

The SLS Study Companion

School Superintendent Assessment

6991



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 educational leadership career. Now you are ready to demonstrate your abilities by taking a 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 57).

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.

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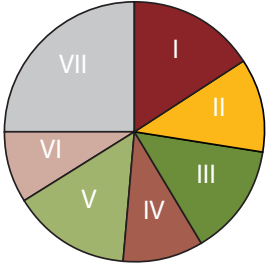
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1. Learn About Your Test

Learn about the specific test you will be taking

School Superintendent Assessment (6991)

Test at a Glance			
Test Name	School Superintendent Assessment		
Test Code	6991		
Time	3 hours		
Number of Questions	120 selected-response questions and 3 constructed-response questions		
Format	Selected-response questions and constructed-response questions		
Test Delivery	Computer delivered		
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination
	I. Strategic Leadership	26	16%
	II. Instructional Leadership	19	12%
	III. Climate and Culture Leadership	22	14%
	IV. Ethical and Policy Leadership	16	10%
	V. Organizational Leadership	24	15%
	VI. Community Leadership	13	8%
	VII. Integrated Knowledge and Understanding (Case Study)	3	25%

About This Test

The School Superintendent Assessment (SSA) is designed to measure the extent to which entry-level superintendents demonstrate the standards-relevant knowledge and skills necessary for competent professional practice. The content of the SSA was defined by a national committee of expert practitioners and preparation faculty and confirmed by a national survey of the field.

The SSA is aligned with two standards: the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA); and the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards, developed by a committee comprised of stakeholders from across the country. The PSEL standards were previously known as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, while the NELP standards were formerly known as the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards.

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 48.

I. Strategic Leadership

A. Mission, Vision, and Core Values

1. Knows how to determine and articulate the core values that define the district's culture
 - a. Emphasizes the imperative of high expectations and student support
 - b. Advocates for a culture of equity and inclusiveness, caring, and trust
2. Knows a variety of strategies for developing a shared understanding of the mission, vision, and core values of the school district and the community
 - a. Clearly communicates the district's mission to a variety of stakeholders
 - b. Identifies strategies to develop a shared vision among stakeholders
 - c. Models the district's core values in all aspects of leadership
3. Understands how to engage stakeholders in the development of the district's mission, vision, and core values to promote the academic success and well-being of each student
 - a. Identifies appropriate stakeholders to give voice to diverse perspectives
 - b. Asks critical questions and seeks input from stakeholders
 - c. Uses effective decision-making strategies to build consensus
 - d. Selects and applies appropriate communication methods
 - e. Recognizes and values the contributions of individuals and groups in goal attainment
4. Knows how to engage stakeholders in the process of evaluating and adjusting the district's mission, vision, and core values based on effectiveness, changing expectations, and needs of students
 - a. Identifies the components of accountability systems necessary to systematically monitor alignment with and make adjustments to district's mission, vision, and core values

B. District and School Improvement

1. Knows how to create a strategic plan that is consistent with the district's core values and supports the district's mission, vision, and goals in a culture of continuous improvement
 - a. Prepares stakeholders for the process of improvement
 - b. Develops the knowledge, skills, and motivation of stakeholders to succeed in the improvement process
 - c. Promotes shared commitment and accountability to achieve the district's vision, mission, goals, and strategic plan
2. Knows how and when to use different strategies for improvement, including transformational, incremental, and adaptive approaches to district and school improvement
3. Knows how to engage stakeholders in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry and strategic planning for continuous school improvement
 - a. Builds the capacity of stakeholders to identify emerging trends and finds research for the benefit of the district and school improvement
 - b. Develops and promotes distributive leadership among appropriate stakeholders for inquiry, experimentation and innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement
 - c. Builds the capacity of staff to ensure the implementation and evaluation of improvement processes
4. Understands how to develop a system for collecting and analyzing data to inform the district's improvement process
 - a. Identifies and uses appropriate quantitative and qualitative data to understand the strengths and challenges of the district and to develop rigorous goals
 - b. Develops systems for collecting, analyzing, and sharing data for district and school improvement

5. Understands how to use a systematic approach when developing strategic plans for district and school improvement
 - a. Analyzes the current status of goals and objectives
 - b. Conducts a needs assessment to determine high-leverage areas of need
 - c. Aligns goals with the vision
 - d. Develops a plan of action based on district and school needs
6. Knows how to develop a strategic plan to achieve the vision
 - a. Identifies systems and resources (human, financial, technological, facility, community) needed to support the strategic plan
 - b. Articulates the strategic plan to key stakeholders and builds understanding and commitment of stakeholders
 - c. Aligns plans to components of the vision
7. Knows how to manage uncertainty, risk, and the change process to ensure the success of the district's improvement efforts
 - a. Applies appropriate models of a change process to situations
 - b. Engages school and district leadership in the change process
 - c. Assesses district and school needs to determine appropriate action
 - d. Responds to stakeholder input and challenges to the change process
8. Understands how to evaluate and adjust the district's strategic plan based on results and the changing expectations and needs of students
 - a. Maintains an accountability system to monitor progress toward goals
 - b. Collects and analyzes data to maintain and adjust programs and practices
 - c. Evaluates current practices to determine efficacy and develops new practices to support areas of need

II. Instructional Leadership

A. Curriculum and Instruction

1. Knows how to develop, design, and deliver coherent district-level systems of curriculum and instruction that reflect high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and that are culturally responsive
 - a. Identifies approaches to facilitate the development, design, and delivery of a rigorous curriculum
 - b. Aligns curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels with applicable standards
2. Knows how to promote instructional practice at all schools that is consistent with knowledge of student learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student
 - a. Promotes the use of instructional practices that are intellectually challenging and authentic to student experiences
 - b. Promotes curriculum planning that is developmentally appropriate for each student
3. Understands the role of technology in teaching and learning
 - a. Integrates technology to support teaching and enhance learning
 - b. Integrates technology across the curriculum for different purposes (e.g., communication, collaboration, organization, research)
4. Knows how to develop intervention systems that identify each student's needs and provide the requisite support

B. Assessment and Accountability

1. Knows how to identify, develop, and use valid assessments that measure student learning aligned with curriculum, standards, and instructional practice
 - a. Distinguishes among the different types of assessments and their purposes for measuring student learning
 - b. Works with administrators to improve the identification, development, and use of appropriate assessments

2. Understands how to gather and analyze assessment data to support instructional improvement and monitor student progress
 - a. Identifies relevant data sources
 - b. Engages administrators and staff in the appropriate use of data
 - c. Applies data-informed decision-making processes to promote continuous improvement
3. Knows how to monitor and evaluate curriculum and instructional practices to support student learning and academic success
 - a. Implements coherent systems of evaluation for curriculum and instruction
 - b. Connects student performance to instructional practices
 - c. Evaluates instructional programs and services to support academic success
4. Understands how to act with equity, cultural competency, and responsiveness in all aspects of leadership
 - a. Promotes matters of equity and cultural competency and responsiveness
 - b. Uses effective interpersonal and communication skills in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of student and staff cultures
 - c. Acts as an advocate for the success of all students in the district and is open to diverse perspectives
5. Understands how to use strategies to address biases and marginalization of students in the district
 - a. Identifies and minimizes deficit-based education
 - b. Identifies and addresses low expectations associated with race, language, culture, gender identification, sexual orientation, and disability

III. Climate and Culture Leadership

A. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

1. Understands how to ensure students are treated fairly and respectfully while acknowledging each student's culture and context
 - a. Recognizes each student's culture as an asset for teaching and learning
 - b. Ensures all student groups have access to rigorous learning opportunities
2. Understands how to ensure students have equitable access to effective administrators and staff, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources
 - a. Recruits qualified, competent, and diverse administrators and staff members who reflect the diversity needs of the school
 - b. Provides resources to historically underperforming student groups to close the achievement gap
 - c. Provides opportunities for preparing students to contribute to a culturally diverse society
3. Understands how to develop district policies aligned to state and federal guidelines that address student conduct in a positive, consistent, fair, and unbiased manner
 - a. Reviews district disciplinary policies, procedures, and incidents

B. Climate and Culture for Staff

1. Understands how to develop workplace conditions that promote and support effective instructional practice and student learning
 - a. Promotes mutual accountability among staff for the success of each student and school
 - b. Creates opportunities for collaborative examination of practice, collegial feedback, and collective learning
 - c. Encourages staff to develop their learning and effectiveness through reflection, study, and improvement
 - d. Promotes and supports the personal health, well-being, and positive work-life balance of staff
 - e. Develops and supports open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships within and among leaders and staff

2. Understands how to empower and entrust staff with collective responsibility for meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and physical needs in accordance to the district's core values and mission
 - a. Creates structures that allow staff to identify, create, and implement opportunities to meet students' varied needs
 - b. Creates a culture in which staff assume collective responsibility for student success
3. Understands how to promote a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole student
 - a. Establishes high expectations for professional practice at all levels in the district
 - b. Ensures ethical and equitable practice at all schools in the district
 - c. Creates an atmosphere of trust and open communication with school leadership and within schools in the district
 - d. Facilitates collaboration and collective efficacy within and among schools in the district
 - e. Pursues ongoing individual learning for professional development that contributes to organizational growth
 - f. Fosters staff's ongoing individual learning for professional development that contributes to organizational growth

