging goals and effective feedback
   3. Parent and community involvement
   4. Safe and orderly environment

According to research, the factors listed above are most likely to have a positive effect on

(A) staff development
(B) curriculum development
(C) campus facility maintenance
(D) student achievement

27. A positive correlation exists between well-maintained campus facilities and

(A) increased resource sharing with the community
(B) improved community involvement
(C) increased student achievement
(D) improved communication among staff members
28. A maintenance supervisor ignores several custodians' repeated complaints that the chemicals used to clean the school bathrooms irritate their lungs. Which of the following regulations is the supervisor violating?

(A) Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
(B) National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
(C) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
(D) Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)

29. According to the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), a superintendent can approve twelve weeks of leave for an employee who

(A) travels outside the United States to begin adoption procedures
(B) provides care for an elderly grandparent with a serious illness
(C) adopts a child through a local adoption agency
(D) has a relative who has died unexpectedly

30. Research-based professional development standards make explicit that the purpose of professional learning is to

(A) identify the most appropriate and effective professional learning programs for educators
(B) develop educators' knowledge and skills to help students perform at higher levels
(C) support collaboratively determined improvement goals of schools and districts
(D) prescribe professional learning solutions to address school-based challenges

31. Which of the following approaches to budgeting has historically been the most widely used in schools?

(A) Line-item budgeting
(B) Performance budgeting
(C) Program budgeting
(D) Zero-based budgeting

32. Which of the following practices by the superintendent would most effectively promote an ethical strategic planning process?

(A) Engaging in planning activities with a diverse group that represents the community
(B) Assigning members of a children’s advocacy group to the district’s student policy development and evaluation committee
(C) Advertising in local church bulletins for interested community members to join the planning team
(D) Inviting members of a local advocacy group that the superintendent is a part of to join the planning process

33. When a superintendent responds to requests by employees for a reference, which of the following practices best mitigates potential liability for errors and omissions?

(A) Providing the requested information to third parties and then notifying the employee
(B) Providing a full and comprehensive reference
(C) Identifying any statements of personal opinion
(D) Including the employee's contact information in the reference letter

34. A school district currently evaluates the effectiveness of its mathematics program by analyzing the results from the annual state-mandated test. To best ensure the mathematics program is aligned with state standards, a more in-depth analysis of which of the following should occur?

(A) The current year of norm-referenced assessment results for mathematics
(B) Multiple years of Title I mathematics program results and the results of special education students
(C) Multiple years of classroom-level assessment results and district benchmark results
(D) The current year of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics results
35. Which of the following best identifies the primary benefit of curriculum integration?
   (A) Facilitating a student-centered approach to teaching and learning
   (B) Supporting the development of units of study based on a central theme or idea
   (C) Promoting student achievement by helping students to make connections among subject matter
   (D) Maintaining teacher accountability for designing relevant learning activities for students

36. The superintendent examines irregularities in the students’ responses on a commercial standardized test. The review reveals that a principal at an elementary school has altered students’ responses. Which of the following has the principal violated?
   (A) An assessment framework
   (B) A campus curriculum policy
   (C) A timed-testing guideline
   (D) A code of ethics

37. Which of the following district policies should be developed collaboratively with the community to best ensure student safety on the Internet?
   (A) Acceptable use
   (B) Use of school facilities
   (C) Use of controversial materials
   (D) Use of virus protection software

38. 1. **Focused on specific curriculum content**
   2. **Organized around real problems of practice**
   3. **Linked to analysis of teaching and student learning**
   4. **Intensive, sustained, and continuous over time**
   5. **Integrated into school and classroom planning around curriculum, instruction, and assessment**

   According to research, following the guidelines above will most likely result in improved
   (A) professional development programs
   (B) curriculum development and revision
   (C) long-range planning
   (D) goal setting

39. Which of the following is a primary benefit to a school district considering a decision to outsource custodial services?
   (A) A reduction in the number of district employees
   (B) Greater efficiency resulting from specialized management
   (C) A reduction in safety risks by storing cleaning supplies off-site
   (D) Flexibility in the hiring and dismissal of the custodial services company

40. When a tenured teacher who is a member of a teachers’ union is being considered for dismissal, which of the following criteria is important to consider?
   (A) Level of participation in campus activities
   (B) Collective bargaining provisions
   (C) Years of service in the position
   (D) Level of education attained
41. Which of the following best identifies a school public relations standard to promote regular, two-way communication with various segments of the community?
   (A) Ensuring that district and school administrators serve as active members of civic and service organizations
   (B) Employing a variety of communication channels that are based on research and planning
   (C) Making information about the district available to the news media on a regular basis
   (D) Providing regular opportunities for school administrators and teachers to meet face-to-face with parents

42. Which of the following would best help to identify potential threats and possible scenarios to consider when refining a district crisis plan?
   (A) Writing a clearly defined disaster-response plan
   (B) Performing a risk assessment
   (C) Practicing disaster-response activities
   (D) Requesting feedback from a disaster-response consultant

43. After a violent incident occurs at a school, which of the following steps taken by the superintendent and school administration best supports the recovery of the campus climate?
   (A) Preparing a comprehensive statement regarding the incident for the media
   (B) Working to return the school environment to normalcy
   (C) Conducting a timely debriefing with safety officials to identify lessons learned
   (D) Determining needed changes to ensure another incident does not occur

44. A superintendent wants the community to better understand the goals of public education as reflected in the district's strategic plan. Which of the following most effectively communicates this information to stakeholders and the community at large?
   (A) Scheduling meetings for interested parties to learn more about the history and relevance of public education
   (B) Including a short statement about the purpose of education on the school Web site and other communication instruments
   (C) Distributing a questionnaire asking participants about the importance of education and publishing the results on the school Web site
   (D) Writing a series of brief articles in the newspaper to highlight different aspects of the importance and relevance of public education

45. Which of the following best defines a leadership model that broadens employee involvement in decision making and focuses on mutual influence of others?
   (A) Distributed leadership
   (B) Transactional leadership
   (C) Situational leadership
   (D) Servant leadership
Answers to Sample Questions

1. The correct answer is (B). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of the authoritative body responsible for adopting policy in a school district. The responsibility and authority to adopt school policy belongs to the school board in each district.

2. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of important research-based actions needed to turn a low-performing school around. Strong leadership, maintaining a consistent focus on improving instruction, making visible improvements early in the process, and building a committed staff are all key components that research has shown positively impact student performance, leading to a successful school turnaround.

3. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of strategies for developing a positive working relationship with the community. During the first few months on the job, the superintendent should take every opportunity to absorb the district's culture, strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and values. By doing so in this scenario, the superintendent refrains from being pulled into taking sides without a full picture of the situation and can use the opportunity to begin anew with this group.

4. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of characteristics associated with highly effective schools. By establishing a structure for teachers to review student progress and performance, teacher accountability is increased and collaborative efforts can be made to ensure the success of teachers' instruction and students' future performance. These two efforts combined are characteristic of highly effective schools.

5. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of creating a shared vision with stakeholders. By providing stakeholders, including employees and community members, an opportunity to be involved in the development of a shared vision, the school leader demonstrates an understanding that individuals affected by the implementation of the vision should be a part of creating it. That way, all stakeholders will have a sense of ownership and will be committed to the change.

6. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of important actions needed to turn around a low-performing school. An effective strategy for building a committed staff is to identify those who are not invested in the turnaround efforts and replace them with qualified, enthusiastic employees who will make the needed changes.

7. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of the interdependent nature of the organizational systems within a district. Teachers working in vertical teams to identify expectations, gaps, and students' needs from one level to the next best ensures the seamless transition from elementary school to middle school to high school.

8. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of collaborating with key stakeholders during the change process. The new superintendent wants to increase collaboration during her first year, and talking with the principal who is undermining her efforts best aligns with this goal. Discussing concerns before taking other actions will be a positive step toward better understanding the principal's concerns, and it will help in seeking solutions.

9. The correct answer is (B). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of the importance of monitoring and evaluating curriculum and instructional practices. To best support data-driven decision making, the superintendent should focus staff development on documented needs, based on quantitative and qualitative data collection, to improve student learning. By using such data, a superintendent can design effective staff-development programs that focus on improving content areas with weak performance and develop pedagogical knowledge in those content areas to meet students' needs and improve student learning.

10. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of procedures for budget planning and management. Student enrollment projections are used to estimate the number of students the district will serve. Revenue and expenditure projections estimate the amount of money that will flow in and out of the district. Debt service projections estimate the amount of money the district will need to pay for expenses such as construction. All these pieces of data assist the superintendent directly in building an accurate district budget.

11. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of how to engage key stakeholders in addressing the district's educational issues. Involving a diverse group of community members in this type of planning will allow for new perspectives and innovative solutions for how to best improve basic language proficiency skills.
12. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of how to analyze student assessment data to monitor, evaluate, and improve instruction to increase student learning. The continuous improvement process encourages districts to connect the practices within a school to data and to use that data to drive the future behavior of teachers toward furthering campus goals. This practice will best promote improvement in student achievement.

13. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of laws, policies, and procedures that protect the rights of students. Laws regarding homeschooling vary widely from state to state and are still being interpreted by the courts. The superintendent needs to review current law concerning homeschooled students to best respond to the parents’ request.

14. The correct answer is (B). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of how organizational factors, such as scheduling, affect teaching and learning. Existing research on block scheduling shows that teachers lecture less and gradually engage students in more active-learning structures than teachers using the traditional 45-minute class schedule.

15. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of how to develop and implement a plan to achieve district goals and objectives. Effective superintendents ensure that district goals, once agreed upon, are fostered in every school site by empowering and monitoring campus administrators as they develop communication and implementation plans for achieving the goals.

16. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of the state education agencies’ responsibilities to support school districts. State education agencies are tasked by state legislatures to equitably distribute education funds in accordance with state law.

17. The correct answer is (B). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of curriculum design. Backward planning for curriculum design focuses on identifying the content that needs to be mastered first and then working backward to design assessments and activities to support student learning.

18. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of how to develop a public relations program to foster community and media relations. A well-thought-out public relations plan is essential to successful communication with the public. By researching, developing goals, carrying out the goals, and evaluating the actions taken, a school district can attain a mutually beneficial relationship with the public it serves.
Step 3: Practice with Sample Test Questions

25. The correct answer is (B). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of communicating with board members to meet the educational needs of the district. The superintendent should educate members of the school board on curricular matters to foster an understanding of and a clear focus on the mission of the district.

26. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of multiple factors that have an impact on student achievement. Student achievement is influenced positively by a guaranteed and viable curriculum that gives students an equal opportunity to learn and an adequate amount of instructional time. Creating challenging goals and using effective feedback creates high expectations for students while providing them with focused and individualized responses to their work. Additionally, by involving parents and the community in students’ education, students feel supported in their efforts and learn to value their education. Finally, when students are able to learn in a safe and orderly environment, they are able to focus on the presented material rather than outside factors that can present distractions.

27. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of how elements of facilities management affect the learning process. A school’s condition has a strong, positive correlation with increased student achievement. Research has shown that students in well-maintained facilities tend to score higher than students in substandard buildings.

28. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of federal laws and regulations associated with facilities management and compliance. OSHA is a federal law passed to ensure occupational health and safety in the workplace.

29. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of federal laws applicable to human resource management, such as the Family and Medical Leave Act. FMLA provides up to 12 weeks of leave in a 12-month period for parents who have given birth to or adopt a child.

30. The correct answer is (B). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of the purpose of implementing effective professional learning. Standards make explicit the purpose of professional learning: improving student learning. Professional learning allows educators to develop the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions needed to help students perform at high levels.

31. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of commonly used budget and accounting practices. Line-item budgeting is the most popular format for educational budgets because of its simplicity and control orientation.

32. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of the importance of ensuring a collaborative strategic planning process. Good practice is for a superintendent to involve a diverse group of participants in the strategic planning process so that varied perspectives are represented.

33. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of best practices regarding human resource management, particularly employee references. To avoid liability for errors or omissions and to offer protection to the employer, a superintendent should clearly label statements of personal opinion with wording such as, “It is my opinion that Mr. Doe . . .”

34. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of how to evaluate curriculum programs using relevant data. Reviewing classroom assessments and district benchmarks (in addition to the annual state-mandated assessment results) for alignment with state standards provides the school with information needed to improve the program’s content, skills, assessments, activities, and resources.

35. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of the basic concepts of curriculum development and design. Integrated curriculum acts as a bridge to increased student achievement by helping students see connections among two or more identifiable disciplines.

36. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of the basic principles of ethical professional behavior for educators. The code of ethics specifically outlines the professional duties of the position, including honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness.

37. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of policy development to protect the rights and confidentiality of students and staff. Developing an acceptable use policy using a collaborative committee of stakeholders ensures that comprehensive input from diverse perspectives is included in the process to best guarantee that students are able to access the Internet in a safe and protected manner.
38. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of critical elements of professional development programs. The guidelines listed help increase teachers’ abilities to effectively support building student skills and competencies that are needed to learn.

39. The correct answer is (B). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of strategies for managing resources associated with facility maintenance. The greatest benefit of outsourcing custodial services is the efficiency and quality resulting from specific, expert management.

40. The correct answer is (B). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of factors affecting staff discipline, remediation, and dismissal. Collective bargaining agreements outline additional due-process rights for tenured teachers.

41. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of how to build effective partnerships throughout the community. Serving as active members of civic and service organizations allows district and school administrators an opportunity to both provide information and receive regular feedback from various community stakeholders.

42. The correct answer is (B). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of how to gather appropriate information needed to revise a crisis management plan. Risk assessment can best identify potential threats by analyzing campus weaknesses, areas that need improvement, and needs specific to each school.

43. The correct answer is (B). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of how to implement a crisis management plan. Returning the campus to normalcy for the students and staff is the most important postcrisis step to reestablish the mental health of the school community.

44. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of communication strategies to articulate the district’s position on educational issues. By contributing a series of brief articles in the local media, the superintendent will reach a broad audience and open a forum for future discussions.

45. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate’s knowledge of leadership models. Distributed leadership allows administrators to develop teacher leaders in their schools while creating a culture of shared ownership and accountability. With teacher leaders supporting administrative goals, additional buy-in is created throughout the school and district, allowing for increased effectiveness of administration.
**Sample Constructed-Response Case Study Test Questions**

The constructed-response questions are presented in Section II of the test. The constructed-response questions are part of a case study.

The scenario for the case study will be presented in the main portion of the screen. Several tabs will appear at the top of the main portion of the screen and should be clicked to access the documents associated with the case study scenario.

In the upper-right-hand corner of the screen, each question will appear as the test taker progresses through the test. In the lower-right-hand corner, the test taker should type a response to each question as it is presented.

For a case study, the information in the main portion of the screen will remain the same for all three related questions. As the test taker progresses through the case study questions, only the specific question appearing in the upper-right-hand corner will change.

The copy and paste tools are not functional for this test. Test takers should ensure that they type their responses below the appropriate question.

*Note: The copy and paste tools are not functional for this assessment.*
Sample Scoring Guide for Constructed-Response Questions

The School Superintendent Assessment consists of a case study with three constructed-response questions that require the candidate to demonstrate the ability to synthesize and apply leadership skills to resolve issues or conflict.

Each task is scored on a 0-3 scale using the following general scoring guide.

Score of 3
A score of 3 presents a well-developed analysis that synthesizes important information from the case components and demonstrates a clear understanding and application of the issues presented in the documents and resolution to the issues.

- Demonstrates detailed, specific, and convincing evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and reasonable ways to resolve the issues
- Responds appropriately to all parts of the questions
- Applies appropriate knowledge of the process to address conflicting points of view
- Applies appropriate knowledge to resolve conflict in a reasonable way
- When required, provides a strong explanation or rationale for the response

Score of 2
A score of 2 presents an adequate analysis that uses some of the important information from the case components and demonstrates a general understanding and application of the issues presented in the documents and resolution to the issues.

- Demonstrates basic evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and reasonable ways to resolve the issues
- Responds appropriately to most parts of the questions
- Applies general knowledge of the process to address conflicting points of view
- Applies general knowledge to resolve conflict in a reasonable way

Score of 1
A score of 1 may demonstrate some competence in analyzing the case and using the information, but is clearly limited or flawed

- Demonstrates limited evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and unreasonable ways to resolve the issues
- Fails to respond appropriately to some parts of the questions
- Applies weak knowledge of the process to address conflicting points of view
- Applies weak knowledge to resolve conflict in a reasonable way
- May contain serious misconceptions in terminology or process that detract from the overall understanding of the role of the superintendent
- When required, provides a simplistic explanation or rationale for the response

Score of 0
A score of 0 fails to address basic components of the prompt.

- Demonstrates little or no evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and unreasonable ways to resolve the issues
- Fails to respond to any parts of the question or rephrases the question
- Applies little or no knowledge of the process to address conflicting points of view
- Applies little or no knowledge to resolve conflict
- May contain mostly serious misconceptions in terminology or process that detract from the overall understanding of the role of the superintendent
- When required, provides no explanation or no rationale for the response

Note: The mere presence of leadership specific words or phrases that might be used in an adequate response does not, by itself, indicate knowledge.

Responses also receiving a score of 0 would be blank, completely off-topic, or not written in English.
Sample Test Question
Implementing Vision and Goals

Scenario

The superintendent of the Greenwood Elementary School District has the responsibility for aligning the district’s elementary curriculum with state standards in the language arts and mathematics areas. The goal is to ensure that students are proficient as measured by state assessments. The Greenwood district has a history of being progressive and forward thinking in terms of education in general and curriculum offerings in particular. A spirit of staff and community involvement and cooperation typifies the district’s curriculum development initiatives.

The state has recently adopted the common core curriculum standards in language arts literacy and mathematics. The new standards, a response to public outrage over declining student achievement in language arts and mathematics, mandate intensified programs, both in breadth and depth of coverage of concepts and skills. Many stakeholders, however, are resistant to the newly mandated curriculum standards as an infringement on “local control” and the possibility that “prized” programs and services may be eliminated.

Documents

The following documents are included:

- Letter to the commissioner of education from the president of the school board of education
- Letter to the president of the school board of education from the commissioner of education
- Article from the Greenwood Daily News
- Memo to the superintendent from the Greenwood Teachers Organization
- Memo to the superintendent from the director of curriculum and instruction of GESD
April 2

To the Office of the State Commissioner of Education

Dear Commissioner:

On behalf of the Greenwood Elementary School District, I am writing to express concerns that we have with recent curriculum mandates of the state Department of Education.

Greenwood is a district with five elementary schools. We have major concerns about the curriculum standards requirements in the areas of language arts literacy and mathematics. In both areas, significant additions have been made to an already demanding curriculum. These additions present major problems for our district, as we suspect they do for many comparable districts.

