Illinois Licensure Testing System

STUDY GUIDE

Principal as Instructional Leader—Subtest 1 (195)

This test is now delivered as a computer-based test.

See www.il.nesinc.com for current program information.

Illinois State Board of Education

IL-SG-FLD195-02

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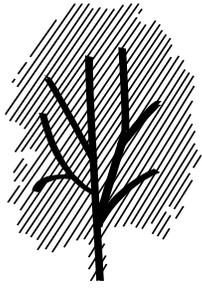
# General Information About the Illinois Licensure Testing System

The first section of the study guide is available in a separate PDF file. Click the link below to view or print this section.

General Information About the Illinois Licensure Testing System
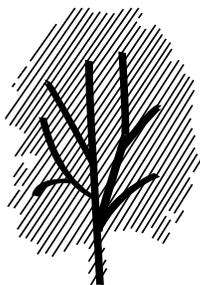
Field-Specific Information

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INTRODUCTION

The content tests are designed to assess a candidate's knowledge of content in the specific teaching, school service personnel, or administrative field in which licensure is sought. The tests are based on current and relevant expectations for teacher preparation students and for teachers in Illinois as defined by the Illinois Content Area Standards for Educators. This study guide is designed to focus your preparation by helping you become familiar with the format and content to be covered on the tests.

This section includes a list of the test subareas and objectives, practice test questions for the field covered by this study guide, an answer key, and an explanation of the test score report.

TEST SUBAREAS AND OBJECTIVES

The content covered by the test is organized into subareas. You will find a list of subareas at the beginning of the list of test objectives. Within each subarea, the content is further defined by a set of objectives. Each objective comprises two major parts:

1. the *objective statement*, which broadly defines the knowledge and skills that an entry-level educator needs to know; and

2. the *descriptive statements*, which describe in greater detail the types of knowledge and skills covered by the test objective.

The test objectives are broad, conceptual, and meaningful statements, written in language that reflects the skills, knowledge, and understanding that an entry-level teacher needs in order to teach effectively in an Illinois classroom. A test consists of test questions that measure an examinee's mastery of these test objectives.

Below is an example of a test objective statement and its accompanying descriptive statements for the Elementary/Middle Grades test.

Objective Statement

Understand word analysis strategies and vocabulary development and how to use effective, developmentally appropriate approaches to promote students' word analysis and vocabulary skills.

Descriptive Statements

- Demonstrate knowledge of phonics and its role in decoding; of ways to assess students' phonic skills; and of effective instructional strategies, activities, and materials for promoting students' phonetic analysis skills.

- Demonstrate knowledge of word analysis strategies, including syllabication, morphology (e.g., use of affixes and roots), and context clues; of ways to assess students' use of word analysis strategies; and of effective instructional strategies, activities, and materials for promoting students' word analysis and contextual analysis skills.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the role of vocabulary development in reading; of ways to assess students' vocabulary development; and of effective instructional strategies, activities, and materials for promoting students' vocabulary development.

PRACTICE TEST QUESTIONS

The practice multiple-choice test questions and constructed-response assignments are designed to give the examinee an introduction to the nature of the test questions included on Principal as Instructional Leader—Subtest 1. The practice multiple-choice test questions and constructed-response assignments represent the various types of test questions you may expect to see on an actual test; however, they are **not** designed to provide diagnostic information to help you identify specific areas of individual strengths and weaknesses or predict your performance on the test as a whole.

Use the answer key located after the practice multiple-choice test questions to check your answers. To help you identify which test objective is being assessed, the objective statement to which the multiple-choice question corresponds is listed in the answer key.

A sample response is provided immediately following the practice constructed-response assignment. The sample responses in this study guide are for illustrative purposes only. A description of the process that is used for scoring the constructed-response assignment is provided in addition to the performance characteristics and score scale.

When you are finished with the practice test questions, you may wish to go back and review the entire list of test objectives and descriptive statements once again.

Planning, Change, and Accountability
Instructional Improvement

SUBAREA I—PLANNING, CHANGE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

0001 **Understand how to lead change and engage in collaborative, data-driven planning and decision making to improve student learning outcomes.**

For example:

- Apply knowledge of how to build consensus for school change and secure stakeholder support in planning and implementing change.

- Analyze skills and strategies for managing and monitoring change and for overcoming obstacles to change.

- Demonstrate knowledge of procedures for gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing data and other information (e.g., test scores, student work samples, survey results, research) to evaluate and make decisions about school programs, activities, environments, and functioning.

- Apply knowledge of principles and practices of data-driven planning and factors to consider in comprehensive planning.

- Apply knowledge of school improvement planning (SIP) processes and how to initiate, lead, and sustain comprehensive planning efforts.

- Demonstrate knowledge of skills and strategies for successfully implementing plans that lead to improved student performance.