C. Community of Care and Support for Students

1. Knows how to cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school district community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student
 - a. Influences the school and district environment (physical, academic, and social) to positively affect student learning
 - b. Assesses the culture and climate in schools in the district
 - c. Collaborates with school-level personnel to identify strengths and address areas of need
2. Knows how to create and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school and district environment that meets the needs of each student
 - a. Integrates the cultures and languages of the school community into the learning environment
 - b. Creates and promotes a safe environment in which each student is known, accepted, and respected
 - c. Promotes a safe and healthy school and district environment in which all students have a voice
 - d. Implements procedures and policies to ensure a safe environment
3. Understands how to provide coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student
 - a. Encourages students to be active and responsible members of the school community
4. Understands how to promote relationships (adult-student and student-peer) that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development of each student
5. Understands how to cultivate and reinforce positive student conduct and engagement in school

IV. Ethical and Policy Leadership

A. Ethical Practice

1. Understands how to act ethically and promote ethical and professional relationships and decision-making by administrators and staff
 - a. Models and promotes professionalism by exhibiting integrity, fairness, transparency, and trustworthiness in interactions with administrators and staff
 - b. Places students and their well-being at the center of all decision-making
 - c. Promotes and practices responsible stewardship of district resources (e.g., financial, physical, time)
2. Knows how to promote and safeguard the values of an equitable public education

3. Understands how to lead with integrity and provides moral direction for staff to cultivate a culture of ethical and professional behavior
 - a. Informs administrators and staff of the expectations for ethical and professional behavior (e.g., equality, equity, honesty, legality, consistency)
 - b. Ensures administrators and staff are trained to exhibit high standards for ethical and professional conduct with students
4. Knows how to recognize and respond to ethical issues
 - a. Establishes a safe and secure system for reporting and responding to ethical issues
 - b. Identifies, investigates, and addresses potentially unethical behaviors

B. Policy, Advocacy, and Governance

1. Knows how to create and implement policies and procedures that align with the district's mission and vision and ensure student success
 - a. Interprets, creates, and enforces appropriate policies related to district needs
 - b. Works effectively with the district board of education to create, revise, and adopt district policies
 - c. Detects and investigates violations of district policy
2. Knows how to apply state and federal laws to district and campus policies and procedures (regarding, e.g., employment, confidentiality of students and staff, rights of students and staff)
3. Knows the roles, functions, and expectations of the superintendent and the district board of education
 - a. Develops and ensures processes that are open, transparent, and accountable
4. Knows how to work with the district board of education to develop and maintain an effective partnership
 - a. Communicates and collaborates with members of the district board of education in a variety of contexts
 - b. Applies protocols in order to address issues associated with the concerns and needs of the district board of education and individual board members

- c. Considers the impact and implications of interactions with members of the district board of education
 - d. Applies appropriate consensus-building strategies to ensure the achievement of the district's vision and goals
5. Knows procedures for district board of education meetings in accordance with state and federal law
6. Knows how to work with the district board of education to advocate for the value of public education

V. Organizational Leadership

A. Professional Capacity

1. Understands the processes and procedures for planning and managing staffing needs
 - a. Ensures an efficient system of recruiting, hiring, supporting, and retaining effective administrators and staff
 - b. Plans for and manages staff turnover and succession and provides opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of new personnel
 - c. follows procedures for staff discipline, remediation, and dismissal (e.g., due process procedures)
 - d. Adheres to local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and codes as required for human resource management and consults with appropriate legal staff
2. Knows how to support the development of administrators' and staff members' professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth
 - a. Identifies research-based professional learning practices and activities for self and staff
 - b. Addresses the varied needs of novice and experienced administrators and staff
 - c. Designs and implements job-embedded, collaborative professional learning opportunities with staff input
3. Knows how to promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement for all staff by empowering and motivating administrators and staff to the highest levels of professional practice

- a. Consistently applies best practices and research-based approaches that support personal and professional growth of all staff
 - b. Builds the capacity of administrators, teacher leaders, and staff through learning opportunities and support
 - c. Applies appropriate methods and techniques for developing, assessing, and evaluating administrators (e.g., school surveys, data analysis, observation, self-assessment, stakeholder feedback)
4. Understands ways to provide actionable feedback regarding instruction and other professional practices through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation to support the development of teachers and staff
- a. Distinguishes multiple research-anchored supervision and evaluation systems
 - b. Explains the process for implementing an evaluation system

B. Operations and Management

1. Understands how to develop ethical and accountable systems to manage the district's fiscal resources to align with the district's vision, mission, and goals
- a. Applies appropriate procedures for budgeting, financial record keeping, reporting, and accountability
 - b. Follows local, state, and federal requirements for financial management
 - c. Recognizes the components of financial planning and the process of monitoring financial accounts (e.g., revenue forecast, enrollment, and staffing projections)
 - d. Identifies and analyzes relevant data for use in budgetary decision making
 - e. Employs strategies for financial planning and management to address future district needs
 - f. Seeks and manages federal, state, and local funds within given parameters (e.g., federal title funds, state aid)
2. Understands how to acquire and manage physical resources and other resources to align with the district's vision, mission, and goals
- a. Recognizes how elements of facilities management affect the learning process
 - b. Identifies procedures and personnel for building maintenance, cost analysis, and use of facilities
 - c. Follows federal laws and regulations associated with facilities management and compliance (e.g., ADA, OSHA)
 - d. Outlines the role of support services in the school system (e.g., transportation, food services)
 - e. Uses technology to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management
3. Knows how to apply strategies for improving district efficiency (including time management and organizational structure)
- a. Protects administrators' and staff members' work and student learning from disruption
 - b. Organizes the administrative structure for efficient day-to-day operations (e.g., purchasing, scheduling, transportation, personnel)
 - c. Manages staff resources to ensure that teachers and staff are assigned to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address student learning needs
4. Understands how to implement the district crisis management plan and works with administrators and staff to ensure campus crisis management plans and related training activities are effective and efficient
- a. Examines the district-level crisis management plan
 - b. Implements the crisis management plan and related training activities for the district and schools
5. Knows how to develop and manage internal and external relationships toward achieving the district's missions and goals
- a. Develops productive relationships with the central office staff, district board of education, school administrators, collective bargaining units, and state legislators
 - b. Facilitates collaboration among feeder and connecting schools for enrollment management and curricular and instructional articulation
 - c. Develops and administers systems in accordance with state and federal laws for fair and equitable management of conflict within and among students, faculty and staff, leaders, families, and community

VI. Community Leadership

A. Community Engagement

1. Knows how to engage and communicate with families and the community in meaningful, mutually beneficial ways to support the achievement of district goals
 - a. Uses appropriate two-way communication strategies to engage families and the community in meeting the needs and highlighting the accomplishments of the district, schools, and students
 - b. Ensures communication is accessible while building and sustaining positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community
 - c. Helps the community understand local policies, state and federal laws, and associated rights
2. Knows how to create opportunities for schools and families to partner in support of student learning in and out of school
3. Knows how to advocate for the district and the needs and priorities of students, families, and the community
 - a. Responds to educational concerns and needs to enhance the community's understanding of and support for areas of concern
 - b. Ensures a high degree of transparency to build trust among stakeholders
4. Knows how to build and sustain productive partnerships with diverse stakeholder groups to support the achievement of district goals
 - a. Identifies and collaborates with key local, state, and national entities to advocate for district positions on educational issues
 - b. Identifies individuals, businesses, higher-education institutions, and other relevant groups in the community for potential partnerships
5. Knows how to develop a public relations program that includes the use of social media to foster community relations
 - a. Identifies communication sources and outlets
 - b. Establishes positive working relationships with the media
 - c. Establishes and implements a communication plan

- d. Establishes collaborative communication with all stakeholders
- e. Recognizes and appropriately uses various social media platforms

B. Maximizing Community Resources

1. Knows how to leverage the community's cultural, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school improvement
 - a. Maintains a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs
 - b. Develops productive relationships and engages various district constituents
2. Knows how to develop productive relationships with local colleges and universities as a resource for the school district
3. Understands how to make district facilities and resources available for families and the community
4. Is familiar with strategies for obtaining resources such as grants, shared services, donations, and foundations

VII. Integrated Knowledge and Understanding (Case Study)

A. Strategic Leadership

B. Climate and Culture Leadership

C. Organizational Leadership

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.

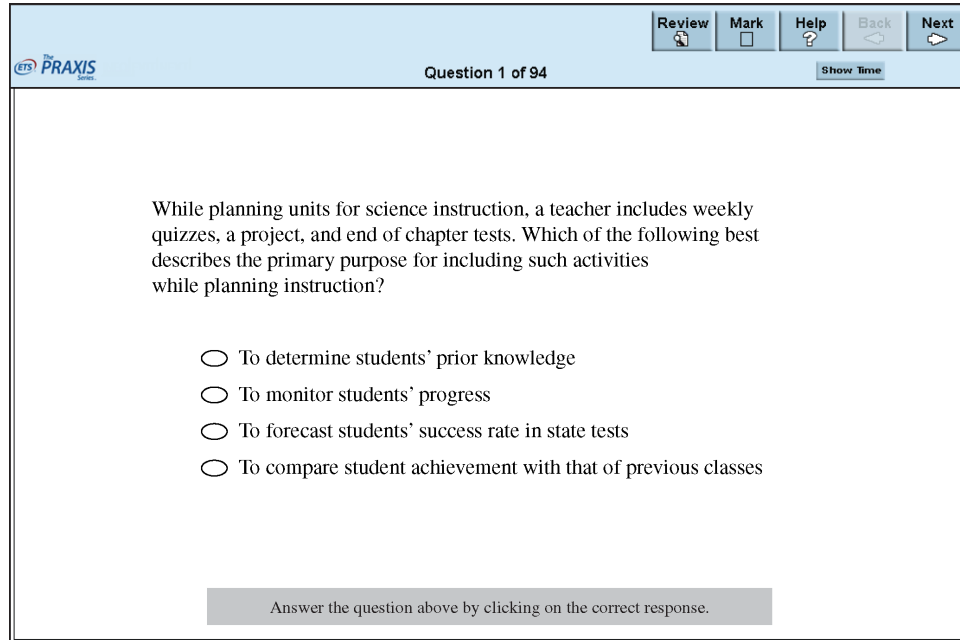
For tests that have constructed-response questions, more detailed information can be found on page 5.