Our district has a long history of considerable academic success as evidenced on our own standardized testing scores as well as teacher-made assessments. Additionally, we provide for our students’ multiple opportunities to experience a total curriculum in the fine arts and many other areas. It is our position that the recently adopted curriculum mandate will harm, rather than benefit, the academic performance and growth of our students.

We request that you send us the proper forms by which we can request exemption from the recent curriculum mandates. If an exemption is not possible, we request a delay of implementation for at least three years. This delay will allow our teachers to prepare adequately for the new curriculum and allow time for the district to negotiate a new teachers’ contract that takes into consideration the lengthened school day and altered teaching requirements of the new mandates.

Sincerely,

President,
Greenwood Elementary School Board of Education
Office of the Commissioner of Education  
State Department of Education  

May 5

President,  
Greenwood Elementary School Board of Education  

Dear School Board President:  

Thank you for sharing your concerns about the state-mandated curriculum standards requirements for the state’s elementary students. By law, there can be no exemptions and no postponements in the implementation of these requirements. 

These alignment mandates are based on educational research and best practices investigated by the Division of Curriculum and Instruction of the state Department of Education. The implementation of these alignment standards will enable all students to master more challenging communication and computational skills. This increased mastery will enable all students to enhance their potential for success in subsequent years of schooling and their ultimate entry into the greater society. Increasing standards for all students in the state should not preclude your district from offering additional experiences such as the ones you mentioned in the fine arts. 

Sincerely,  

Commissioner of Education
Greenwood Daily News

Parents Fear State Standards Will Cause Elimination of Special Programs for Gifted and Talented Students
May 10

Parents at the Greenwood Elementary District Board of Education meeting last night expressed strong concerns about the future of the district’s programs for gifted and talented children, particularly in the fine arts. A recent presentation by the district’s director of curriculum included recommendations for reducing time allocated to highly regarded programs, “in order to provide additional time for instruction required to meet the state’s newly mandated curriculum standards in language arts literacy and mathematics.”

“We fought so hard to get these special programs for our children into the curriculum. This seems like a huge step backwards. We are disappointed and angry,” said a parent of three children in the district.

The meeting was very heated at times. The board president said, “We feel caught in a no-win situation. We must be sure that our students can perform well on the state’s assessments. We don’t know where to find the time to fit all these things in the school day. After all, these are very young children and we can’t keep them here until late at night.”

The board promised to continue to address this issue in the coming months.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendent, Greenwood Elementary School District
FROM: Greenwood Teacher’s Organization
DATE: May 13
RE: Contract

We are writing to make official the concerns we have expressed in recent conversations with you about the necessity of reopening negotiations for the teaching contract effective July 1 of this year. We believe that the recently concluded negotiations resulted in a fair and equitable contract, and we appreciate the spirit of cooperation and professionalism of all concerned in the negotiations. However, as we have discussed, the refusal of the state to grant a waiver or a delay in the implementation of the new state curriculum standards clearly means that there will be a longer school day and teachers will have more demanding teaching responsibilities. Both of these provisions have been deemed necessary by the district in order to meet the state mandate and continue to offer the rich program of which our district is justly proud.

Both of these factors clearly require a modification in the contract. We are aware that the budget-building process for next year is complete. However, in view of the drastically changed teaching demands on the district’s teachers, that process must be reopened, and necessary funds identified to compensate teachers for their increased work load. We would like to meet with you at your earliest convenience to establish timelines and priorities for renegotiating the contract effective July 1.
Office of the Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Greenwood Elementary School District

TO: Superintendent, Greenwood Elementary School District
FROM: Director, Curriculum and Instruction, GESD
DATE: May 14
RE: Planning for implementation of state standards

With the state’s refusal to grant a waiver or a delay of implementation of the new state Department of Education Curriculum Standards, we must now make specific plans for what will be required for the implementation of these standards. I suggest that at the next Superintendent’s Council, we place on the agenda the specific items that we must address in meeting the state mandate. The members of our council, consisting of district and school administrators, and teacher and community representatives, could provide valuable insight.

I know you will want to share the agenda items with the board of education, so the board members can be informed of our efforts to comply with the state mandate and still preserve local control over the excellent educational programs of the district. I am prepared to brief the council, and the board, if appropriate, of the instructional implications of the new state mandate.
Sample Questions

Question 1

Identify THREE steps the superintendent should take immediately to ensure the support and involvement of the board of education in the alignment of the district’s curriculum with the state standards.

For EACH step, explain why it is important to ensuring the success of the initiative.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

The superintendent’s first step is to present clear and concise information to the board concerning the reasoning behind the changes within the district and how the changes support the district’s goals and objectives. Directives from the state department of education generally deals with broad educational issues on a statewide basis, so the superintendent will need to blend the state mindset with the local mindset for board members to understand why it is important and beneficial to implement curricular changes on the district level.

Prior to any formal meeting, the superintendent should provide information on the background and impetus behind the state’s curriculum standards, as well as research on national trends in implementing a standards-based curriculum. Articles from state and national sources, as well as data from educational research, will provide the board with valid reasons for making curricular changes. The information will also help the board to justify the need for change to the campus and greater communities.

Once the board members have reviewed the information, the superintendent should schedule an informal session to discuss the information and to answer board members’ questions or address any concerns.

Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 3

This response demonstrates detailed and specific evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and reasonable ways to resolve the issues. The response identifies specific steps the superintendent should use to enlist the critical support and involvement of the board of education in the alignment of the district’s curricula with the state curriculum. The response also provides a detailed and specific explanation of why each step is important. Therefore, this response earned a score of 3.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

- Share with board of education the new programs the district has implemented and data to support how they have increased student performance. This may delay the implementation of the state standards for a while.
- Share an alignment of state and district standards to ensure high quality in programs and competencies.
- Address the board’s concerns in a working meeting to promote a trusting relationship to allow opinions to be shared.
- Involve the board in training sessions and staff development opportunities to increase their knowledge of instructional practices for new standards.
- Be accessible to the board as issues arise to address them promptly to avoid problems with communication.

Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 2

This response demonstrates basic evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and basic, reasonable ways to resolve the issues. The response identifies basic steps the superintendent should use to enlist the critical support and involvement of the board of education in the alignment of the district’s curricula with the state curriculum. The response also provides a general explanation of why each step is important. Therefore, this response earned a score of 2.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

Have a team meeting (administration, curriculum directors, board of education members, and department chairs) to discuss how these new curriculum standards can be incorporated—without sacrificing the current basics of a curriculum that is highly successful. (Evidently, in this district, declining student achievement isn’t a problem.) All parties involved in developing the standards have to have ownership in it. I would encourage the team to refrain from completely ditching a successful program because of a state mandate designed to target problems elsewhere in the state.

Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 1

This response demonstrates limited evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and a simplistic way to resolve the issues. The response identifies a simplistic step the superintendent should use to enlist the critical support and involvement of the board of education in the alignment of the district’s curricula with the state curriculum. The response also provides a weak explanation of why the step is important. Therefore, this response earned a score of 1.
Sample Response That Received a Score of 0

This is probably not something the superintendent will want to get the Board of Education involved in initially. Since this is a state mandate, the superintendent must immediately begin to develop policies and regulations that will ensure the smooth transition of this new curriculum into the school district. The superintendent must demonstrate his/her expertise in the curriculum arena and become an agent of change in leading the district to success. Involving all stakeholders in a collaborative process to refine the curriculum and teaching strategies will become pivotal in bringing about any change.

Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 0

This response demonstrates no evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and no realistic way to resolve the issues. The response identified is not a step the superintendent should use to enlist the critical support and involvement of the board of education in the alignment of the district’s curricula with the state curriculum. The explanation provided demonstrates a serious misconception of the role of the superintendent. Therefore, this response earned a score of 0.

Question 2

Identify THREE specific topics relative to the state mandate that the superintendent should place on the agenda for the superintendent’s council and the board of education.

For EACH topic, explain why it is important.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

The first topic should be an examination of why student achievement has declined in language arts literacy/mathematics. Is this evidence of a national or state (or both) trend in declining scores or is this limited to a factor identifiable within the district?

Actually understanding what the data is pointing out should explain why there is a concern and why the state has deemed it necessary to mandate rather than recommend curricular changes.

The second topic should be a comparison of the objectives, scope, and sequence of the present curriculum compared to the requirements of the standards and the changes the state is mandating. This is important because according to the Board president, parents, and teachers, there are three major problems. This includes 1) not having enough time to “push in” the changes; 2) a reduction in the amount of time given to fine arts and gifted education; and 3) identifying contractual time constraints that affect the professional development needed to prepare the staff adequately for the curricular and instructional changes.

The third topic is implications for students. This is important because the changes will have a direct impact on the students, not just the institution. Student opinion and suggestions should be allowed and taken into consideration when considering and implementing curricular change.

Overall, addressing this type of problem will result in an investment of time and effort on the part of all stakeholders, including students.

Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 3

This response demonstrates detailed and specific evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and reasonable ways to resolve the issues. The response identifies specific topics relative to the implementation of the state mandate that the superintendent should place on the agenda for the superintendent’s council and review with the board of education. The response also provides a detailed and specific explanation of why each topic is important. Therefore, this response earned a score of 3.
Sample Response That Received a Score of 2
Curriculum mapping of K–3rd grade curriculum goals; important as it will allow for a progression in developing new skill by the grade.
Teacher contracts are vital, as working conditions, notably teachers’ participation in professional development, may have changed. Renegotiation of the contract may be necessary.
Special programs for the new curriculum objectives and instructional strategies to implement.
Continuity of the programs the district offers which are successful should be addressed as the community has a vested interest in the type of programs offered.
Delay in implementing new curriculum to negotiate contracts, increase knowledge of curriculum and instruction, and allow time for parents to adjust to changes.

Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 2
This response demonstrates basic evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and basic, reasonable ways to resolve the issues. The response identifies basic topics relative to the implementation of the state mandate that the superintendent should place on the agenda for the superintendent’s council and review with the board of education. The response also provides a general explanation of why each topic is important. Therefore, this response earned a score of 2.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 1
1. Report on changes to other school activities/personnel due to curriculum changes and proposals to address resulting problems. Especially representatives of the teachers’ organization.
2. Past assessment results—to see how much change, if any, is necessary.
3. A comparison of the current curriculum with the newly proposed standards. I think they might be surprised at how little information will have to be added to a currently successful curriculum to fully incorporate state standards.

Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 1
This response demonstrates limited evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and simplistic ways to resolve the issues. The response identifies simplistic topics relative to the implementation of the state mandate that the superintendent should place on the agenda for the superintendent’s council and review with the board of education. The response also provides a weak or no explanation of why each topic is important. Therefore, this response earned a score of 1.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 0
The first topic should be the draft of a letter to the state explaining why the district should be exempt. The district has had a great academic record and by enlisting the support of the community and the newspaper, it is possible that the superintendent might be able to slow down this mandate. If this does not work, the team will have to come up with a plan to introduce the curriculum in such a way that it will have limited impact on the current educational program. Next, the council will have to come up with a way to pay for all this. Budgets are always tight and whenever something is added to the school program extra cost will be incurred. Where will the money come from?

Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 0
This response demonstrates no evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and no realistic ways to resolve the issues. The topic identified is not appropriate based on the issues presented in the scenario, and the explanation demonstrates a serious misconception of the role of the superintendent. Therefore, this response earned a score of 0.
Question 3

Identify FOUR specific groups of stakeholders who have responsibilities and needs in regard to the implementation of the state mandate.

For EACH group, explain the impact of the mandate.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

Parents/Guardians:
This group is concerned for the present and future of their children. They will worry mainly about the problems created at this time and hopefully some will be farsighted enough to realize implications for their child’s future.

Educators/Principals/Teachers etc.:
This group strives to educate the children to the best of their abilities. Some will consider the mandate a challenge and will internally challenge themselves to meet the new standards for the sake of the child, not themselves.

The idea of time problems, learning new techniques and becoming even more frustrated with educational demands is very real.

Superintendent/Board of Education:
It will be up to this group to aid in the understanding of why, where and how all can be accomplished. They will need to be firm but yet available to other changes that will go along with or result from the mandates (sometimes changes in budget, etc.)

Students:
The most important group—how will it affect them in the present and what can it do for them in the future. Will it result in schedule changes, longer time on task, needs for more tutoring, special programs etc?

Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 3

This response presents a well-developed analysis that uses important information from all of the sources provided. It provides detailed, specific, and convincing evidence for each question, clearly defining the role of the superintendent in providing information and guidance to the board of education and recognizing the impact of this mandate on all stakeholders. The response also outlines an effective plan that proposes logical and reasonable courses of action.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

Teachers. As implementers of the new standards teachers have a major responsibility. They are directly impacted, as their ability to expand the curriculum or replace standards is a work in progress. Without time to become familiar with the new standards and align them with the old ones, implementation can be less effective.

Principals & administrators, as the curriculum and instructional leaders of the schools, provide guidance and support in the implementation process. They are impacted as they work closely the instructional staff in clarifying how to supplement the previously used programs with the new standards. Parents & Students have the need to know what is expected of them. What concepts and skills will be learned. They are impacted because it becomes necessary to become familiar with new objectives & skills.

Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 2

This adequate analysis uses some of the important information from the case components and demonstrates awareness, rather than clear recognition, of the important issues in the case. The responses to Questions 1, 2, and 3 are relatively detailed and specific. Although the response generally indicates an awareness of the issues, the answers provided sometimes present to the board advice that is contrary to what is clearly stated in the documents. Communication is alluded to briefly in other parts of the response. As a whole, the answers to the questions provide an uneven response.
Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

1.) Teachers—responsible for writing curriculum and implementing it. They are held accountable to teach what is being assessed by the state, by employers informally. These teachers aren’t going to be pleased if it reflects poorly on them. They also think that this will have financial ramifications—I think not. It’s a poor administrator, if he can’t incorporate state standards into the current curriculum without lengthening the school day!

2.) Parents—They need to have initial input into curriculum revision by pointing out what they deem important. They also never want services or programs reduced.

3.) Students—Being the ones taking the actual assessment, they need to put significant value on meeting these state standards. Perhaps the reward of paying dual-credit fees once they reach high school would be an appropriate incentive for the school to pursue—if the state doesn’t already do it.

Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 1

This response demonstrates some competence in analyzing the case, but the answers to the questions are often unclear and the response is clearly limited. While the response to Question 1 does involve information pertinent to the case, it does not clearly respond to the question of describing the steps needed to enlist the support and involvement of the board and does not indicate an awareness of the responsibilities of the board in this type of situation. Responses to the balance of the questions are often vague and, even when rational courses of action are proposed, often there are gaps in the reasoning and the actions are not clearly connected to the issues or the questions.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 0

The teachers and the students should always come first. It is important that any change that is considered have as little disruptive impact on their day as possible. We should always consider them before we do anything. They should be involved in the process from the start so that they feel ownership in any change that impacts the curriculum or their school day.

Commentary on Sample Response that Received a Score of 0

This response fails to address the basic components of the prompt and does not convey an understanding of or a grasp of knowledge about the issues raised in the case, about the roles of the superintendent and the board, or about the role of stakeholders in addressing the situation. The responses to each of the questions seem to either evade the questions asked or demonstrate a fundamental misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the issues and concepts involved. As a result, the response is often inappropriate or illogical.
4. Determine Your Strategy for Success

Set clear goals and deadlines so your test preparation is focused and efficient

Effective SLS test preparation doesn’t just happen. You’ll want to set clear goals and deadlines for yourself along the way. Otherwise, you may not feel ready and confident on test day.

1) Learn what the test covers.

You may have heard that there are several different versions of the same test. It’s true. You may take one version of the test and your friend may take a different version a few months later. Each test has different questions covering the same subject area, but both versions of the test measure the same skills and content knowledge.

You’ll find specific information on the test you’re taking on page 5, which outlines the content categories that the test measures and what percentage of the test covers each topic. Visit www.ets.org/sls/testprep for information on other SLS tests.

2) Assess how well you know the content.

Research shows that test takers tend to overestimate their preparedness—this is why some test takers assume they did well and then find out they did not pass.

The SLS tests are demanding enough to require serious review of likely content, and the longer you’ve been away from the content, the more preparation you will most likely need. If it has been longer than a few months since you’ve studied your content area, make a concerted effort to prepare.

3) Collect study materials.

Gathering and organizing your materials for review are critical steps in preparing for the SLS tests. Consider the following reference sources as you plan your study:

- Did you take a course in which the content area was covered? If yes, do you still have your books or your notes?
- Does your local library have a high school-level textbook in this area? Does your college library have a good introductory college-level textbook in this area?

Practice materials are available for purchase for many SLS tests at www.ets.org/sls/testprep. Test preparation materials include sample questions and answers with explanations.

4) Plan and organize your time.

You can begin to plan and organize your time while you are still collecting materials. Allow yourself plenty of review time to avoid cramming new material at the end. Here are a few tips:

- Choose a test date far enough in the future to leave you plenty of preparation time. Test dates can be found at www.ets.org/sls/register/centers_dates.
- Work backward from that date to figure out how much time you will need for review.
- Set a realistic schedule—and stick to it.
5) **Practice explaining the key concepts.**

SLS tests with constructed-response questions assess your ability to explain material effectively. As a teacher, you'll need to be able to explain concepts and processes to students in a clear, understandable way. What are the major concepts you will be required to teach? Can you explain them in your own words accurately, completely, and clearly? Practice explaining these concepts to test your ability to effectively explain what you know.

6) **Understand how questions will be scored.**

Scoring information can be found on page 63.

7) **Develop a study plan.**

A study plan provides a road map to prepare for the SLS tests. It can help you understand what skills and knowledge are covered on the test and where to focus your attention. Use the study plan template on page 48 to organize your efforts.

And most important—get started!

**Would a Study Group Work for You?**

**Using this guide as part of a study group**

People who have a lot of studying to do sometimes find it helpful to form a study group with others who are working toward the same goal. Study groups give members opportunities to ask questions and get detailed answers. In a group, some members usually have a better understanding of certain topics, while others in the group may be better at other topics. As members take turns explaining concepts to one another, everyone builds self-confidence.

If the group encounters a question that none of the members can answer well, the group can go to a teacher or other expert and get answers efficiently. Because study groups schedule regular meetings, members study in a more disciplined fashion. They also gain emotional support. The group should be large enough so that multiple people can contribute different kinds of knowledge, but small enough so that it stays focused. Often, three to six members is a good size.

Here are some ways to use this guide as part of a study group:

- **Plan the group's study program.** Parts of the study plan template, beginning on page 48, can help to structure your group's study program. By filling out the first five columns and sharing the worksheets, everyone will learn more about your group's mix of abilities and about the resources, such as textbooks, that members can share with the group. In the sixth column (“Dates I will study the content”), you can create an overall schedule for your group's study program.

- **Plan individual group sessions.** At the end of each session, the group should decide what specific topics will be covered at the next meeting and who will present each topic. Use the topic headings and subheadings in the Test at a Glance table on page 5 to select topics, and then select practice questions, beginning on page 16.