- Apply knowledge of how to use data and other evidence to monitor and evaluate progress and revise plans as necessary.

0002 **Understand the use of assessment and accountability systems to monitor students' progress and promote educational excellence.**

For example:

- Demonstrate knowledge of how to implement sound, nondiscriminatory student assessment practices and use assessment results to shape school programs and improve achievement for all students.

- Apply knowledge of how to use quantitative and qualitative data to identify school strengths and needs, define gaps between current outcomes and goals, identify areas for improvement, and promote organizational learning and improvement.

- Demonstrate knowledge of skills and strategies for guiding analysis and disaggregation of student performance data on a regular basis to improve the instructional program.

- Apply knowledge of procedures for monitoring and assessing the progress of school programs, making adjustments, and formulating new action steps as necessary.

- Analyze the role of assessment in educational accountability and how various types of information can be used to provide formative and summative evaluation of teachers and to analyze and improve student learning.

- Apply knowledge of how to communicate expectations, results, and progress toward goals to district administrators, students, staff, parents/guardians, and the community.

SUBAREA II—INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

0003 **Understand how to establish and sustain a school culture and learning environment conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.**

For example:

- Demonstrate knowledge of how to establish a school culture in which students, families, teachers, and other stakeholders share a commitment to high expectations for all students, closing achievement gaps, and vigorously pursuing academic and behavioral excellence.

- Demonstrate knowledge of how to establish and sustain rigorous academic goals and priorities, ensuring that teachers set high academic and behavior expectations for every student and that students are consistently engaged in meaningful learning.

- Apply knowledge of practices that create and sustain a positive school culture of learning, growth, and equity and that provide a safe, supportive learning environment for all students.

- Apply knowledge of procedures for assessing the learning environment and for using assessment results to promote improvement.

- Demonstrate knowledge of how to develop and implement effective behavior management approaches, student codes of conduct, and practices and procedures to prevent bullying and other forms of violence.

- Apply knowledge of how to establish a strong professional culture that supports teacher learning, teacher leadership, and shared commitment to the school's vision and goals.

- Apply knowledge of strategies for providing support, time, and resources for staff to examine their own beliefs, values, and practices in relation to the school's vision and goals for teaching and learning.

- Demonstrate knowledge of how to lead individual and collaborative efforts to analyze relevant data and formulate action plans for improved learning and achievement.

0004   Understand how to provide instructional leadership focused on effective teaching and learning and the use of research-supported instructional practices that promote academic success for every student.

For example:

- Apply knowledge of how to plan, organize, supervise, monitor, and support a rigorous, standards-based instructional program based on research-supported best practices for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

- Demonstrate knowledge of developmentally appropriate academic and social-emotional learning from early childhood through adolescence.

- Apply knowledge of effective instructional methods, materials, and practices, including differentiation and research-supported intervention, to meet student needs, close achievement gaps, and promote success for each student.

- Apply knowledge of research-supported curriculum and instruction for promoting literacy and numeracy for students at all grade levels.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the characteristics, benefits, and limitations of formative and summative student assessments and the use of assessment data to improve student learning.

- Analyze the significance of structural factors (e.g., staffing patterns, schedules, grouping approaches) and how these factors can be adjusted to achieve desired student outcomes.

- Analyze the significance of student differences (e.g., cultural background, economic background, gender, giftedness, learning style) for instructional planning and assessment, and identify instructional practices with proven effectiveness for promoting achievement for students with diverse characteristics and needs.

- Demonstrate knowledge of procedures for Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Section 504 Plans, and Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and strategies for promoting development and learning for students with disabilities.

- Demonstrate knowledge of skills and strategies for promoting learning and academic success for English language learners.

- Demonstrate knowledge of pupil personnel programs and for developing and maintaining programs that meet the needs of students and their families.

- Apply knowledge of how to use technology and information systems to enrich curriculum and instruction and monitor instructional effectiveness and how to effectively integrate technology into instruction and assessment.

0005   **Understand professional development that improves learning for every student.**

For example:

- Demonstrate knowledge of how to guide and support job-embedded, standards-based professional development that improves learning for all students, including allocating adequate time and other resources to support staff learning and collaboration.

- Apply knowledge of how to organize adults into data-driven learning communities and build a professional culture of collaboration in which teamwork, reflection, discussion, sharing, and problem solving about student learning and achievement are aligned to instructional priorities.

- Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for leading teachers in using achievement data to profile student performance, analyze differences among individuals and groups of students, and guide planning for improved teaching and learning.

- Demonstrate knowledge of skills and strategies for using regular classroom observation and student data to evaluate teaching quality and for providing teachers with prompt, high-quality feedback aimed at improving student outcomes.

- Apply knowledge of how to use various supervisory models (e.g., clinical, peer coaching) to improve teaching and learning and how to guide and monitor individual professional development plans.