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.



The screenshot shows a computer-delivered test interface. At the top left is the logo for "The PRAXIS Series". In the top right corner, there are five buttons: "Review" (with a magnifying glass icon), "Mark" (with a square icon), "Help" (with a question mark icon), "Back" (with a left arrow icon), and "Next" (with a right arrow icon). Below these buttons, the text "Question 1 of 94" is centered, and "Show Time" is on the right. The main content area contains a question: "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?" Below the question are four radio button options: "To determine students' prior knowledge", "To monitor students' progress", "To forecast students' success rate in state tests", and "To compare student achievement with that of previous classes". At the bottom of the question area, there is a grey instruction box that says "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.

- In addition to reviewing state law, which of the following actions should a superintendent take first to ensure the successful joint use of public school facilities?
 - Determining the level of funding that will be needed to address maintenance costs
 - Quantifying the need for staff to supervise non-district events held at schools
 - Communicating the building capacity for various types of non-district activities
 - Developing district policies to guide the use of schools as public space
- A superintendent works with the principal and staff members of a low-performing middle school to implement the following research-based recommendations:
 - Support change with strong leadership.**
 - Maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction.**
 - Make visible improvements early in the process.**
 - Build a committed staff.**

Which of the following is the primary purpose of the recommendations above?

 - Increasing the likelihood of a successful turnaround
 - Improving teacher-administrator communication
 - Establishing credibility in the community
 - Alerting other schools of the need to maintain high standards
- At a recent board of education meeting, a new superintendent allowed a vote on a contract to take place by three out of the seven board members who were present because of an approaching deadline. The next day, the superintendent learned that the vote had to be voided. Which of the following is the most likely reason why it was necessary to void the vote?
 - The board is not required to vote on a contract if the company is located within the school district.
 - The superintendent was not notified in advance that board members would be absent.
 - The community will not favor the outcome of the vote once it is announced.
 - The vote for a contract requires a quorum to be present.
- 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?
 - Professional learning communities
 - Collaborative cohorts
 - Vertical teaming
 - Inquiry-based staff development
- A superintendent solicits feedback from stakeholders in the early stages of developing the district's strategic plan and notices that there is significantly less feedback from parents than from other district stakeholders. The superintendent can best facilitate an increase in parental involvement by
 - having administrators ask parents for feedback when they call home to discuss discipline
 - scheduling morning community focus group meetings throughout the week
 - holding multiple meetings in varied locations during the day and in the evening
 - sending a mass e-mail letting parents know when a meeting will be held to gather input

6. 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
7. A superintendent receives the district's standardized testing results, and the scores indicate that the district did not meet the goals set by the school board and district stakeholders in several areas. Which of the following actions best represents transparent professionalism by the superintendent in the management of the results?
- (A) Highlighting only the positive aspects when sharing the results with the school board
 - (B) Meeting with the district's lead teachers to review the results and set new goals
 - (C) Creating a report that details the results for the school board, staff, and community
 - (D) Announcing in the local newspaper that the results are available to the public upon request
8. 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
9. 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

10. 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 the 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
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

Refer to the following scenario and document when responding to questions 12-14.

Dr. Shilling, the superintendent, is working with the district improvement team to plan district-wide professional development for teachers for the beginning of the school year. He meets with the district improvement team to review the results of data for professional development from the end of the previous school year. The district-wide in-service lasts two days and supports the 160 faculty and staff members in the district. The team decides to have the first day focus on a single topic, while the second day could include multiple topics. The district budget is limited, so Dr. Shilling asks the team to be frugal with resources.

Document

1. Professional Development Needs Survey

Professional Development Needs Survey

In which of the following areas do you need professional development? Select one.

Professional Development Needs	Teacher Experience Level	Elementary 1	Elementary 2	Middle School	High School
Topics (see comments)	Novice	1	2	3	3
	Experienced	1	1	1	1
Differentiation	Novice	5	4	6	9
	Experienced	12	11	13	16
Assessment	Novice	1	1	1	1
	Experienced	1	2	3	3
Classroom management	Novice	6	6	7	10
	Experienced	1	1	1	1
Technology Integration	Novice	1	1	1	1
	Experienced	4	5	6	6

Elementary School Comments: Mathematical thinking (multistep word problems); writing process; strategies for below-grade-level readers; working with English learners; inquiry-based science

Middle and High School Comments: Scientific thinking and application to labs; rigorous homework; helping students write and organize thoughts clearly; improving reading comprehension of technical texts

12. Based on the data, which of the following describes Dr. Doctor Shilling's best initial recommendation for the first staff development day?
- (A) Asking the district improvement team to survey administrators at each school to understand whether they promote and support differentiation
 - (B) Determining the number of survey participants wanting to receive professional development on differentiation and the resources needed to provide it
 - (C) Reviewing the content of the previous professional development on differentiation to identify areas that were not covered
 - (D) Collecting data from teachers regarding students' learning styles that would support the need for differentiation

13. A month into the school year, the district improvement team meets again with Dr. Shilling to inquire about how to continue supporting teachers' professional development throughout the school year. Which of the following is Dr. Shilling's most appropriate recommendation?
- (A) Investigating whether online professional development would allow teachers to customize their learning plan needs
 - (B) Reviewing whether district funds can be reallocated to support having professional speakers visit each school during the bimonthly staff meeting
 - (C) Asking each grade-level or content-area team to keep a log of professional development needs throughout the year and prioritize them for the following year
 - (D) Asking teacher leaders at each school to provide monthly after-school professional development sessions on topics of interest
14. Which of the following describes the team's best recommendation for the second staff development day?
- (A) Focusing the sessions on strategies and tools for meeting the needs of the novice teachers to ensure that they are prepared for the school year
 - (B) Splitting the sessions so elementary teachers and middle and high school teachers can brainstorm strategies for teaching their respective content areas
 - (C) Including breakout sessions on classroom management and technology integration that will be facilitated by district staff
 - (D) Having teachers in each school analyze benchmark and state data from the previous school year to create an action plan for their schools
15. 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
16. 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

17. A superintendent wants to deploy technology resources effectively to ensure a successful implementation of the district-wide technology integration plan. Match each description of effective technology incorporation with the focus area that it best exemplifies.

Developing a shared vision with stakeholders for how technology can support learning and working with stakeholders to secure appropriate resources

Ensuring technology access for administrators, teachers, and students through careful planning focused on sustainability

Collaborating with school leaders to build capacity through face-to-face, online, and blended learning communities

Promoting the use of software-aided real-time data to make instructional decisions and appropriately adjust learning activities

Robust infrastructure	<input type="text"/>
Personalized student learning	<input type="text"/>
Personalized professional learning	<input type="text"/>
Collaborative leadership	<input type="text"/>

18. Two middle school students engage in a physical altercation resulting in disciplinary consequences for both of them. The parents of one of the students involved demand that the principal disclose the level of consequences the other student received. When the principal declines to provide this information, the parents appeal to the superintendent using the district’s grievance process. Which of the following actions by the superintendent is most appropriate in this situation?

- (A) Approving the request because parents have the right to know that the punishment was equal
- (B) Denying the request because parents must wait 30 days before requesting this type of information
- (C) Approving the request because the parents have a legitimate educational interest
- (D) Denying the request because the information is protected and confidential

19. Several principals and teachers in the world language departments of their high schools ask that the superintendent approve a request to begin a sister-school program with a school in China as part of each high school’s Mandarin Chinese language class. Which of the following is the most important benefit the superintendent should consider when deciding whether or not to implement the sister-school program?

- (A) The program would ensure high school students learn a new world language effectively through daily practice.
- (B) The program would provide instructional resources to each Mandarin Chinese teacher to support daily lesson planning.
- (C) The technology tools that teachers would use to communicate during the program would support structured learning.
- (D) The experience would help students understand the lives of other people in a genuine, meaningful way.

20. The superintendent of Blanchard ISD, an urban, high-poverty district, implements a shared summer school program with a neighboring school district. The superintendent reviews the status of the shared program after the first year of implementation and considers next steps.

Summer School Services Summary Information

Blanchard ISD Summer School Program Last Year	Shared Summer School Program Current Year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total cost to the district: \$420,000 • 72% of teachers report the curriculum is rigorous and aligned. • Students' daily time on task is 3.5 hours. • 64% of students report supportive relationships with program teachers. • 76% of students pass the state-mandated assessment retake test at the end of the program. • 75% of teachers reflect the diversity of students enrolled in the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total cost to the district: \$240,000 • 60% of teachers report the curriculum is rigorous and aligned. • Students' daily time on task is 3 hours. • 80% of students report supportive relationships with program teachers. • 70% of students pass the state-mandated assessment retake test at the end of the program. • 72% of teachers reflect the diversity of students enrolled in the program.

Based on the data provided, which of the following strategies addresses the most pressing need of the summer school program?