- **Prepare your presentation for the group.** When it’s your turn to present, prepare something that is more than a lecture. Write two or three original questions to pose to the group. Practicing writing actual questions can help you better understand the topics covered on the test as well as the types of questions you will encounter on the test. It will also give other members of the group extra practice at answering questions.
Step 4: Determine Your Strategy for Success

• **Take a practice test together.** The idea of a practice test is to simulate an actual administration of the test, so scheduling a test session with the group will add to the realism and may also help boost everyone’s confidence. Remember, complete the practice test using only the time that will be allotted for that test on your administration day.

• **Learn from the results of the practice test.** Review the results of the practice test, including the number of questions answered correctly in each content category. For tests that contain constructed-response questions, look at the Sample Test Questions section, which also contain sample responses to those questions and shows how they were scored. Then try to follow the same guidelines that the test scorers use.

• **Be as critical as you can.** You’re not doing your study partner(s) any favors by letting them get away with an answer that does not cover all parts of the question adequately.

• **Be specific.** Write comments that are as detailed as the comments about the sample responses. Indicate where and how your study partner(s) are doing an inadequate job of answering the question. Writing notes in the margins of the answer sheet may also help.

• **Be supportive.** Include comments that point out what your study partner(s) got right.

Then plan one or more study sessions based on aspects of the questions on which group members performed poorly. For example, each group member might be responsible for rewriting one paragraph of a response in which someone else did an inadequate job.

Whether you decide to study alone or with a group, remember that the best way to prepare is to have an organized plan. The plan should set goals based on specific topics and skills that you need to learn, and it should commit you to a realistic set of deadlines for meeting those goals. Then you need to discipline yourself to stick with your plan and accomplish your goals on schedule.
### 5. Develop Your Study Plan

**Develop a personalized study plan and schedule**

Planning your study time is important because it will help ensure that you review all content areas covered on the test. Use the sample study plan below as a guide. It shows a plan for the *Praxis® Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading* test. Following that is a study plan template that you can fill out to create your own plan. Use the “Learn about Your Test” and “Test Specifications” information beginning on page 5 to help complete it.

**Use this worksheet to:**
1. **Define Content Areas:** List the most important content areas for your test as defined in chapter 1.
2. **Determine Strengths and Weaknesses:** Identify your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.
3. **Identify Resources:** Identify the books, courses, and other resources you plan to use for each content area.
4. **Study:** Create and commit to a schedule that provides for regular study periods.

**Praxis Test Name (Test Code):** Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading (5712)

**Test Date:** 9/15/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content covered</th>
<th>Description of content</th>
<th>How well do I know the content? (scale 1-5)</th>
<th>What resources do I have/need for the content?</th>
<th>Where can I find the resources I need?</th>
<th>Dates I will study the content</th>
<th>Date completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Ideas and Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close reading</td>
<td>Draw inferences and implications from the directly stated content of a reading selection</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Middle school English textbook</td>
<td>College library, middle school teacher</td>
<td>7/15/15</td>
<td>7/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining Ideas</td>
<td>Identify summaries or paraphrases of the main idea or primary purpose of a reading selection</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Middle school English textbook</td>
<td>College library, middle school teacher</td>
<td>7/17/15</td>
<td>7/17/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining Ideas</td>
<td>Identify summaries or paraphrases of the supporting ideas and specific details in a reading selection</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Middle and high school English textbook</td>
<td>College library, middle and high school teachers</td>
<td>7/20/15</td>
<td>7/21/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft, Structure, and Language Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting tone</td>
<td>Determine the author's attitude toward material discussed in a reading selection</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Middle and high school English textbook</td>
<td>College library, middle and high school teachers</td>
<td>7/25/15</td>
<td>7/26/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of structure</td>
<td>Identify key transition words and phrases in a reading selection and how they are used</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Middle and high school English textbook, dictionary</td>
<td>College library, middle and high school teachers</td>
<td>7/25/15</td>
<td>7/27/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis of structure</td>
<td>Identify how a reading selection is organized in terms of cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, etc.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author's purpose</td>
<td>Determine the role that an idea, reference, or piece of information plays in an author's discussion or argument</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
## Step 5: Develop Your Study Plan

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Content covered</th>
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<th>Where can I find the resources I need?</th>
<th>Dates I will study the content</th>
<th>Date completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language in different contexts</td>
<td>Determine whether information presented in a reading selection is presented as fact or opinion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/1/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contextual meaning</td>
<td>Identify the meanings of words as they are used in the context of a reading selection</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Figurative Language</td>
<td>Understand figurative language and nuances in word meanings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/8/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary range</td>
<td>Understand a range of words and phrases sufficient for reading at the college and career readiness level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/15/15</td>
<td>8/17/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</td>
<td>Diverse media and formats</td>
<td>Analyze content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/22/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of arguments</td>
<td>Identify the relationship among ideas presented in a reading selection</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/24/15</td>
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<td>Evaluation of arguments</td>
<td>Determine whether evidence strengthens, weakens, or is relevant to the arguments in a reading selection</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
<td>8/27/15</td>
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<td>Evaluation of arguments</td>
<td>Determine the logical assumptions upon which an argument or conclusion is based</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
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<td>8/30/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of arguments</td>
<td>Draw conclusions from material presented in a reading selection</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
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<td>8/31/15</td>
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<td>Comparison of texts</td>
<td>Recognize or predict ideas or situations that are extensions of or similar to what has been presented in a reading selection</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>High school textbook, college course notes</td>
<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparison of texts</td>
<td>Apply ideas presented in a reading selection to other situations</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor</td>
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# My Study Plan

Use this worksheet to:

1. **Define Content Areas:** List the most important content areas for your test as defined in chapter 1.
2. **Determine Strengths and Weaknesses:** Identify your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.
3. **Identify Resources:** Identify the books, courses, and other resources you plan to use for each content area.
4. **Study:** Create and commit to a schedule that provides for regular study periods.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content covered</th>
<th>Description of content</th>
<th>How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)</th>
<th>What resources do I have/need for this content?</th>
<th>Where can I find the resources I need?</th>
<th>Dates I will study this content</th>
<th>Date completed</th>
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### Step 5: Develop Your Study Plan

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<th>Content covered</th>
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<th>How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)</th>
<th>What resources do I have/need for the content?</th>
<th>Where can I find the resources I need?</th>
<th>Dates I will study the content</th>
<th>Date completed</th>
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6. Review Study Topics

*Detailed study topics with questions for discussion*

**Using the Study Topics That Follow**

The School Superintendent Assessment test is designed to measure the knowledge and skills necessary for a beginning superintendent.

This chapter is intended to help you organize your preparation for the test and to give you a clear indication of the depth and breadth of the knowledge required for success on the test.

Virtually all accredited programs address the topics covered by the test; however, you are not expected to be an expert on all aspects of the topics that follow.

You are likely to find that the topics below are covered by most introductory textbooks. Consult materials and resources, including lecture and laboratory notes, from all your coursework. You should be able to match up specific topics and subtopics with what you have covered in your courses.

Try not to be overwhelmed by the volume and scope of content knowledge in this guide. Although a specific term may not seem familiar as you see it here, you might find you can understand it when applied to a real-life situation. Many of the items on the actual test will provide you with a context to apply to these topics or terms.

**Discussion Areas**

Interspersed throughout the study topics are discussion areas, presented as open-ended questions or statements. These discussion areas are intended to help test your knowledge of fundamental concepts and your ability to apply those concepts to situations in the real world. Most of the areas require you to combine several pieces of knowledge to formulate an integrated understanding and response. If you spend time on these areas, you will gain increased understanding and facility with the subject matter covered on the test. You may want to discuss these areas and your answers with a teacher or mentor.

Note that this study companion does not provide answers for the discussion area questions, but thinking about the answers to them will help improve your understanding of fundamental concepts and will probably help you answer a broad range of questions on the test.
Study Topics
An overview of the areas covered on the test, along with their subareas, follows.

I. Educational Leadership

A. Vision and Goals
1. Knows strategies for engaging all stakeholders in the development of the district’s vision and goals
   a. asks critical questions
   b. identifies stakeholders
   c. knows how to give voice to diverse perspectives
   d. distributes tasks as appropriate
   e. uses effective communication strategies to build consensus
   f. understands basic group processes
   g. administers a needs assessment
2. Knows how to formulate goals and objectives using data and resources
   a. uses data to establish goals
   b. identifies resources for developing goals
   c. recognizes the importance of aligning goals with the district’s vision
3. Knows how to develop and implement a plan to achieve district goals and objectives
   a. analyzes the status of current district goals and objectives
   b. develops a plan of action
   c. prioritizes critical goals and objectives
   d. differentiates short-term and long-term planning needs
   e. articulates the action plan
   f. implements a change-process model
4. Knows how to monitor and evaluate progress toward district goals and objectives in order to sustain continuous improvement
   a. identifies accountability models that systematically monitor progress
   b. collects and analyzes quantitative and qualitative data in order to adjust programs and practices
5. Is familiar with various resources used to support the implementation of a district’s vision and goals
   a. identifies human resources, financial resources, technological resources, facilities resources, and community resources
6. Knows how to assess the effect of the culture and climate of the organization on student learning
   a. identifies culture and climate characteristics of high-performing schools
   b. assesses the existing culture and climate using tools such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews
   c. understands the impact of culture and climate on student learning
7. Understands the need to recognize and celebrate the contributions of all stakeholders toward the achievement of the district’s goals and objectives
   a. understands and demonstrates the importance of recognizing contributions
   b. recognizes and acknowledges contributions of individuals and groups in goal attainment