- Apply knowledge of strategies for providing professional support and development focused on authentic problems and student outcomes, integrating opportunities for continuous learning into the school environment, and engaging staff in ongoing self-assessment.

- Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for promoting teacher initiative, leadership, innovation, action research, and knowledgeable risk taking.

- Demonstrate knowledge of how to use principles of adult learning and motivation to provide professional development opportunities that meet defined goals.

- Demonstrate knowledge of resources and activities, including the use of reflection and stakeholder feedback, for promoting one's own professional development and learning on an ongoing basis.

1. A school-based committee has been appointed to develop a plan for improving student performance in writing. After several months, the committee chairperson informs the school principal that progress has stalled because a few highly vocal members refuse to compromise over priorities and timelines. Which of the following approaches would be the principal's best *initial* step for helping the committee make progress?

    A. attending the next meeting to express concern about the group's lack of progress and directing the members to find ways to move forward

    B. encouraging the chairperson to exhibit stronger leadership and offering to speak personally to the committee members in question

    C. joining the meetings more regularly to gain understanding of members' differences and points of agreement and suggesting strategies for achieving consensus

    D. asking the committee to submit a preliminary report of all members' ideas and returning the report to the group indicating which ideas should be pursued

2. An elementary school recently began implementing a new reading program to improve student scores on state reading assessments. The principal can best support implementation of the new reading program by using which of the following strategies?

    A. ensuring that relevant faculty and staff have adequate release time to learn about and prepare to use the new program

    B. giving a presentation at a faculty meeting in support of the new program and describing its advantages over the program it is replacing

    C. overseeing the development of procedures for faculty to use in modifying the new program to fit their individual instructional approaches

    D. meeting regularly with the coordinator of the new program to monitor teacher compliance with guidelines for using the program

3.   School leaders have recruited a team to plan school improvement efforts that will be implemented over the coming years. Which of the following factors with regard to the composition of the team should the principal consider most problematic and most urgent to address before moving forward with planning activities?

A. Some team members have expressed very different ideas about causes of the school's problems.

B. Few team members have had significant prior experience with long-term educational planning.

C. The current members of the team reflect only a small portion of the school's demographic diversity.

D. There are more staff and parent/guardian representatives on the team than community representatives.

4.   A principal is analyzing student assessment data with a team of teachers. An initial review of school data indicates that eighth grade scores in writing showed significant improvement beginning two years ago compared with eighth grade scores in similar schools in the district and the state. On the other hand, the school's eighth grade scores in reading started to decline two years ago relative to student performance in other similar schools. The principal could best use this information to improve the school program by guiding the team to answer which of the following questions *first*?

A. Was there a significant shift in the focus of the school's reading and/or writing instruction beginning three or four years ago?

B. What are the key similarities and differences in the foundational skills required for competence in reading versus writing?

C. What proportion of all eighth graders in the school exhibited both improved writing scores and lower reading scores two years ago?

D. Do changes in students' reading and writing performance appear to be reflected in changing student attitudes regarding these skills areas?

5. Two years ago an elementary school adopted a new science program for students at all grade levels. Recently, students in certain grades took standardized tests in science that are aligned to the new program. The principal has planned a series of meetings in which teachers will use the test results to analyze the effectiveness of the new program in promoting student learning. The principal begins the meetings by reviewing basic test data, such as the percentage of students at each grade level tested who met standards in different areas of science. Which of the following steps would be most useful for the principal to take next in guiding the teachers to use the data for program evaluation and improvement?

   A. discussing whether the test data confirm or refute current views about program strengths and weaknesses

   B. examining available information about the tests' validity and reliability

   C. dividing students into groups or tiers based on their current level of knowledge and skills as indicated by the data

   D. identifying meaningful patterns of student performance in the data

6. School principals are likely to be most successful in creating a culture that focuses on high expectations and academic excellence for all students if they consistently communicate which of the following messages to school stakeholders?

   A. "The key to promoting high-quality learning is providing students with goals that are easily achievable."

   B. "Standardizing instructional and assessment practices provides the foundation for all students to achieve success."

   C. "Accountability for student performance outcomes is shared by all members of the school community."

   D. "All students are capable of becoming successful learners and it is our responsibility to help them reach their full potential."

7. Principals can best help sustain focus on rigorous academic goals and ensure that teachers continue to maintain high expectations for all students by emphasizing which of the following strategies?

    A. encouraging teachers to share academic success stories from their classrooms during regular faculty meetings

    B. using student performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of individual teachers and identify teachers who may need additional supervision

    C. helping teachers establish and implement age-appropriate incentive systems to reward academic achievement

    D. meeting with teams of teachers to examine assessments they use for progress monitoring and develop intervention plans for students who are struggling

8. Principals who wish to promote numeracy for students at all grade levels should actively encourage teachers to adopt which of the following classroom practices?