- (A) Working collaboratively with the neighboring district to maximize instruction and improve lesson and unit plans
- (B) Reviewing a line-item expenditure list to determine opportunities for additional cost savings to the district
- (C) Providing training to participating teachers to better meet the emotional and academic needs of students
- (D) Review hiring practices for the program to ensure students have role models that reflect their backgrounds
21. Two neighboring school districts recently entered into a shared services agreement with each other. Which THREE of the following benefits are primarily gained through the agreement?
- (A) Alleviating fiscal stress brought on by external economic factors
- (B) Keeping utility bills within prescribed budgetary parameters
- (C) Reducing costs of transportation and maintenance
- (D) Creating an increase in student achievement
- (E) Allowing districts to cut staff without sacrificing program quality
22. Which of the following actions is most appropriate for a superintendent to take to support district staff in their efforts to use student data effectively to improve instruction?
- (A) Partnering with a local college to offer school leaders a minicourse on best practices for collecting student data
- (B) Working with administrators to adjust school schedules to provide teacher teams with a common planning time for analyzing data and preparing instruction
- (C) Requiring all schools to participate in a book study that focuses on strategies for reviewing data and communicating results to parents
- (D) Contracting a vendor that can upload student academic data into a platform and provide teachers with training in using the new technology software

Questions 23 to 25 are based on the following scenario.

Dr. Fielder, a new superintendent, has been asked by the board of education to design an improvement plan to address declining student achievement in mathematics and reading. Dr. Fielder forms a team composed of district administrators, principals, and curriculum coordinators to answer the following questions.

- 1) How can we help teachers use data to make instructional decisions?
 - 2) What approach to professional development will best promote teacher growth and improve student learning?
 - 3) What practices will promote vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum?
23. Which of the following actions best addresses question 1?
- (A) Asking principals to analyze the grading practices of their teachers and institute a schoolwide model for grading
 - (B) Facilitating conversations among teachers that encourage reflection on their classroom practices
 - (C) Directing curriculum coordinators to act as clearinghouses for student data related to their content areas
 - (D) Establishing school-based data teams that model and encourage the use of data to make instructional decisions
24. Which of the following approaches to professional development best addresses question 2?
- (A) Offering release time and reimbursement to teachers who attend workshops and conferences
 - (B) Providing teachers with initial training in new practices and coaching through the initial phase of implementation
 - (C) Concentrating professional development on generic topics that benefit the teaching staff as a whole
 - (D) Allowing teachers to select professional development topics based on self-identified need

25. Which of the following actions best addresses question 3?
- (A) Arranging time for teachers to create and share curriculum maps for each content area and grade level
 - (B) Scheduling a work session for teachers to identify the learning standards that align with each instructional unit
 - (C) Having the curriculum coordinator survey teachers to identify areas of the curriculum that need revision
 - (D) Asking teachers to match content instruction and assessments with the marking period in which they occur
26. A superintendent receives feedback from principals and teachers that district-developed staff development is unhelpful. Teachers and principals request training that allows them to share their personal teaching experiences working with diverse students. Particularly, teachers want to discuss the needs of different student groups in their classes, discuss how to address content-specific misconceptions by students, and learn how to scaffold lessons to ensure instruction is rigorous. Which of the following changes to staff development should the superintendent implement to best meet the needs of principals and teachers?
- (A) Focusing training on connecting student learning to the district's mission statement of producing productive and culturally responsive students
 - (B) Expanding training to encourage teachers to consider how their cultural blindness could be impacting the low expectations they have of their students
 - (C) Implementing professional learning communities that create a reflective culture focused on increasing the achievement of all demographic groups
 - (D) Asking district staff to provide an equity workshop for new teachers at the beginning of each school year focused on using classroom data to inform the instructional process

After a district-wide curriculum audit, the superintendent reviews key summary information regarding the district's writing program.

- Curriculum guides were created two years ago and are being implemented across the district. 95% of teachers report using the curriculum daily but request better examples of differentiation.
 - Student writing samples scored by teachers across the district show below-grade-level expectations for student mastery.
 - Student writing standards were updated by the legislature last year.
 - 82% of high school teachers report implementing the new college-and-career readiness standards for language arts.
 - District-developed benchmarks were updated this year and reflect appropriate rigor and alignment.
27. Which TWO of the following actions by the superintendent appropriately respond to the key summary information regarding the district's writing program?
- (A) Form a committee to update the lessons in the curriculum guides for alignment and address the learning needs of diverse populations.
 - (B) Administer a survey to teachers and administrators to gauge the quality and alignment of the curriculum.
 - (C) Provide exemplars as explicit guidance on student learning expectations at each grade level.
 - (D) Track instructional materials and supplemental resources used to implement college-and-career-readiness standards.
 - (E) Create professional development systems that support teachers in making effective instructional decisions.
28. After reviewing registration data for the past ten years, a superintendent notices a consistent trend of decreasing enrollment due to open enrollment in neighboring school districts and a loss in overall population in the city. The superintendent and the board of education explore the possibility of creating a visual and performing arts magnet program at the high school to attract students from other cities and to keep current students from leaving. Which of the following analyses would be most effective in helping the superintendent make a decision?
- (A) Root-cause analysis
 - (B) Disparate impact analysis
 - (C) Political, economic, social, and technological analysis
 - (D) Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis
29. Upon notice of a principal's retirement, the district superintendent forms a selection committee. After screening applicants and completing a round of interviews, the committee selects the top three applicants for a one-day, on-site visit. Which TWO of the following tasks should the superintendent plan for each applicant to complete during the school visit to help identify an applicant with strong instructional leadership skills that will meet the needs of the school?
- (A) A review of the school improvement plan and current student performance data with teacher leaders at the school
 - (B) A panel discussion with student leaders to hear their perspectives on the school's strengths and weaknesses in technology resources
 - (C) An interview with key business leaders to discuss strategies to build a stronger working relationship with local community leaders
 - (D) A building walk-through to observe classroom instruction with debriefings to discuss instructional practices identified and potential actions needed
 - (E) An interview with cocurricular and extracurricular sponsors to discuss how the school's current programs enhance the school's curricular program

30. Which of the following actions best demonstrates a superintendent effectively fostering a high standard of academic excellence?
- (A) Providing a stipend for teachers who pursue a master’s degree or advanced certification in their assigned teaching position
 - (B) Reallocating funds to provide teachers with state-of-the-art resources and manipulatives for instructional use
 - (C) Reviewing annual student assessment data individually with school leaders to identify areas of weakness
 - (D) Communicating each school’s role in the district improvement plan to ensure accountability to the vision and mission

Refer to the following scenario and documents when responding to questions 31-33.

Mr. Heraldo is the new superintendent in Braxton, an urban district with three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. The last five years have seen a troubling growth in student involvement in gang activities, beginning in late elementary school and increasing through middle and high school. Anecdotal data gathered by the school counselors estimate that 15% of the student body identify as gang participants. According to federal guidelines, this indicates that Braxton has a gang problem. Previous district- and building-level administrators have been reluctant to acknowledge the extent of gang involvement, but parents and the community are looking to the school district for leadership in handling the growing problem.

Documents

1. Excerpt: Sunday Feature, Braxton Times
2. E-mail from the presidents of the Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs)
3. Demographics of the Braxton School District

Excerpt: Sunday Feature, *Braxton Times*

“Gangs and Schools,” L. Lowry and D. Rodriguez, Community Reporters

Gang activity in the United States is unlimited in its reach. Actions that schools and law enforcement can take to thwart gang activity was the subject of a presentation at the Mid-State School Safety Conference held last weekend at the state capital. School Resource Officer (SRO) Joseph Billings says. “Schools present a target-rich environment for gang activity such as drugs and extortion. Parents may be unaware of their child’s gang involvement until they are contacted by the school.”

People wonder why a gang may exist inside of a school. “Kids sometimes don’t see each other any time of the day or any time of the year except during the school day,” Billings explains. “When kids go home, they may not appear to be gang members, but when they come into schools where their friends are, they exhibit these behaviors.” Billings notes that distrust of other cultures fosters gang development. “Young people come into schools from various cultures or countries. They are often made to feel different based on their race, material possessions, or language.”

E-mail from the presidents of the Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs)

TO: Mr. Herald, Superintendent

FROM: PTO Presidents Lopez (12th Street Elementary), Washington (Spring Elementary), Soong (Chrysler Elementary), Benning (Braxton Middle), and McGinley (Braxton High)

RE: Gang Activity in Braxton

For several years, the joint PTOs of Braxton have petitioned the district to increase its response to gang activity in the schools and the surrounding community. We have shared our observations and asked for leadership and support from the schools. We believe that the half-hearted response from the previous administration has allowed student involvement in gangs to increase.

The PTOs are hoping that a new administration will take our concerns seriously. As such, we are making available to you any and all resources at our disposal. We freely give you access to our PTO meetings and sponsored activities, funding to hire speakers and counselors, and the time and efforts of our members. We await your direction in using the resources of the joint PTOs to address the problem of gang involvement by our children.

Demographics of the Braxton School District

Student Group	Current School Year
Female	44%
Male	56%
Economically disadvantaged	79%
Students in special education	43%
English learners	27%
Homeless/transient	1%
Students in foster care	11%
Military-connected students	1%
Migrant students	0%
African American	49.5%
Hispanic	29.5%
White	13%
Asian	4%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2%
American Indian	0%
Two or more races	2%

31. Mr. Herald acknowledges that any prevention programs in schools should be based on an assessment of the specific nature of the problems that gangs present in the school and the local community. He begins the process of addressing the problem of gangs in Braxton schools by conducting a needs assessment.
- Identify TWO sources of data that the needs assessment should examine. Describe the data and the data-gathering method.
 - For EACH source, explain how the data will help to address the problem of gangs in the district schools.