B. Ethics and Integrity
1. Knows the basic principles of ethical professional behavior for educators
   a. identifies the following in the context of ethical professional behavior:
      – equality
      – equity
      – honesty
      – legality
      – consistency
2. Knows how to implement policies and procedures that promote the ethical behavior of all district personnel
   a. interprets policies and procedures related to ethical behavior
   b. promotes professional standards of behavior and written codes of ethical conduct
   c. models ethical behavior
3. Knows how to detect, monitor, and respond to ethical issues
   a. establishes a safe and secure accountability system
   b. identifies and addresses nonethical behaviors
   c. investigates promptly
   d. applies due process
Step 6: Review Study Topics

4. Knows laws, policies, and procedures that protect the rights and confidentiality of students and staff
   a. identifies laws, policies, and procedures essential to:
      – employment
      – rights of students and staff
      – privacy
      – technology

C. Communication and Collaboration

1. Knows how and when to articulate positions on educational issues
   a. selects appropriate communication tools
   b. identifies appropriate communication strategies for various audiences
   c. serves as an advocate
   d. responds to educational concerns, needs, and topics

2. Is familiar with emerging issues and trends affecting education
   a. identifies societal issues (including but not limited to):
      – achievement gap
      – demographics
      – technology
      – family structures
      – mobility
      – diversity
      – global connections
   b. identifies educational issues (including but not limited to):
      – achievement gap
      – accountability
      – outsourcing educational services
      – school choice
      – tenure
      – availability of professional personnel
      – extended school day and school year
      – technology
      – performance-based pay

3. Knows how to communicate and collaborate with diverse stakeholder groups, both internal and external, in order to support the achievement of district goals
   a. identifies groups with diverse perspectives
   b. develops a sense of shared responsibility
   c. distributes tasks as appropriate

4. Knows how and when to facilitate collaborative decision making
   a. defines decision-making processes and procedures
   b. utilizes decision-making processes and procedures
   c. determines appropriate degree of transparency
   d. recognizes when decision making requires collaboration

5. Is familiar with how to identify, access, and collaborate with key local, state, and national entities in order to address educational issues
   a. identifies individuals, businesses, higher-education institutions, and other groups in the community who can help develop, implement, and support school-related programs

6. Knows how to build partnerships that strengthen programs and support district goals
   a. promotes schools as community resources
   b. collaborates with partners
   c. develops a communication plan

7. Understands the roles, functions, and expectations of the superintendent and the board of education, and the expectations each has of the other
   a. identifies position and boundary limitations
   b. differentiates responsibilities
   c. communicates statutory roles
   d. employs strategies to separate roles

8. Knows how to communicate and collaborate with board members in a variety of contexts
   a. identifies and selects procedures for formal communication and collaboration
   b. identifies and selects procedures for informal communication and collaboration
   c. applies protocols to address board issues
   d. applies protocols to address individual board member issues
   e. understands the impact and implications of interactions with board members
9. Understands how to develop a public relations program to foster community and media relations
   a. identifies communication sources and outlets
   b. establishes positive working relationships with the media
   c. establishes a communication plan
   d. establishes collaborative communication channels

Discussion areas: Educational Leadership
- How should a superintendent determine the appropriate stakeholders to develop a district's vision and goals?
- Why would it be valuable for a school leader to poll key stakeholders about the purpose of education when developing vision and goals?
- What should form the basis of a school's vision and goals?
- What types of data are valuable for developing or revising vision and goals?
- How are quantitative and qualitative data used to evaluate program effectiveness?
- What strategies are effective for engaging stakeholders in planning and carrying out programs and activities?
- What does research show are the common characteristics of high-performing schools?
- How can a superintendent foster an environment that supports rigorous curriculum and high student expectations?
- Why is consistency an essential element in modeling and promoting ethical and legal behavior?
- What are the laws, regulations, and policies that protect the rights of students? Staff members?
- Why is it important for a school leader to administer educational policies equitably and legally?
- How can a superintendent advocate for public education?
- What societal issues drive emerging movements in education and how do they affect schools?
- What role does technology play in schools and how can a superintendent prepare to meet these demands?
- What strategies can a superintendent use to promote collaborative decision making?
- What are the key elements in a transparent decision-making process?
- How can a superintendent build consensus among board members?

II. Instructional Leadership
   A. Teaching and Learning
   1. Knows how to facilitate and promote a culture of learning
      a. establishes shared mission, vision, values, and goals
      b. implements key elements that promote a culture of learning
      c. creates a safe and supportive climate for learning and teaching
      d. develops and sustains professional development activities that are aligned with district goals
   2. Knows how to evaluate and select programs, services, and resources to support the learning of all students
      a. examines the effectiveness of programs, services, and resources
      b. determines and addresses barriers to student learning
      c. investigates the equity and cultural responsiveness of programs
   3. Is familiar with multiple factors that affect teaching and learning
      a. identifies the factors that affect teaching and learning
   4. Understands how the environment affects student learning
      a. identifies the culture and climate in district schools
      b. recognizes the effect of the school climate on learning:
         - physical climate
         - academic climate
         - social climate
c. collaborates with school-level personnel to monitor and identify areas of strength and need

d. implements procedures and policies to ensure a safe environment

5. Understands how organizational factors affect teaching and learning
   a. analyzes the impact on teaching and learning of:
      – staffing patterns
      – class-scheduling formats
      – course offerings
      – calendar: school day and school year
      – school organizational structures

6. Understands the importance of developing and implementing a district plan of student assessment
   a. distinguishes among the different forms and types of assessment and their purpose for measuring student learning
   b. determines the appropriate instruments and actions required to identify program strengths and needs

7. Understands how to gather and analyze student assessment data to monitor, evaluate, and improve student learning
   a. identifies relevant data sources
   b. applies data-informed decision-making processes to promote continuous improvement

8. Is familiar with the correlation between teacher effectiveness and student learning
   a. describes the research-based relationship between instruction and learning

9. Is familiar with best practices and research that support personal and professional growth of all staff
   a. identifies research-based professional development practices and activities for self and staff

10. Knows the importance of implementing a comprehensive and differentiated professional development program for all staff
    a. describes characteristics of effective professional development programs:
       – sustained
       – job-embedded
       – enhanced with follow-up support and coaching
       – aligned with district goals
    b. addresses the varied needs of novice and veteran staff

11. Knows the importance of providing ongoing support to facilitate professional growth
    a. determines practices that promote professional learning
    b. recognizes resources that support professional growth:
        – time
        – personnel
        – fiscal support
        – facilities
        – technology
        – materials

12. Is familiar with strategies for addressing the needs of diverse populations
    a. identifies strategies that address the needs of diverse populations
    b. identifies activities that support diverse populations

B. Curriculum and Instruction

1. Is familiar with the basic concepts of curriculum development and design
   a. identifies the components of a curriculum review and revision cycle
   b. recognizes the need for curriculum alignment with local, state, and national guidelines

2. Knows how curriculum design and delivery systems affect instructional quality and student learning
   a. identifies approaches to curriculum design and delivery
   b. recognizes connections between curriculum design and delivery and student learning
   c. describes the relationship between curriculum-delivery systems and student learning

3. Understands the role of technology in teaching and learning
   a. recognizes the importance of technology in supporting teaching and learning
   b. applies a variety of technologies for the purposes of:
      – communication
      – collaboration
      – organization
      – research
Step 6: Review Study Topics

4. Understands the importance of monitoring and evaluating curriculum and instructional practices
   a. applies procedures and practices to monitor and evaluate curriculum and instructional practices
   b. connects the results of student performance to instructional practices
   c. uses data trends to monitor and evaluate instructional practices

Discussion areas: instructional Leadership

- Why is it essential for a professional development plan to align with a district’s goals?
- What are some qualities common to effective professional development?
- What criteria can be used to assess the effectiveness of a new program?
- When and how should a school leader involve students in school improvement teams and processes?
- What factors contribute to forming a school’s culture?
- How does a change in a district’s class scheduling pattern affect teaching and learning?
- What impact does staffing decisions have on student learning? How can impact be limited?
- How is student assessment data used to improve student learning?
- Which practices do research show are most effective for addressing the needs of different student populations?
- What are the emerging movements in curriculum design?
- What technological competencies are necessary for a 21st-century learner?
- What are the benefits and shortcomings of the expanding use of technology in schools? How can superintendents prepare?
- How is student performance used to monitor and evaluate instructional practices?