    A. incorporating competitions that focus on mathematics problem-solving skills into instruction on a regular basis

    B. utilizing available computer software to reinforce students' mathematics skills in the area of basic operations

    C. using a variety of bulletin boards and other classroom displays that illustrate one or more mathematics components

    D. engaging students frequently in practical problem-solving tasks that connect key mathematical concepts and processes

9. A high school principal is making a series of brief classroom observations. Which of the following activities, observed by the principal, represents the best use of technology to enrich student learning?

    A. In a history class, students are using classroom computers to reserve library media center resources for an upcoming research project.

    B. In a mathematics class, students are utilizing spreadsheet software to average their grades on class assignments and tests.

    C. In a science class, students are using videoconferencing to discuss a joint research project with students in another state.

    D. In a journalism class, students are utilizing word processing software to format original essays for publication in a class anthology.

10. Teachers in a school recently completed a workshop on adapting instruction for English language learners and are ready to begin implementing the techniques they have learned. The principal can best support teachers' ability to implement these techniques effectively by taking which of the following actions?

    A. having teachers prepare weekly summaries of how the techniques are working to share with the rest of the staff

    B. arranging a follow-up session specifically for teachers to ask the workshop presenter questions about the techniques

    C. allocating a small budget for the purchase of resources about the techniques for the school's professional library

    D. providing time for small teams of teachers to observe and coach one another on their use of the techniques

11. A principal makes a practice of conducting informal classroom observations on a regular basis and following up the observations with brief written feedback to teachers. The principal should be aware that this feedback is likely to be most effective in helping teachers improve student outcomes if the feedback:

A. is framed in the context of concrete examples (e.g., actions, statements) observed by the principal.

B. focuses on one particular area of the teacher's practice in need of improvement.

C. is accompanied by a general comment on the teacher's overall performance (e.g., "Quality teaching!").

D. relates the observed instructional strategies to the principal's own classroom experiences.

Use the exhibits to answer the four questions that follow.

Introduction

Mr. Johnson is the new principal of Elm Grove Middle School, which includes grades six through eight and is located in a suburban community. The school enrolls 580 students, approximately 40 percent of whom qualify for free or reduced-price meals. There has been little change in staffing over the past five years. The local community has remained relatively stable in recent years with regard to its demographic and economic profile.

One of Mr. Johnson's first actions when he was hired was to meet with the superintendent to gain some background information about the school and to learn more about the superintendent's goals for the school. During this meeting, the superintendent noted that although academic performance for many students at Elm Grove has been satisfactory, there has been a growing achievement gap between both English language learners and students who are economically disadvantaged when compared with the rest of the school population. The superintendent explained that one of Mr. Johnson's priorities is to address these achievement gaps.

Following his meeting with the superintendent, Mr. Johnson began gathering relevant data. He first reviewed the school's recent state assessment data, which strongly indicated the need for school staff to take steps to improve the academic performance of students who are economically disadvantaged and of English language learners. He also reviewed the results of an anonymous teacher survey administered at the end of the previous school year. Mr. Johnson further noted that data gathered over the past few years have consistently shown a lower attendance rate among economically disadvantaged seventh and eighth grade students than among the student population overall.

State Assessment Results (previous year)
(percentage of students meeting or exceeding benchmark standard)

	Reading	Math	Science	Total Students Tested
Grade 6				
All Students	69%	68%	N/A	174
English Language Learners	33%	52%	N/A	12
Low Income	43%	49%	N/A	80
Grade 7				
All Students	64%	70%	N/A	184
English Language Learners	38%	50%	N/A	14
Low Income	38%	42%	N/A	75
Grade 8				
All Students	58%	60%	72%	201
English Language Learners	31%	50%	44%	16
Low Income	34%	42%	55%	95

Results from Anonymous Teacher Survey (previous year)
(approximately 90% of teachers completed the survey)

How much do you agree that…	% Agree or Strongly Agree
1. Every student can be motivated to learn.	40%
2. Every student is capable of succeeding academically.	44%
3. Teachers' attitudes and behaviors can have a positive effect on every student's learning.	49%
4. Teachers have the ability to engage every student actively in the learning process.	52%
5. Teachers' knowledge and skills are the most important factors in their students' ability to achieve.	38%
6. Teachers have a significant capacity to counteract negative factors outside of school that affect student learning.	39%
7. Teachers are the primary influence on student attitudes toward school and learning.	40%

Views expressed by 10 or more respondents in the open-ended comment section of the survey:

- Some groups of students just don't seem to care about getting good grades.
- Teachers can't help students learn if the students don't bother coming to school.
- Many students are so far behind in their learning that it would be hard for them ever to catch up or make good grades.
- No matter what I try, it never seems to be enough for some students.
- Some students come to school with a great attitude while others are completely unengaged.