32. Mr. Heraldo responds to documents 1 and 2 in part by examining the measures the district is taking to ensure the safety of students when they are on school property and when attending classes.

Identify and describe TWO policies, procedures, or actions that Mr. Heraldo can implement to reduce the potential for gang or other violence in or around district schools.

For EACH, present a justification for the effectiveness of the policy, procedure, or action for reducing gang or other violence in or around district schools.

33. Identify and describe TWO factors that put a student at risk for gang involvement.

For EACH factor, suggest an action Mr. Heraldo can take to either reduce or mitigate the influence of the factor on student involvement in a gang.

Answers to Sample Questions

1. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of maximizing community resources. Developing joint-use policies to establish guidelines for using school facilities allows for transparency between the school district and the community. This is the first step to making district facilities available for use because policies will establish agreed-upon guiding principles and a framework for consistent implementation.
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 (D). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of procedures for working with the district board of education. When a quorum is not present, any business conducted is void.
4. 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.
5. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of strategies to engage stakeholders in the development of the district's strategic plan. A variety of meeting times and locations can increase access among parents who work (including those who work the night shift) or have difficulty obtaining transportation.
6. 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.
7. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of promoting professionalism by leading with integrity and transparency. According to the Statement of Ethics for Educational Leaders by

the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), an educational leader must act with honesty and integrity and in a trustworthy manner. In order to be transparent in their actions when managing student assessment results, superintendents must maintain honesty by sharing results with all district stakeholders. This creates a culture of trust.

8. 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.
9. The correct answer is (B). 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.
10. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of strategies that support a positive learning environment for diverse populations. An integrated approach to a multicultural curriculum at all levels encourages interaction and tolerance between cultures and groups and nurtures the understanding and appreciation of cultural similarities and differences.
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 (B). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of using data-based information to direct instruction. Nearly half of all survey participants (76 out of 160) chose differentiation as the topic that they most require professional development on.

13. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of how to address the professional development needs of staff. Online professional development is most appropriate based on the data and the lack of budget described in the set leader. Online professional development would provide ongoing support for teachers and could cover the range of topics listed in the survey.

14. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of planning professional development activities. The data show that novice teachers benefit from professional development on classroom management, while experienced teachers benefit from technology integration.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. The correct answer is 2, 4, 3, 1. This question tests the candidate's knowledge of how to effectively use technology. Robust infrastructure matches with ensuring technology access for administrators, teachers, and students through careful planning focused on sustainability. Personalized student learning matches with promoting the use of software-aided real-time data to make instructional decisions and appropriately adjust learning activities. Personalized professional learning matches with collaborating with school leaders to build capacity through face-to-face, online, and blended learning communities. Collaborative leadership matches with developing a shared vision with stakeholders for how technology can support learning and working with stakeholders to secure appropriate resources. All of these are essential areas that a superintendent needs to have an understanding of in order to deploy technology resources effectively.

18. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of how to apply state and federal laws. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the information in a student's education record, including disciplinary consequences,

except under certain circumstances. Neither the requested information nor the requesting parties meet the standard for an exception set by FERPA.

19. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of providing a range of services to meet students' learning needs. The addition of a sister-school program to an existing world language class provides students with an opportunity to develop global competence in an authentic way. Interacting with students from another country will allow students to understand the culture and experiences of students on the other side of the world in a personal way and increase their global awareness.

20. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of how to use data-informed decision-making processes. The data reveal significant drops in the percentage of teachers who feel that the curriculum is aligned and rigorous and the percentage of students passing the state-mandated retake test; therefore, working collaboratively with the neighboring district to maximize instruction is the most effective strategy to address these needs.

21. The correct answers are (A), (C), and (D). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of sustaining productive relationships with diverse stakeholders. (A) is correct because districts use shared service agreements to combat factors such as reductions in state aid and property tax caps. (C) is correct because transportation and maintenance are two types of services that are often shared between districts. (D) is correct because sharing of special education and curriculum resources has been found to positively impact student achievement.

22. The correct answer is (B). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of how to work with administrators to ensure the efficient use of data in the district. Allowing time for grade-level and department-level teams to meet during the school day provides a job-embedded, collaborative opportunity to analyze student data and plan effective instruction.

23. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of ways to promote the use of data-driven instructional practices. A data-based inquiry process promotes the use of effective practices and the adoption of common expectations for student performance and helps teachers to develop effective strategies to better serve students. By establishing data teams, teachers will receive guidance on how to use data to make informed decisions about their instructional practices.

24. The correct answer is (B). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of best practices regarding professional development. Research indicates that a primary area of struggle for teachers is not learning new approaches to teaching but implementing them. Providing teachers with support through the implementation phase will ensure that they successfully integrate knowledge from professional development into their instructional practices.

25. The correct answer is (A). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of curriculum planning across and within grade levels. A curriculum map identifies the actual content that is being taught in a grade level, how it has been taught, and the learning outcomes. Creating and sharing curriculum maps will allow teachers to compare their curriculum with that of peers who teach the same grade level or content area. This will ensure the vertical and horizontal alignment of the content being taught.

26. The correct answer is (C). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of implementing effective and appropriate professional development practices to meet specific needs. Professional learning communities provide opportunities for teachers to analyze student work and share effective instructional practices that result in rigorous learning activities for all students and increase student achievement. By taking this action, the superintendent is responsive to the professional development needs of teachers and principals.

27. The correct answers are (A) and (C). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of how to analyze data to support instructional improvement. The curriculum guides were created two years ago, but the state just updated student expectations, so a committee of stakeholders should make any needed updates and respond to the requests of teachers for differentiation to support student learning. Exemplars of student work samples for each grade level should be created and provided to align and calibrate teacher expectations and increase rigor.

28. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of different strategies for understanding the district's strengths and challenges. SWOT analysis is used to identify the internal and external factors that can influence the success of an idea, product, process, or organization. It supports planning, development, and decision-making efforts.

29. The correct answers are (A) and (D). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of effective recruiting and hiring practices to meet a school's needs. (A) and

(D) allow the applicants to meet with teacher leaders to discuss the current strategic plan in comparison to student performance data to assess whether the applicants have strong data analysis skills or not. Completing classroom observations and debriefs gives the interview committee an opportunity to see how well the applicants can identify strengths and weakness in instructional practice and identify trends that should be addressed. (B), (C), and (E) involve stakeholders who have a limited understanding of the instructional program at the school and/or are discussing topics that are not central to helping the interview committee assess the applicants' instructional leadership skills.

30. The correct answer is (D). This question tests the candidate's knowledge of strategies for promoting mutual accountability for the success of each student and school. Communicating expectations for each school's role in implementing the district improvement plan will provide schools with information that will help schools adjust their instructional practices to ensure all students succeed. It will also promote a shared commitment and accountability among staff.

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 demonstrates a **thorough understanding** of the issues presented in the scenario and any supporting documents. The response is well-developed and synthesizes important information from the case components.

- 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 underlying processes to address issues or various points of view
- Applies **appropriate** knowledge to resolve conflict in a reasonable way
- When required, provides a **detailed, specific,** and **convincing** explanation or rationale for the response
- Contains terminology or processes that demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the role of the superintendent

Score of 2

A score of 2 demonstrates a **general understanding** of the issues presented in the scenario and any supporting documents. The response is adequately developed and uses some of the important information from the case components

- Demonstrates **basic** evidence of a grasp of the issues presented in the materials and **reasonable but basic** ways to resolve the issues
- Responds **appropriately** to **most** parts of the questions
- Applies **general** knowledge of the underlying processes to address issues or various points of view

- Applies **general** knowledge to resolve conflict in a reasonable way
- When required, provides an **adequate** explanation or rationale for the response
- May contain **minor** errors in terminology or process that detract from the overall understanding of the role of the superintendent

Score of 1

A score of 1 demonstrates a **limited understanding** of the issues presented in the scenario and any supporting documents. The response is simplistically developed and may use some of the information from the case components, 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 **limited** knowledge of underlying processes to address issues or various points of view
- Applies **limited** knowledge to resolve conflict in a reasonable way
- When required, provides a **simplistic** explanation or rationale for the response
- May contain **serious misconceptions** in terminology or process that detract from the overall understanding of the role of the superintendent

Score of 0

A score of 0 demonstrates **little or no understanding** of the issues presented in the scenario and any supporting documents. The response fails to address essential components of the prompt and does not use any of the information from the case components.

- 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** part of the questions or rephrases the questions
- Applies **little or no** knowledge of underlying processes to address issues or various points of view
- Applies **little or no** knowledge to resolve conflict
- When required, provides **no** explanation or **no** rationale for the response

- Mostly contains **serious misconceptions** in terminology or process that detract from the overall understanding of the role of the superintendent

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

Sample Responses for Question 31

Mr. Heraldo acknowledges that any prevention programs in schools should be based on an assessment of the specific nature of the problems that gangs present in the school and the local community. He begins the process of addressing the problem of gangs in Braxton schools by conducting a needs assessment.

- Identify TWO sources of data that the needs assessment should examine. Describe the data and the data-gathering method.
- For EACH, explain how the data are helpful for addressing the problem of gangs in the district schools.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

The first piece of data the superintendent should request is a building-by-building detailed breakdown of discipline referrals.