III. Administrative Leadership

A. Personnel

1. Knows major federal laws, regulations, and codes that cover human resource management
   a. identifies basic tenets of federal laws guiding human resource management
   b. applies current federal laws guiding human resource management

2. Knows the basic procedures for staffing
   a. identifies procedures for:
      - recruiting
      - placement
      - retention
   b. understands the implications of contractual agreements related to staffing

3. Knows how to assess and evaluate staff
   a. determines methods and techniques for assessing and evaluating staff:
      - conferencing
      - data analysis
      - observation
      - self-assessment
      - stakeholder feedback
   b. distinguishes between formative assessments and summative evaluations

4. Knows basic procedures for staff discipline, remediation, and dismissal
   a. applies ethical, legal, and due-process procedures in:
      - discipline
      - remediation
      - dismissal
   b. identifies basic tenets of due-process procedures

B. Finance

1. Knows basic procedures for financial record keeping, reporting, and accountability
   a. distinguishes local, state, and federal requirements for financial management
   b. identifies the process of monitoring financial accounts
   c. recognizes the importance of using standard accounting practices
2. Understands procedures for budget planning and management
   a. identifies and analyzes relevant data for use in budgetary decision making
   b. identifies and engages stakeholders in budget planning
   c. describes the process for budget planning at multiple levels
   d. facilitates the management of budgets according to law

3. Is familiar with strategies for obtaining and managing resources needed to achieve the district’s mission and goals
   a. identifies key strategies for obtaining resources:
      – securing grants
      – sharing services
      – consolidating purchases
      – securing sponsorship and advertising
      – establishing foundations
      – securing donations
   b. identifies key strategies for efficiently managing resources:
      – sharing or consolidating services
      – sharing human capital
      – conserving resources
      – auditing staff
      – utilizing technology
      – outsourcing building capacity of staff to meet the needs of all learners

4. Is familiar with strategies for financial planning to address future district needs
   a. identifies components of financial planning:
      – revenue forecasts
      – enrollment and staffing projections
      – bond issues
      – demographic trends
      – capital and facility needs

C. Management

1. Is familiar with how elements of facilities management affect the learning process
   a. identifies the relationship between facilities management and the learning process
   b. identifies elements of a facilities management plan
   c. identifies procedures and personnel needed for building maintenance, cost analysis, use of facilities

2. Is familiar with federal laws and regulations associated with facilities management and compliance
   a. identifies federal laws and regulations associated with facilities (including but not limited to):
      – ADA
      – OSHA
      – EPA
      – IDEA 2004 (IDEIA)

3. Knows how to implement a crisis management plan
   a. defines components of a crisis management plan
   b. identifies resources to use in implementing the plan
   c. communicates procedures, practices, and personnel required for crisis management implementation
   d. implements crisis management readiness and training activities

4. Knows how to evaluate the efficacy of a crisis management plan
   a. describes the steps in the evaluation of a crisis management plan
   b. examines the status of the current crisis management plan

5. Knows strategies for time management
   a. applies the elements of time management:
      – planning
      – prioritizing
      – scheduling
      – delegating
      – allocating
      – monitoring

6. Is familiar with the effect of the organizational structure of a district on day-to-day operations
   a. identifies the effects of the organizational structure on daily operations:
      – purchasing
      – scheduling
      – transportation
      – personnel
Step 6: Review Study Topics

7. Understands the role of support services in the school system
   a. explains support services and recognizes their roles:
      – transportation services
      – food services
      – student support services
      – custodial services
      – safety and security services
      – information technology services

8. Understands the interdependent nature of the organizational system
   a. explains the cause-and-effect relationship of departments in the organization
   b. applies appropriate teaming strategies to build connectedness

9. Knows strategies for problem solving
   a. assimilates problem-solving strategies into daily operations:
      – identifies and investigates a problem
      – generates solutions
      – analyzes options
      – selects an action
      – implements the action
      – communicates the results of the action
      – evaluates the action
   b. supports multiple models for problem solving

Discussion areas: Administrative Leadership

• What recruitment strategies are effective for building a diverse faculty?

• What recent federal laws have had the most impact on personnel and staffing at schools?

• Which methods and techniques for evaluating staff does research support as most effective?

• Which laws apply to the discipline, remediation, and dismissal of staff?

• Why is it essential for a school district to develop, implement, and monitor a budget according to standard accounting practices?

• What types of budgeting decisions should be made by principals? By teachers?

• How can a superintendent ensure that the budget development process considers the viewpoints of all stakeholders?

• What is an example of competing interests in terms of budget development?

• How can a superintendent maintain quality programs and services during difficult economic times?

• What factors should a superintendent consider when budgeting for a district's future needs?

• How does a school's physical environment affect learning and teaching?

• Who should a superintendent involve in the development of a district's crisis management plan?

• How should a superintendent respond to parents' concerns about unsafe conditions in their child's school?

• How can a superintendent use delegation to aid in managing a district's operations and systems?

• Why is interagency cooperation important when dealing with safety and security concerns?
7. Review Smart Tips for Success

*Follow test-taking tips developed by experts*

Learn from the experts. Take advantage of the following answers to questions you may have and practical tips to help you navigate the SLS test and make the best use of your time.

**Should I guess?**

Yes. Your score is based on the number of questions you answer correctly, with no penalty or subtraction for an incorrect answer. When you don’t know the answer to a question, try to eliminate any obviously wrong answers and then guess at the correct one. Try to pace yourself so that you have enough time to carefully consider every question.

**Can I answer the questions in any order?**

You can answer the questions in order or skip questions and come back to them later. If you skip a question, you can also mark it so that you can remember to return and answer it later. Remember that questions left unanswered are treated the same as questions answered incorrectly, so it is to your advantage to answer every question.

**Are there trick questions on the test?**

No. There are no hidden meanings or trick questions. All of the questions on the test ask about subject matter knowledge in a straightforward manner.

**Are there answer patterns on the test?**

No. You might have heard this myth: the answers on tests follow patterns. Another myth is that there will never be more than two questions in a row with the correct answer in the same position among the choices. Neither myth is true. Select the answer you think is correct based on your knowledge of the subject.

**Can I write on the scratch paper I am given?**

Yes. You can work out problems on the scratch paper, make notes to yourself, or write anything at all. Your scratch paper will be destroyed after you are finished with it, so use it in any way that is helpful to you. But make sure to select or enter your answers on the computer.

**Smart Tips for Taking the Test**

1. **Skip the questions you find extremely difficult.** Rather than trying to answer these on your first pass through the test, you may want to leave them blank and mark them so that you can return to them later. Pay attention to the time as you answer the rest of the questions on the test, and try to finish with 10 or 15 minutes remaining so that you can go back over the questions you left blank. Even if you don’t know the answer the second time you read the questions, see if you can narrow down the possible answers, and then guess. Your score is based on the number of right answers, so it is to your advantage to answer every question.
2. **Keep track of the time.** The on-screen clock will tell you how much time you have left. You will probably have plenty of time to answer all of the questions, but if you find yourself becoming bogged down, you might decide to move on and come back to any unanswered questions later.

3. **Read all of the possible answers before selecting one.** For questions that require you to select more than one answer, or to make another kind of selection, consider the most likely answers given what the question is asking. Then reread the question to be sure the answer(s) you have given really answer the question. Remember, a question that contains a phrase such as “Which of the following does NOT …” is asking for the one answer that is NOT a correct statement or conclusion.

4. **Check your answers.** If you have extra time left over at the end of the test, look over each question and make sure that you have answered it as you intended. Many test takers make careless mistakes that they could have corrected if they had checked their answers.

5. **Don’t worry about your score when you are taking the test.** No one is expected to answer all of the questions correctly. Your score on this test is not analogous to your score on the GRE® or other tests. It doesn't matter on the SLS tests whether you score very high or barely pass. If you meet the minimum passing scores for your state and you meet the state’s other requirements for obtaining a teaching license, you will receive a license. In other words, what matters is meeting the minimum passing score. You can find passing scores for all states that use the SLS tests at [www.ets.org/s/sls/pdf/passing_scores.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/sls/pdf/passing_scores.pdf) or on the web site of the state for which you are seeking certification/licensure.

6. **Use your energy to take the test, not to get frustrated by it.** Getting frustrated only increases stress and decreases the likelihood that you will do your best. Highly qualified educators and test development professionals, all with backgrounds in teaching, worked diligently to make the test a fair and valid measure of your knowledge and skills. Your state painstakingly reviewed the test before adopting it as a licensure requirement. The best thing to do is concentrate on answering the questions.
8. Check on Testing Accommodations

See if you qualify for accommodations that may make it easier to take the SLS test

What if English is not my primary language?

SLS tests are given only in English. If your primary language is not English (PLNE), you may be eligible for extended testing time. For more details, visit www.ets.org/sls/register/accommodations.

What if I have a disability or other health-related need?

The following accommodations are available for test takers who meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act disability requirements:

- Extended testing time
- Additional rest breaks
- Separate testing room
- Writer/recorder of answers
- Test reader
- Sign language interpreter for spoken directions only
- Perkins Brailler
- Braille slate and stylus
- Printed copy of spoken directions
- Oral interpreter
- Audio test
- Braille test
- Large print test book
- Large print answer sheet
- Listening section omitted

For more information on these accommodations, visit www.ets.org/sls/disabilities.

Note: Test takers who have health-related needs requiring them to bring equipment, beverages, or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks must request these accommodations by following the procedures described in the Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-Related Needs (PDF), which can be found at http://www.ets.org/s/disabilities/pdf/bulletin_supplement_test_takers_with_disabilities_health_needs.pdf.

You can find additional information on available resources for test takers with disabilities or health-related needs at www.ets.org/sls/disabilities.
9. Do Your Best on Test Day

Get ready for test day so you will be calm and confident

You followed your study plan. You prepared for the test. Now it’s time to prepare for test day.

Plan to end your review a day or two before the actual test date so you avoid cramming. Take a dry run to the test center so you’re sure of the route, traffic conditions, and parking. Most of all, you want to eliminate any unexpected factors that could distract you from your ultimate goal—passing the SLS test!

On the day of the test, you should:

- be well rested
- wear comfortable clothes and dress in layers
- eat before you take the test
- bring an acceptable and valid photo identification with you
- bring an approved calculator only if one is specifically permitted for the test you are taking (see Calculator Use, at https://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/policies/calculators)
- be prepared to stand in line to check in or to wait while other test takers check in

You can't control the testing situation, but you can control yourself. Stay calm. The supervisors are well trained and make every effort to provide uniform testing conditions, but don't let it bother you if the test doesn't start exactly on time. You will have the allotted amount of time once it does start.