12. As Mr. Johnson begins to address the achievement gaps at Elm Grove, he is likely to be most successful in his efforts if he gathers additional data and other information related to which of the following questions?

   A. What strategies are teachers currently using to provide engaging and motivating learning experiences for students?

   B. To what extent are families at the school involved in and supportive of school and district initiatives?

   C. How many teachers at the school are considered highly qualified according to the district's evaluation criteria?

   D. What practices are in place to communicate to students the importance of academic excellence?

13. Mr. Johnson should be most concerned about following up on which of the following issues suggested by the results of the anonymous teacher survey?

   A. Teachers express a disproportionate emphasis on grades as a measure of student learning.

   B. Teachers do not assume ownership and responsibility for students' performance and learning outcomes.

   C. Teachers' expectations for students' performance and learning are unrealistically high.

   D. Teachers are unaware of the relationship between motivation and students' academic success.

14. Mr. Johnson plans to incorporate professional development activities into faculty and grade-level meetings on a regular basis. The information provided suggests that emphasizing which of the following areas would be most effective in helping the school close its achievement gaps?

    A. developing strategies and materials for integrating mathematics and science instruction

    B. identifying and implementing research-based instructional strategies for diverse groups of students

    C. conducting research on emerging technologies and their use in classroom instruction

    D. planning and presenting demonstration lessons in core content areas for collegial feedback

15. Which of the following actions by Mr. Johnson represents the most important *first* step in developing a successful plan for addressing the school's achievement gaps?

    A. seeking input from parents/guardians regarding the root causes of the school's problems

    B. conducting a formal performance evaluation of and follow-up conference with each teacher in the school

    C. constructing a detailed timeline with benchmarks for achieving the school's goals to present to school stakeholders

    D. engaging small groups of teachers in discussions to gain insight into their perceptions, strengths, and needs

This section contains the answers to the practice test questions in the previous section.

After you have worked through the practice test questions, check the answers given in this section to see which questions you answered correctly.

Question Number	Correct Response	Test Objective
1.	C	Understand how to lead change and engage in collaborative, data-driven planning and decision making to improve student learning outcomes.
2.	A	Understand how to lead change and engage in collaborative, data-driven planning and decision making to improve student learning outcomes.
3.	C	Understand how to lead change and engage in collaborative, data-driven planning and decision making to improve student learning outcomes.
4.	A	Understand the use of assessment and accountability systems to monitor students' progress and promote educational excellence.
5.	D	Understand the use of assessment and accountability systems to monitor students' progress and promote educational excellence.
6.	D	Understand how to establish and sustain a school culture and learning environment conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
7.	D	Understand how to establish and sustain a school culture and learning environment conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
8.	D	Understand how to provide instructional leadership focused on effective teaching and learning and the use of research-supported instructional practices that promote academic success for every student.
9.	C	Understand how to provide instructional leadership focused on effective teaching and learning and the use of research-supported instructional practices that promote academic success for every student.
10.	D	Understand professional development that improves learning for every student.
11.	A	Understand professional development that improves learning for every student.
12.	A	Understand how to provide instructional leadership focused on effective teaching and learning and the use of research-supported instructional practices that promote academic success for every student.
13.	B	Understand how to establish and sustain a school culture and learning environment conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
14.	B	Understand professional development that improves learning for every student.
15.	D	Understand how to establish and sustain a school culture and learning environment conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

OVERVIEW

This section of the test consists of two written assignments. Assignment 1 is a work product assignment and Assignment 2 is a case study assignment. You are to prepare a written response of about 150–300 words to Assignment 1 and a written response of about 300–600 words to Assignment 2.

In the directions for this section, you will be instructed to read each assignment carefully before you begin to write and to think about how to organize your responses. You will be provided with a multipage note booklet to make notes and/or prepare an outline.

Your response to each written assignment will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

PURPOSE: Fulfill the purpose of the assignment by responding appropriately to each specific task in the assignment.

APPLICATION OF CONTENT: Accurately and effectively apply the relevant content knowledge and skills.

SUPPORT: Support the response with appropriate examples, evidence, and rationales based on the relevant content knowledge and skills.

Your responses will be evaluated on the criteria above, not on writing ability. However, your responses must be communicated clearly enough to permit valid judgment of your knowledge and skills. Your responses should conform to the conventions of edited American English. This should be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work.

Be sure to write about the assigned topics. You may not use any reference materials during the test. Remember to review what you have written and make any changes that you think will improve your responses.

PRACTICE CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT FOR PLANNING, CHANGE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Use the information below to complete the assignment that follows.