- *A minimum of the last three years to identify trends*
- *Disaggregated by subgroups indicated in document 1 to identify groups at risk*
- *The types of infraction to identify whether infractions are gang related*
- *The consequences of the infractions to determine whether the consequences are equitable and fair*
- *Percentage of times when parental contact was made to determine the extent the school engages parents in student disciplinary matters*
- *Percentage of responses from the parental contact to determine parenting capacity*
- *Percentage of times follow-up action was taken by the school to determine the extent and nature of school-home partnerships*

These data are helpful

- *to anticipate future actions based on trends*
- *to plan targeted interventions*
- *to revise or strengthen disciplinary procedures*
- *to establish or strengthen parental engagement*
- *to plan parenting programs*
- *to establish or strengthen school-home partnerships*

The second piece of data is a student survey.

- *Anonymous multiple-choice survey to fourth-through-twelfth-grade students*
- *Asks students to self-identify by gender, ethnicity, grade level*
- *Likert-style scale on approximately twenty statements about gang activity, involvement, etc.*
- *Comment section*

These data are helpful

- *to gain quantifiable information about student involvement in gangs and other perceptions related to gangs and the school*
- *to identify groups at risk or to target programs to the appropriate audience*
- *to target programs based on student perceptions and needs*
- *to gain anecdotal information about impressions, needs, etc. that may not have been revealed in the survey questions*

Commentary on Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

This response conveys a thorough understanding of the scenario and prompt and responds completely and appropriately to all parts of the question. The response presents a well-developed analysis that uses important information from the sources provided. It provides a detailed description of appropriate sources of data that will guide the superintendent as he begins the process of addressing the gang problem in Braxton and how the data sources will be obtained. The response also explains how each piece of data will be helpful for addressing the problem of gangs in the district schools.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

The first piece of data the superintendent should request is crime statistics from local law enforcement. The statistics should be broken down by time period (monthly, etc.), offense, juvenile or adult, and adjudication. This information will be valuable for the needs assessment to gauge the extent of gang activity by students and the extent of gang activity within the community. So far, the superintendent only has anecdotal data from the school counselors, so these data are helpful for truly assessing the problem.

The second piece of data is national statistics on gang involvement at the school level, broken down by gender, ethnicity, family status, etc., so the superintendent can gauge the extent of gang activity in this district and community as compared to national norms. These data may reveal a lesser or greater problem than anticipated. Knowing the extent of the problem will likely affect the type of response the district will offer to combat gang activity in the schools. It's possible the problem is only in the outside community, so the district response would be more toward community support than implementing school programs.

Commentary on Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

This response conveys a general understanding of the scenario and prompt and responds generally and appropriately to all parts of the question. This response provides an adequate description of two data sources that will guide the superintendent as he begins the process of addressing the gang problem in Braxton and how the data sources will be obtained. However, the response does not provide a detailed explanation of how each piece of data will be helpful for addressing the problem of gangs in the district schools.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

The two pieces of data the superintendent should request are a teacher questionnaire and local juvenile crime statistics. Teachers observe and discipline students every day. Their responses to a survey about gang involvement are invaluable. The questionnaire format allows teachers to expand on their responses, perhaps providing more anecdotal information. It may even identify particular students at risk so they can be provided with intervention directly. The teacher survey also builds investment from teachers in that they feel part of the decision-making process about the problem. No program will be successful without teacher investment.

Local statistics on juvenile crime will shed light on students' activities outside the school environment. This information will be helpful because it will help the superintendent identify community and cultural influences that affect gang affiliation. The district can create a mutually beneficial partnership with local law enforcement to rehabilitate juvenile offenders, with the goal of reducing gang activity.

Commentary on Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

This response shows a basic, limited understanding of the scenario and question presented. Although the response identifies two sources of data that the superintendent can use for the needs assessment, the response fails to provide an adequate description of the data sources, how they will be obtained, and how they will be helpful for addressing the problem of gangs in the district schools.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 0

It is best for the superintendent to meet with the district leadership first to discuss strategies for involving the community in solving the problem of gangs in the district. Once the strategies have been decided, the district leadership can have a town hall meeting with community members to discuss the issue and delineate the ways the community can be involved in addressing the problem. The superintendent will also ask for suggestions and recommendations from community members to ensure that they feel a part of the resolution process.

Commentary on Sample Response That Received a Score of 0

This response fails to address the basic components of the prompt. The response also does not show an understanding of the prompt or knowledge of the issues raised in the case study. The response does not show an understanding of appropriate data sources a superintendent can use as parts of a needs assessment or how the data may be useful in addressing the problems the district might be facing.

Sample Responses for Question 32

Mr. Heraldo responds to Documents 1 and 2 in part by examining the measures the district is taking to ensure the safety of students when they are on school property and when attending classes.

- Identify and describe TWO policies, procedures, or actions that Mr. Heraldo can implement to reduce the potential for gang or other violence in or around district schools.
- For each, present a justification for the effectiveness of the policy, procedure, or action for reducing gang or other violence in or around district schools.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

The superintendent can take steps to prevent the violent behavior by working with building-level administrators to address academic failure. Academic failure is a leading cause for student participation in gangs. Catching possible learning problems early is key in reducing academic failure. The action the superintendent should implement is encouraging and supporting early identification of failing students so that intervention can be started to keep students on track with their peers. It is also vital that students with learning disabilities be identified and provided with special education services early in their academic careers based on the data showing a low number of students identified for special education services. When students are given support to succeed in school and are succeeding, they are less likely to become disconnected from school and seek other ways of validating their worth, such as participating in gangs.

Another action the superintendent can take is to instruct the middle and high school administrations to be vigilant about removing gang presence from the school. That means making sure that graffiti with gang symbols or colors are removed promptly, prohibiting gang clothing, and disciplining students who

use gang hand signals, gestures, or other means to communicate with their own and rival gangs. The superintendent should also provide training for building-level administrators to stay on top of changing ways gangs identify themselves, such as with commercial clothing brands that signify gang affiliation. These actions are important for communicating to all students that the school does not belong to gangs and that their presence is not tolerated. Students who have no gang affiliation or are not yet fully engaged in gangs need to know that school is safe, is a place intended for learning and personal growth, and that the school administration is in charge, not gangs.

Commentary on Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

This response conveys a thorough understanding of the scenario and prompt and responds completely and appropriately to all parts of the question. The response presents a well-developed analysis that uses important information from the sources provided. It provides a detailed description of two actions that Mr. Heraldo can implement to reduce the potential for gang or other violence in or around district schools. The response also provides a detailed justification for the effectiveness of the actions for reducing gang or other violence in or around district schools.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

A superintendent can support a “no gang” policy by supporting student involvement in clubs intended to provide children with positive alternatives to dysfunctional homes or street life. Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and the Y are a few that should be promoted in the schools. The superintendent could work with the directors/coordinators of these groups to hold assemblies or run something similar to membership drives either in school or perhaps through the PTO meetings.

It is important that the superintendent communicate to building principals that a positive behavior discipline system should be in place and enforced consistently. Simply punishing students makes them more likely to affiliate with gangs, not less likely, because many of them already have experiences with punitive actions (law enforcement, strict parents) but little experience with solving problems through good decision making or conflict resolution. These can be part of health and wellness classes or group counseling by the school counselor.

Commentary on Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

This response conveys a general understanding of the scenario and prompt and responds generally and appropriately to all parts of the question. This response provides an adequate description of two actions that Mr. Heraldo can implement to reduce the potential for gang or other violence in or around district schools. Unlike the sample response that received a score of 3, this response provides only a general justification for the effectiveness of the actions for reducing gang or other violence in or around district schools.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

An action the superintendent can take is to make sure that parents are made aware of any behavior problem that signals gang involvement as soon as it is observed by school personnel. Even elementary students may display defiance disorders or other emotional or behavioral disorders that predict antisocial behavior. Early intervention with counseling, either in school or by community agencies, should be provided. When students enter the secondary grades, these behaviors may already be in place but could possibly be channeled toward more positive outcomes. Mentoring by an adult or older, stable peer goes a long way with a student who lacks reasonable parenting/guidance at home. Parental involvement is key in addressing any behavior that indicates a propensity for criminal or violent behavior.

Commentary on Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

This response shows a basic, limited understanding of the scenario and question presented. The response fails to address all parts of the question. Although the response provides a limited explanation of two actions that Mr. Heraldo can implement to reduce the potential for gang or other violence in or around district schools (1. Parent awareness of the gang problem 2. Early intervention with counselling), the response fails to provide justification for the effectiveness of the actions for reducing gang or other violence in or around district schools.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 0

An action Mr. Heraldo can take is to contact the law enforcement team assigned to the district immediately and request the arrest of all students that are suspected to be gang members. It is important that Mr. Heraldo contacts the law enforcement team to prevent further escalation of gang activities in the district. Then Mr. Heraldo should ensure that parents are informed as a way of discouraging students' further involvement in gang activities.

Commentary on Sample Response That Received a Score of 0

This response fails to address the basic components of the prompt. The response also does not show an understanding of the prompt or knowledge of the issues raised in the case study. The response does not show an understanding of appropriate actions a superintendent can implement to reduce the potential for gang or other violence in or around district schools. It is inappropriate for Mr. Heraldo to ask for the arrest of students merely because they are suspected to be gang members. Further evidence may be required even if this action is justified. In addition, while informing parents and including them in the process can help eliminate gang activities in the district, it is inappropriate to tell parents that their children are gang members without appropriate evidence to this effect.