You can think of preparing for this test as training for an athletic event. Once you've trained, prepared, and rested, give it everything you've got.

What items am I restricted from bringing into the test center?

You cannot bring into the test center personal items such as:

- handbags, knapsacks, or briefcases
- water bottles or canned or bottled beverages
- study materials, books, or notes
- pens, pencils, scrap paper, or calculators, unless specifically permitted for the test you are taking (see Calculator Use, at https://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/policies/calculators)
- any electronic, photographic, recording, or listening devices

Personal items are not allowed in the testing room and will not be available to you during the test or during breaks. You may also be asked to empty your pockets. At some centers, you will be assigned a space to store your belongings, such as handbags and study materials. Some centers do not have secure storage space available, so please plan accordingly.

Test centers assume no responsibility for your personal items.
Step 9: Do Your Best on Test Day

If you have health-related needs requiring you to bring equipment, beverages or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks, you need to request accommodations in advance. Procedures for requesting accommodations are described in the Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-related Needs (PDF).

**Note:** All cell phones, smart phones (e.g., Android® devices, iPhones®, etc.), and other electronic, photographic, recording, or listening devices are strictly prohibited from the test center. If you are seen with such a device, you will be dismissed from the test, your test scores will be canceled, and you will forfeit your test fees. If you are seen using such a device, the device will be confiscated and inspected. For more information on what you can bring to the test center, visit [www.ets.org/sls/test_day/bring](http://www.ets.org/sls/test_day/bring).

**Are You Ready?**
Complete this checklist to determine whether you are ready to take your test.

- Do you know the testing requirements for the license or certification you are seeking in the state(s) where you plan to teach?
- Have you followed all of the test registration procedures?
- Do you know the topics that will be covered in each test you plan to take?
- Have you reviewed any textbooks, class notes, and course readings that relate to the topics covered?
- Do you know how long the test will take and the number of questions it contains?
- Have you considered how you will pace your work?
- Are you familiar with the types of questions for your test?
- Are you familiar with the recommended test-taking strategies?
- Have you practiced by working through the practice questions in this study companion or in a study guide or practice test?
- If constructed-response questions are part of your test, do you understand the scoring criteria for these questions?
- If you are repeating an SLS test, have you analyzed your previous score report to determine areas where additional study and test preparation could be useful?

If you answered "yes" to the questions above, your preparation has paid off. Now take the SLS test, do your best, pass it—and begin your administrative career!
10. Understand Your Scores

*Understand how tests are scored and how to interpret your test scores*

Of course, passing the SLS test is important to you so you need to understand what your scores mean and what your state requirements are.

**What are the score requirements for my state?**
States, institutions, and associations that require the tests set their own passing scores. Visit [www.ets.org/sls/states](http://www.ets.org/sls/states) for the most up-to-date information.

**If I move to another state, will my new state accept my scores?**
SLS tests are part of a national testing program, meaning that they are required in many states for licensure. The advantage of a national program is that if you move to another state that also requires SLS tests, you can transfer your scores. Each state has specific test requirements and passing scores, which you can find at [www.ets.org/sls/states](http://www.ets.org/sls/states).

**How do I know whether I passed the test?**
Your score report will include information on passing scores for the states you identified as recipients of your test results. If you test in a state with automatic score reporting, you will also receive passing score information for that state.

A list of states and their passing scores for each test are available online at [www.ets.org/sls/states](http://www.ets.org/sls/states).

**What your SLS scores mean**
You received your score report. Now what does it mean? It’s important to interpret your score report correctly and to know what to do if you have questions about your scores.

To access *Understanding Your School Leadership Series Scores*, a PDF document that provides additional information on how to read your score report, visit [www.ets.org/sls/scores/understand](http://www.ets.org/sls/scores/understand).

**Put your scores in perspective**
Your score report indicates:

- Your score and whether you passed
- The range of possible scores
- The raw points available in each content category
- The range of the middle 50 percent of scores on the test

If you have taken the same test or other SLS tests over the last 10 years, your score report also lists the highest score you earned on each test taken.
Content category scores and score interpretation

Questions on the SLS tests are categorized by content. To help you in future study or in preparing to retake the test, your score report shows how many raw points you earned in each content category. Compare your “raw points earned” with the maximum points you could have earned (“raw points available”). The greater the difference, the greater the opportunity to improve your score by further study.

Score scale changes

ETS updates SLS tests on a regular basis to ensure they accurately measure the knowledge and skills that are required for licensure. When tests are updated, the meaning of the score scale may change, so requirements may vary between the new and previous versions. All scores for previous, discontinued tests are valid and reportable for 10 years, provided that your state or licensing agency still accepts them.

These resources may also help you interpret your scores:

- Understanding Your School Leadership Series Scores (PDF), found at [www.ets.org/sls/scores/understand](http://www.ets.org/sls/scores/understand)
- The School Leadership Series Passing Scores (PDF), found at [www.ets.org/sls/scores/understand](http://www.ets.org/sls/scores/understand)
- State requirements, found at [www.ets.org/sls/states](http://www.ets.org/sls/states)
Appendix: Other Questions You May Have

Here is some supplemental information that can give you a better understanding of the SLS tests.

What do the SLS tests measure?
The SLS tests measure the specific knowledge and skills that beginning educational administrators need. The tests do not measure an individual’s disposition toward teaching or potential for success, nor do they measure your actual teaching ability. The assessments are designed to be comprehensive and inclusive but are limited to what can be covered in a finite number of questions and question types. Teaching requires many complex skills that are typically measured in other ways, including classroom observation, video recordings, and portfolios.

There are three SLS tests, which contain selected-response questions or constructed-response questions, or a combination of both: School Leadership Licensure Assessment (6011), School Superintendent Assessment (6021), and the Kentucky Speciality Test of Instructional and Administrative Practices (6015).

Who takes the tests and why?
Many colleges and universities use the SLS tests to evaluate individuals for entry into administrative programs. The assessments are generally taken late in your college career. Many states also require an SLS test as part of their licensing process. In addition, some professional associations and organizations require an SLS test for professional licensing.

Candidates can test in one state and submit their scores in any other state that requires SLS testing for licensure. You can find details at www.ets.org/sls/states.

What is licensure/certification?
Licensure in any area—medicine, law, architecture, accounting, cosmetology—is an assurance to the public that the person holding the license possesses sufficient knowledge and skills to perform important occupational activities safely and effectively. In the case of administrative licensing, a license tells the public that the individual has met predefined competency standards for beginning administrators.

Because a license makes such a serious claim about its holder, licensure tests are usually quite demanding. In some fields, licensure tests have more than one part and last for more than one day. Candidates for licensure in all fields plan intensive study as part of their professional preparation. Some join study groups, others study alone. But preparing to take a licensure test is, in all cases, a professional activity. Because a licensure exam surveys a broad body of knowledge, preparing for a licensure exam takes planning, discipline, and sustained effort.

Why does my state require the SLS tests?
Your state chose the SLS tests because they assess the breadth and depth of content—called the “domain”—that your state wants its administrators to possess before they begin to teach. The level of content knowledge, reflected in the passing score, is based on recommendations of panels of teachers and teacher educators in each subject area. The state licensing agency and, in some states, the state legislature ratify the passing scores that have been recommended by panels of educators.
How were the tests developed?

ETS consulted with practicing educators around the country during every step of the SLS test development process. First, ETS asked them what knowledge and skills a beginning administrator needs to be effective. Their responses were then ranked in order of importance and reviewed by hundreds of educators.

After the results were analyzed and consensus was reached, guidelines, or specifications, for the selected-response and constructed-response tests were developed by educators. Following these guidelines, administrators and professional test developers created test questions that met content requirements and ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness.*

When your state adopted the research-based SLS tests, local panels of educators evaluated each question for its relevance to beginning administrators in your state. During this “validity study,” the panel also provided a passing-score recommendation based on how many of the test questions a beginning administrator in your state would be able to answer correctly. Your state’s licensing agency determined the final passing-score requirement.

ETS follows well-established industry procedures and standards designed to ensure that the tests measure what they are intended to measure. When you pass the SLS test your state requires, you are proving that you have the knowledge and skills you need to begin your educational leadership career.

How are the tests updated to ensure the content remains current?

SLS tests are reviewed regularly. During the first phase of review, ETS conducts an analysis of relevant state and association standards and of the current test content. State licensure titles and the results of relevant job analyses are also considered. Revised test questions are then produced following the standard test development methodology. National advisory committees may also be convened to review and revise existing test specifications and to evaluate test forms for alignment with the specifications.

How long will it take to receive my scores?

Scores for tests that do not include constructed-response questions are available on screen immediately after the test. Scores for tests that contain constructed-response questions or essays aren’t available immediately after the test because of the scoring process involved. Official score reports are available to you and your designated score recipients approximately two to three weeks after the test date for tests delivered continuously, or two to three weeks after the testing window closes for other tests. See the test dates and deadlines calendar at www.ets.org/sls/register/centers_dates for exact score reporting dates.

Can I access my scores on the web?

All test takers can access their test scores via their SLS account free of charge for one year from the posting date. This online access replaces the mailing of a paper score report.

The process is easy—simply log into your SLS account at www.ets.org/sls and click on your score report. If you do not already have an SLS account, you must create one to view your scores.

Note: You must create an SLS account to access your scores, even if you registered by mail or phone.

Your career is worth preparing for, so start today! Let the SLS Study Companion guide you.

To search for the SLS test prep resources that meet your specific needs, visit:

www.ets.org/sls/testprep

To purchase official test prep made by the creators of the SLS tests, visit the ETS Store:

www.ets.org/sls/store

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