You are in your second year as principal of a middle school that enrolls 700 students in grades six through eight. Students come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Approximately 15 percent of students are English language learners. Seventy-four percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. A significant number of students are considered to be at risk for academic failure. State assessment results from the previous year revealed that 61 percent of students met or exceeded benchmark standards in reading and 63 percent of students met or exceeded benchmark standards in mathematics, which is well below the state average.

The school offers after-school tutoring and homework support. Teachers in all subject areas have incorporated study skills into content instruction. A student recognition program is in place that includes displaying of photographs of students who make substantial progress and/or reach high levels of achievement and awarding students who maintain their achievement with a book at the end of each semester. Books are provided by a local bookstore that is one of the school's partners.

The current supports have been ineffective in improving student achievement, and participation in the tutoring and homework support sessions has steadily declined over the last three years. Students have told teachers that they do not want the recognition because their friends sometimes make fun of them and that they would rather do other things than read a book. Some teachers have become discouraged that students are not taking advantage of the help available to them.

You decide to form a team with a goal of developing a plan for improving the supports provided to students who are at risk for academic failure. You have assembled a team that includes teachers from each grade level, parents/guardians, the school counselor/social worker, the library media specialist, and interested community partners. You will lead the team and are preparing for the first meeting.

16.   Write a memo of approximately 150–300 words to the team about the plan the team will develop. In your memo:

   •   explain why it is important for the school to succeed in improving the supports provided to students who are at risk for academic failure;

   •   describe key factors for the team to consider in developing its plan to improve the supports provided by the school for students who are at risk for academic failure;

   •   identify one type of data or other information that the team should benchmark and monitor to evaluate the impact of proposed strategies; and

   •   explain why the identified data or other information would be useful in evaluating the impact of proposed strategies and meeting the targeted goal.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

The sample below is an example of a strong response to the practice constructed-response assignment.

It is important for the school to succeed in improving supports for students who are at risk for academic failure because academic failure at the middle school level leads to increased drop-out rates and limited options for students in the workplace. Students who are at risk for academic failure may need targeted interventions and increased scaffolding to achieve their full potential. Helping these students succeed academically will expand their opportunities as they progress through school and into the workplace.

Key factors for the team to consider in developing a plan for improving supports for students who are at risk for academic failure include students' current skill levels in English language arts and mathematics, techniques for motivating students, and the accessibility of supports for students who may have family or other responsibilities after school.

One type of data or other information the team should benchmark and monitor to evaluate the impact of proposed strategies is the number of students at risk for academic failure who are participating in or taking advantage of improved and/or additional supports. The team should collect this information on a weekly basis and it should be disaggregated by grade level and student subgroups for analysis.

This disaggregated information would be useful in evaluating the impact of proposed strategies and meeting the targeted goal because it is an indicator of whether the improved and/or additional supports are being accessed by students at risk for academic failure. The issues and trends revealed by this information will help the team make adjustments to strategies as needed to better serve this population of students and help them succeed academically.

PRACTICE CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Use the exhibits below to complete the assignment that follows.

Introduction

You are the new principal of a middle school. The school is located on the outskirts of a large urban area. Over the past three years, the school has maintained a steady enrollment of approximately 750 students in grades six through eight. Approximately two-thirds of the students in the school are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and one-third of the students are English language learners. The community has experienced a slight economic downturn with the closing of two major employers. School faculty and staff strive to provide a positive and supportive environment for all students and families, and the school enjoys strong community and family support.

The district superintendent has communicated a commitment to increasing by 20 percent the number of students who meet or exceed benchmark standards on the state assessment in reading and mathematics. The superintendent has charged you with developing a plan to support this goal. The district's most recent professional development activities have focused on aligning the reading and mathematics curricula with the rigorous standards recently adopted by the state. Teachers have participated in sessions on using formative assessments to measure student growth and cross-curricular planning to embed more complex texts into instruction. The teachers in the school have been very active in supporting the curriculum redesign and have requested additional professional development to support implementation.

State Assessment Results for All Students
Two-Year Comparison
(percentage of students in all groups meeting or exceeding benchmark standard)

Subject	School		District		State	
	2 Years Ago	Last Year	2 Years Ago	Last Year	2 Years Ago	Last Year
Reading	60%	64%	66%	68%	82%	81%
Math	68%	71%	63%	65%	81%	83%

State Assessment Results, by Student Group
Two-Year Comparison
(percentage of students, by group, meeting or exceeding benchmark standard)

	Percent of School Population	2 Years Ago		Last Year	
		Reading	Math	Reading	Math
Female	51%	62%	70%	65%	72%
Male	49%	58%	66%	63%	70%
Grade 6	31%	59%	68%	63%	70%
Grade 7	33%	60%	66%	66%	73%
Grade 8	36%	61%	68%	62%	71%
Low Income	65%	54%	56%	57%	60%
English Language Learners	33%	31%	62%	43%	70%
Students with Disabilities	18%	26%	21%	20%	17%