Sample Responses for Question 33

- Identify and describe TWO factors that put a student at risk for gang involvement.
- For EACH factor, suggest an action Mr. Heraldo can take to either reduce or mitigate the influence of the factor on student involvement in a gang.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

1. *Gender: Males make up the clear majority of gang members. Males are primarily attracted to gangs because they provide the social support that is essential to their adolescent development. A gang offers safety, status, and identity. Gang recruiters communicate a strong message of male bonding, which builds potential members' sense of belonging. Gang membership is also a path to gaining instant respect from peers. It enhances a tough reputation, which is equated with masculinity. In the gang's social structure, older members are viewed as authority figures, role models, or mentors.*

Mr. Heraldo can reduce males' attraction to gangs by working with principals to establish school-level interventions that provide social support and opportunities for building self-esteem by positive means. Some sample interventions are matching at-risk males with appropriate male peer or adult mentors, providing frequent one-on-one support in and out of the classroom, designing learning activities that have real-world, hands-on applications, and keeping class sizes small with high adult-to-student ratios.

2. *Family dysfunction: A student’s family situation also promotes participation in gangs. Joining a gang can be an attractive option for children whose families are dysfunctional. Parents may provide poor role models, fail to teach children that criminality and gang activity are wrong, or may be involved in criminal activities themselves. They may also simply be uninterested in or unable to supervise their children’s activities or lack the basic parenting skills for disciplining and monitoring behavior.*

Mr. Herald can address this problem by offering school sponsored parenting programs or using the offer of the resources of the joint PTOs P T Os and community organizations to provide support for parents with children at risk of gang involvement or already involved in gangs. The programs should emphasize approaches that enhance parent-child interactions; improve communication, discipline and behavioral monitoring methods; and strengthen the family as a whole. The programs should also deal with currently occurring behavioral problems. Programs could be held at the schools or at other community locations that parents can easily access and where they feel comfortable.

Commentary on Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

This response conveys a thorough understanding of the scenario and prompt and responds completely and appropriately to all parts of the question. The response presents a well-developed analysis and provides a detailed description of two factors that put a student at risk for gang involvement. The response also provides a suggestion of an action Mr. Herald can take to either reduce or mitigate the influence of each factor on student involvement in a gang.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

One important factor for gang involvement that the superintendent should be aware of is ethnicity. Statistics on gang activity indicate that most gang participants are African American or Hispanic. 80% of students in this district identify with these ethnicities, so the chances of gang affiliation among students is high.

The superintendent cannot (and should not) try to influence students’ ethnic or racial identities, but he can address the alienation that students feel when they are not in the majority culture. The gangs often value their own ethnicities and cultures so members feel respected. The superintendent can mitigate this factor by making sure that the school also takes steps to make students of all ethnicities feel recognized and respected.

A second factor for gang involvement is the need for self-protection. In neighborhoods (and schools) where gangs are active, young people who are not involved are often targeted by gangs. For self-preservation, they join the gang, even though they may not want to. The superintendent can address this factor by making sure that the school environment is safe for students—no gang colors, clothes, symbols, etc.—and establishing clear guidelines for appropriate conduct.

Commentary on Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

This response conveys a general understanding of the scenario and prompt and responds generally and appropriately to all parts of the question. This response provides a general and adequate description of two factors that put a student at risk for gang involvement. The response also provides an adequate suggestion of an action Mr. Herald can take to either reduce or mitigate the influence of each factor on student involvement in a gang.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

There is, without a doubt, a direct relation between poverty and gangs. Though poverty isn't always necessarily the cause of gangs, it has a clear connection to gangs, and those who are gang members are often poor, as defined by government measures. One of the main reasons that people join gangs is to get money. Another cause is location, or area of residence. There is a lot of poverty seen in inner cities and rural areas because of factors such as limited job opportunities. Although there are gangs scattered in many parts of countries, they are typically concentrated in locations where poverty rates are high. Where there is more poverty, there are more gangs and criminal activity.

Many gang members are those who have dropped out of high school or college, leaving them without much skills or knowledge to get a sustainable job. The lack of education causes these people to be unable to get a job, which then causes them to become poor. Because they are poor, they choose to join a gang as a method of getting money.

Commentary on Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

This response shows a basic, limited understanding of the scenario and question presented and fails to respond appropriately to all parts of the question. Although the response identifies two factors that put a student at risk for gang involvement, the response does not provide any suggestions of an action Mr. Herald can take to either reduce or mitigate the influence of any factor on student involvement in a gang.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 0

Students often join gangs when they are not engaged in academics or schoolwork. Also students feel inadequate when they do not have support from parents or significant adults in their lives. This increases their attraction to gang activities thereby encouraging them to join gangs.

To fix this problem, schools need to ensure that students have all the required tools they need to be engaged in their academics—such as textbooks, supplies, and access to technology. Also districts should develop family programs to help improve the relationships between parents/guardians and their wards.

Commentary on Sample Response That Received a Score of 0

This response fails to address the basic components of the prompt. The response also does not show an understanding of the prompt or knowledge of the issues raised in the case study. The response does not show an understanding of factors that put a student at risk for gang involvement. The examples provided are inappropriate and do not answer the presented question. In addition, the response does not provide appropriate suggestions of actions Mr. Herald can take to mitigate the effect of the factors.

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 60.

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 46 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 46, 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 17.
- **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.

- **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 (5713)

Test Date: 9/15/18

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for the content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study the content	Date completed
Key Ideas and Details						
Close reading	Draw inferences and implications from the directly stated content of a reading selection	3	Middle school English textbook	College library, middle school teacher	7/15/18	7/15/18
Determining Ideas	Identify summaries or paraphrases of the main idea or primary purpose of a reading selection	3	Middle school English textbook	College library, middle school teacher	7/17/18	7/17/18
Determining Ideas	Identify summaries or paraphrases of the supporting ideas and specific details in a reading selection	3	Middle and high school English textbook	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/20/18	7/21/18
Craft, Structure, and Language Skills						
Interpreting tone	Determine the author's attitude toward material discussed in a reading selection	4	Middle and high school English textbook	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/25/18	7/26/18
Analysis of structure	Identify key transition words and phrases in a reading selection and how they are used	3	Middle and high school English textbook, dictionary	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/25/18	7/27/18
Analysis of structure	Identify how a reading selection is organized in terms of cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, etc.	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/18	8/1/18
Author's purpose	Determine the role that an idea, reference, or piece of information plays in an author's discussion or argument	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/18	8/1/18

(continued on next page)

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for the content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study the content	Date completed
Language in different contexts	Determine whether information presented in a reading selection is presented as fact or opinion	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/18	8/1/18
Contextual meaning	Identify the meanings of words as they are used in the context of a reading selection	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/18	8/1/18
Figurative Language	Understand figurative language and nuances in word meanings	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/8/18	8/8/18
Vocabulary range	Understand a range of words and phrases sufficient for reading at the college and career readiness level	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/15/18	8/17/18
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas						
Diverse media and formats	Analyze content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/22/18	8/24/18
Evaluation of arguments	Identify the relationship among ideas presented in a reading selection	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/24/18	8/24/18
Evaluation of arguments	Determine whether evidence strengthens, weakens, or is relevant to the arguments in a reading selection	3	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/27/18	8/27/18
Evaluation of arguments	Determine the logical assumptions upon which an argument or conclusion is based	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/28/18	8/30/18
Evaluation of arguments	Draw conclusions from material presented in a reading selection	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/30/18	8/31/18
Comparison of texts	Recognize or predict ideas or situations that are extensions of or similar to what has been presented in a reading selection	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	9/3/18	9/4/18
Comparison of texts	Apply ideas presented in a reading selection to other situations	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	9/5/18	9/6/18

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. Strategic Leadership

A. Mission, Vision, and Core Values

1. Knows how to determine and articulate the core values that define the district's culture
2. Knows a variety of strategies for developing a shared understanding of the mission, vision, and core values of the school district and the community
3. Understands how to engage stakeholders in the development of the district's mission, vision, and core values to promote the academic success and well-being of each student
4. Knows how to engage stakeholders in the process of evaluating and adjusting the district's mission, vision, and core values based on effectiveness, changing expectations, and needs of students

B. District and School Improvement

1. Knows how to create a strategic plan that is consistent with the district's core values and supports the district's mission, vision, and goals in a culture of continuous improvement
2. Knows how and when to use different strategies for improvement, including transformational, incremental, and adaptive approaches to district and school improvement
3. Knows how to engage stakeholders in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry and strategic planning for continuous school improvement
4. Understands how to develop a system for collecting and analyzing data to inform the district's improvement process
5. Understands how to use a systematic approach when developing strategic plans for district and school improvement
6. Knows how to develop a strategic plan to achieve the vision
7. Knows how to manage uncertainty, risk, and the change process to ensure the success of the district's improvement efforts

8. Understands how to evaluate and adjust the district's strategic plan based on results and the changing expectations and needs of students

Discussion areas: Strategic Leadership

- How should a superintendent determine the appropriate stakeholders to involve in developing a district's vision and goals?
- What should form the basis of a district's vision and goals?
- Why is it important to develop and implement a district's vision and goals?
- What types and sources of data can be used to determine or provide support for a district's vision and goals?
- What types of data are valuable for developing or revising a district's vision and goals?
- Why is it necessary to use data when planning to implement or revise a district vision and goals?
- What is meant by "data-driven decision making"?
- Why is it necessary to involve others in developing and implementing a district's vision and goals?
- What are some of the key strategies for involving community members in district planning?
- 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 districts?
- How can district community members learn more about the importance of a district vision and goals?
- What processes are involved in consensus building? Conflict resolution?
- How can a superintendent distribute responsibility effectively?
- What societal issues drive emerging movements in education and how do they affect schools?

II. Instructional Leadership

A. Curriculum and Instruction

1. Knows how to develop, design, and deliver coherent district-level systems of curriculum and instruction that reflect high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and that are culturally responsive
2. Knows how to promote instructional practice at all schools that is consistent with knowledge of student learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student
3. Understands the role of technology in teaching and learning
4. Knows how to develop intervention systems that identify each student's needs and provide the requisite support

B. Assessment and Accountability

1. Knows how to identify, develop, and use valid assessments that measure student learning aligned with curriculum, standards, and instructional practice
2. Understands how to gather and analyze assessment data to support instructional improvement and monitor student progress
3. Knows how to monitor and evaluate curriculum and instructional practices to support student learning and academic success

Discussion areas: Instructional Leadership

- 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 twenty-first-century learner?
- What are the benefits and shortcomings of the expanding use of technology in districts? How can superintendents prepare?
- How is student performance used to monitor and evaluate instructional practices?
- How are quantitative and qualitative data used to evaluate program effectiveness?
- What trends in student achievement data might indicate that there are problems in curriculum alignment?

- What criteria can be used to assess the effectiveness of a new program?
- How can a superintendent make data and other information on student and district performance accessible to parents and the community?
- What are the purposes of formal and informal assessments?
- How are student assessment data used to improve student learning?

III. Climate and Culture Leadership

A. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

1. Understands how to ensure students are treated fairly and respectfully while acknowledging each student's culture and context
2. Understands how to ensure students have equitable access to effective administrators and staff, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources
3. Understands how to develop district policies aligned to state and federal guidelines that address student conduct in a positive, consistent, fair, and unbiased manner
4. Understands how to act with equity, cultural competency, and responsiveness in all aspects of leadership
5. Understands how to use strategies to address biases and marginalization of students in the district

B. Climate and Culture for Staff

1. Understands how to develop workplace conditions that promote and support effective instructional practice and student learning
2. Understands how to empower and entrust staff with collective responsibility for meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and physical needs in accordance to the district's core values and mission
3. Understands how to promote a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole student

C. Community of Care and Support for Students

1. Knows how to cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school district community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student
2. Knows how to create and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school and district environment that meets the needs of each student
3. Understands how to provide coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student
4. Understands how to promote relationships (adult-student and student-peer) that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development of each student
5. Understands how to cultivate and reinforce positive student conduct and engagement in school

Discussion areas: Climate and Culture Leadership

- What strategies are effective for ensuring a culturally responsive teaching and learning environment?
- What are some culturally relevant curriculum and instructional strategies?
- How can a superintendent ensure that student misconduct is addressed in a fair and consistent manner?
- How can a superintendent ensure that all students have equitable access to effective teachers and learning opportunities?
- In what ways can the professional culture and climate of a district impact the success of students, schools, and the district?
- How can a superintendent foster in students a positive attitude toward school and learning?
- What factors contribute to forming a district's culture?
- What strategies can a superintendent use to improve staff morale?

- How can a district foster an environment that supports a rigorous curriculum and high student expectations?
- What processes and strategies can be implemented to ensure equitable treatment of students and/or staff?
- How can a superintendent act with cultural competence and responsiveness?
- What are some strategies for building a safe, caring, and healthy district environment that meets the needs of students?
- How should a superintendent respond to parents' concerns about unsafe conditions in their child's school?
- What resources are available to meet the range of students' learning needs and promote student engagement?
- What are some qualities common to effective professional development?
- What criteria should be considered in developing a plan for professional development?
- What type of student data can be used to provide feedback to teachers so that they can improve student learning?
- What resources are available to superintendents for nurturing their professional growth?
- What are the benefits of reflective practice?

IV. Ethical and Policy Leadership

A. Ethical Practice

1. Understands how to act ethically and promote ethical and professional relationships and decision-making by administrators and staff
2. Knows how to promote and safeguard the values of an equitable public education
3. Understands how to lead with integrity and provides moral direction for staff to cultivate a culture of ethical and professional behavior
4. Knows how to recognize and respond to ethical issues

B. Policy, Advocacy, and Governance

1. Knows how to create and implement policies and procedures that align with the district's mission and vision and ensure student success
2. Knows how to apply state and federal laws to district and campus policies and procedures (regarding, e.g., employment, confidentiality of students and staff, rights of students and staff)
3. Knows the roles, functions, and expectations of the superintendent and the district board of education
4. Knows how to work with the district board of education to develop and maintain an effective partnership
5. Knows procedures for district board of education meetings in accordance with state and federal law
6. Knows how to work with the district board of education to advocate for the value of public education

Discussion areas: Ethical and Policy Leadership

- 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 superintendent to administer educational policies equitably and legally?
- How can a superintendent advocate for public education?
- What is the purpose of a district board of education?
- In what ways do current laws, regulations, policies, and procedures affect how various student needs are met?
- What types of situations often involve issues of ethics and integrity?
- What steps, strategies, and procedures can a superintendent take to protect the privacy and confidentiality of students and staff?
- What are the key elements in a transparent decision-making process?
- How can a district and its leaders function as instruments of social justice?

- What steps should be taken to ensure that others are acting ethically?
- How can a superintendent refocus attention on the district's vision and goals when controversial issues arise?

V. Organizational Leadership

A. Professional Capacity

1. Understands the processes and procedures for planning and managing staffing needs
2. Knows how to support the development of administrators' and staff members' professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth
3. Knows how to promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement for all staff by empowering and motivating administrators and staff to the highest levels of professional practice
4. Understands ways to provide actionable feedback regarding instruction and other professional practices through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation to support the development of teachers and staff

B. Operations and Management

1. Understands how to develop ethical and accountable systems to manage the district's fiscal resources to align with the district's vision, mission, and goals
2. Understands how to acquire and manage physical resources and other resources to align with the district's vision, mission, and goals
3. Knows how to apply strategies for improving district efficiency (including time management and organizational structure)
4. Understands how to implement the district crisis management plan and works with administrators and staff to ensure campus crisis management plans and related training activities are effective and efficient
5. Knows how to develop and manage internal and external relationships toward achieving the district's missions and goals

Discussion areas: Organizational 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 districts?
- Which laws apply to the discipline, remediation, and dismissal of staff?
- Which methods and techniques for evaluating staff does research support as most effective?
- 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?
- Why is it essential for a district to develop, implement, and monitor a budget according to standard accounting practices?
- 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?
- What are the components of a comprehensive safety and security plan, and who should be considered key emergency personnel?
- Why is interagency cooperation important when dealing with safety and security concerns?
- Under what circumstances would a superintendent contact a child protective agency? Law enforcement agency? District legal counsel?
- How can a superintendent stay current with regulations related to student and staff safety (e.g., fire codes, immunizations, precautions against infectious disease) ?
- What impact do scheduling and staffing decisions have on student learning?

VI. Community Leadership**A. Community Engagement**

1. Knows how to engage and communicate with families and the community in meaningful, mutually beneficial ways to support the achievement of district goals
2. Knows how to create opportunities for schools and families to partner in support of student learning in and out of school
3. Knows how to advocate for the district and the needs and priorities of students, families, and the community
4. Knows how to build and sustain productive partnerships with diverse stakeholder groups to support the achievement of district goals
5. Knows how to develop a public relations program that includes the use of social media to foster community relations

B. Maximizing Community Resources

1. Knows how to leverage the community's cultural, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school improvement
2. Knows how to develop productive relationships with local colleges and universities as a resource for the school district
3. Understands how to make district facilities and resources available for families and the community
4. Is familiar with strategies for obtaining resources such as grants, shared services, donations, and foundations

Discussion areas: Community Leadership

- In what types of situations can family and community stakeholders be helpful?
- What guidance do various laws, policies, and regulations provide for determining when family or guardians have input to educational decisions?
- What strategies are effective for communicating district and student success to families and the community?
- How can a superintendent involve families in decision making about their children's education?

- What strategies could a superintendent use to communicate with parents and the community when English is not the primary language or where many languages are spoken?
- What policies should be in place for communicating with and responding to the media?
- What conflict-resolution strategies would be helpful in resolving differences between competing groups to work for the best interests of the district and its students?
- What criteria should be considered in developing programs, committees, or activities that include the community?
- What cultural or socioeconomic factors exert the most influence on student learning?
- What methods are effective for keeping abreast of the dynamics, changes, and trends in a community?
- How can a superintendent advocate for the district within the greater community?
- How would a district be affected by a dramatic increase in a special population (e.g., English learners or students requiring special education services) ?
- In what circumstances should a superintendent consider external resources for assisting students and their families?
- What laws and regulations govern the use of district facilities?
- How can the community be helpful in identifying and supplying resources for the district and its programs?
- How can a superintendent use community resources to support student learning?
- What guidelines/restrictions would normally be in place when a district enters a relationship with an outside party (e.g., local business, health service, law enforcement agency) ?

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 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 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 Braille
- 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 http://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 http://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.

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.

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 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.

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.

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.

Visit http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/sample_score_report.pdf to see a sample score report. 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.

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
- *The School Leadership Series Passing Scores* (PDF), found at www.ets.org/sls/scores/understand
- State requirements, found at 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 several SLS tests, which contain selected-response questions or constructed-response questions, or a combination of both: *School Leadership Licensure Assessment* (6011 and 6990), *School Superintendent Assessment* (6021 and 6991), 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.

*[ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness](#) (2014, Princeton, N.J.) are consistent with the [Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing](#), industry standards issued jointly by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education (2014), Washington, D.C.).

Your teaching 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:

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