Formative Assessment Results for Reading Grades 6–8
(percentage of students answering more than 70% of items correctly)

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Reading for Information	61%	50%	48%
Writing to Learn	60%	52%	48%
Citing Textual Evidence	50%	51%	49%
Learning through Research	58%	51%	49%
Developing a Position	55%	58%	53%

Formative Assessment Results for Math Grades 6–8
(percentage of students answering more than 70% of items correctly)

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Ratios and Proportion	63%	59%	n/a
Number Systems	61%	56%	n/a
Expressions and Equations	54%	34%	39%
Functions	n/a	n/a	37%
Geometry	n/a	n/a	50%

Results from Student Survey (previous year)
Reading and Mathematics Classes Grades 6–8

Item	% Agree					
	Reading Classes			**Math Classes**		
	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
My teacher in this class cares about me and my learning.	92%	88%	84%	74%	70%	57%
My teacher in this class makes sure that students stay busy and don't waste time.	86%	83%	90%	92%	88%	80%
My teacher in this class explains difficult concepts clearly.	77%	75%	72%	57%	43%	38%
My teacher in this class expects me to explain my answers and why I think what I think.	52%	41%	35%	34%	36%	30%
My teacher in this class makes learning enjoyable.	76%	68%	58%	48%	32%	27%
My teacher in this class encourages us to share our thoughts and ideas.	84%	82%	78%	38%	45%	26%
My teacher in this class summarizes what we have learned during each lesson.	42%	46%	50%	60%	59%	51%

Results from Anonymous Teacher Survey (previous year)

Thinking about your experiences at our school over the past three years, how much do you agree that:	% Agree or Strongly Agree	
	Reading Teachers	Math Teachers
You enjoy working in this school.	83%	71%
You feel effective in your instructional role.	81%	75%
All students in this school are receiving instruction appropriate to their needs.	68%	53%
You are interested in professional development to help develop your ability to achieve instructional goals for your students.	76%	84%
You have access to support and materials to help you differentiate instruction effectively.	72%	51%
You possess the knowledge and skills needed to help students from all economic and family circumstances progress academically at an adequate pace.	64%	47%
You possess the knowledge and skills needed to help English language learners progress academically at an adequate pace.	58%	46%
Diversity is welcomed and appreciated at this school.	89%	86%
School administrators are supportive and responsive to teachers' and students' needs.	62%	54%
The school supports collaboration between teachers and specialist staff.	70%	71%

Teacher Evaluation Data—All Teachers (previous year)
(based on multiple measures, including student growth)

Subject Area	Total Teachers	Unsatisfactory		Needs Improvement		Proficient		Excellent	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Grade 6 Reading	6	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	66.7%	2	33.3%
Grade 6 Math	6	0	0.0%	1	16.7%	5	83.3%	0	0.0%
Grade 6 Special Education	2	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
Grade 6 Gifted, Library Media, Health	3	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	66.7%	1	33.3%
Grade 7 Reading	6	0	0.0%	1	16.7%	3	50.0%	2	33.3%
Grade 7 Math	6	0	0.0%	2	33.3%	3	50.0%	1	16.7%
Grade 7 Special Education	2	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%
Grade 7 Science, Soc. Studies, Foreign Language	9	0	0.0%	1	11.1%	6	66.7%	2	22.2%
Grade 8 ELA	6	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	66.7%	2	33.3%
Grade 8 Math	6	0	0.0%	2	33.3%	3	50.0%	1	16.7%
Grade 8 Special Education	2	0	0.0%	0	0%	2	100%	0	0.0%
Grade 8 Science, Soc. Studies, Foreign Language	9	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	55.6%	4	44.4%
Grade 6-8 PE, Art, Music	9	1	11.1%	1	11.1%	4	44.4%	3	33.3%

Teacher Observation Summary Data (previous year)
(number of teachers scoring at each performance level)

		Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Excellent
Domain 1: Planning and Preparation	Reading	1	1	10	6
	Math	2	4	9	3
Domain 2: The Classroom Environment	Reading	2	2	9	5
	Math	3	5	7	3
Domain 3: Instruction	Reading	1	3	10	4
	Math	2	6	8	2
Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities	Reading	1	3	9	5
	Math	3	4	7	4

	Unsatisfactory
	Needs Improvement
	Proficient
	Excellent

17. Citing evidence from the exhibits, write a response of approximately 300–600 words in which you:
    - identify the most significant areas of need in the school's educational program;

    - for each of the areas of need you identified, describe strategies for addressing that area of need;

    - explain why each of these strategies would be effective in improving the school's educational program;

    - explain how you would secure and implement the necessary resources to implement each of these strategies;

    - identify one important strength in the school's educational program; and

    - describe a strategy for leveraging this strength to improve the school's educational program.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

The sample below is an example of a strong response to the practice constructed-response assignment.

There are some significant areas of need in this school's educational program. According to student assessment data, eighth grade students are performing substantially below the sixth and seventh grade students in reading. The student survey reveals that most mathematics teachers across grade levels do not appear to be asking students to explain their answers and thinking. According to the teacher survey results, approximately half of teachers do not feel fully able to meet the learning needs of all students. Of the eighteen mathematics teachers in the school, at least one-third perform at the level of unsatisfactory or needs improvement in multiple domains according to the teacher observation summary.

To address the lower performance of eighth grade students in reading, I would lead the reading teachers in increasing the use of formative assessments and targeted interventions in their reading instruction and provide time for them to regularly analyze formative assessment data. To help teachers develop skills and strategies for engaging students in explanations of their answers and thinking as well as for differentiating instruction to meet diverse learning needs, I would provide school-wide professional development in these areas. I would also encourage collaboration between classroom and specialist teachers. I would address the performance of the mathematics teachers who need improvement by implementing more frequent walk-through observations and by arranging for proficient or excellent mathematics teachers to partner with these teachers to plan and implement instruction.

Increasing the use of formative assessment and targeted interventions in reading instruction as well as ongoing analysis of formative assessment data would enable teachers to adjust their strategies or approaches in a timely way to increase their instructional effectiveness and improve student learning outcomes. Providing school-wide professional development in the areas of differentiation and strategies for engaging students in explanations of their answers and thinking would expand teachers' repertoire of instructional strategies, enhance the responsiveness of their instruction, and ultimately provide them with useful insights into students' thinking processes. Frequent walk-throughs in mathematics teachers' classrooms would enable me to stay informed about the strategies and instructional approaches they are using and provide ongoing

feedback. Partnering proficient and excellent teachers with teachers whose performance needs improvement would allow them to learn from their colleagues' pedagogical expertise.

Some of these planned strategies can be easily implemented with few additional resources. For example, leading teachers in increasing the use of formative assessment and interventions could be accomplished by using faculty meeting time to develop assessments and discuss effective interventions. To provide time for ongoing data analysis, the school schedule may need to be adjusted or planning periods reorganized. School-wide professional development would need to be discussed with the district superintendent to explore various options available in terms of time, funding, and presenters. One option could be to engage teachers or district consultants to present training as an alternative to one of the district's professional development days. I would need to delegate some administrative tasks to others to free up time for more walk-throughs. To enable teachers to co-plan and possibly co-teach, I would likely have to arrange for someone, either another staff member or substitute, to cover one or more of the teachers' classes.

EXPLANATION OF THE SCORING PROCESS FOR THE CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ASSIGNMENTS

This section is designed to provide you with an explanation of the scoring process for the constructed-response assignments of the Principal as Instructional Leader test.

THE SCORING PROCESS

Constructed-response assignments will be scored on a four-point scoring scale (see page 2-32). Within the range of scores (i.e., from 1 to 4), a response that receives a score point of 1 is an undeveloped response, while a score point of 4 is assigned to a response that is very well developed. Specific performance characteristics (see below) describe the elements typically found in responses at each of the four score points, although any particular response may be either more or less developed in respect to any specific elements.

Each category of the four-point scale will reflect a range of ability across that score point. Thus, among the most competent constructed responses, there will be those that represent a "high 4" (the best) as well as those that represent a "low 4" (clearly superior responses, but they are not quite as well constructed as the "high 4"). This range of ability holds true within each of the other three points on the scoring scale.

Each response will be read and scored by two readers; the sum of the two readers' scores will be the examinee's total score for each constructed-response assignment. Any pair of scores that differs by more than one point will be regarded as discrepant and will require resolution by a third reader. For example, a total score of 6 would result from the assignment of a "3" and a "3" from each of two readers; it could not result from assigned scores of "2" and "4" because the scores differ by more than one point.

Performance Characteristics

Purpose	The candidate fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding appropriately to each specific task in the assignment.
Application of Content	The candidate accurately and effectively applies the relevant content knowledge and skills.
Support	The candidate supports the response with appropriate examples, evidence, and rationales based on the relevant content knowledge and skills.

Score Scale

The four points of the scoring scale correspond to varying degrees of performance. The following statements describe typical responses at each score point.

SCORE POINT	SCORE POINT DESCRIPTION
4	**The "4" response reflects a thorough understanding of the relevant content knowledge and skills from the test objectives.** • The response completely fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding fully to the given task. • The response demonstrates an accurate, highly effective application of the relevant content knowledge and skills. • The response provides strong supporting examples, evidence, and rationales based on the relevant content knowledge and skills.
3	**The "3" response reflects a general understanding of the relevant content knowledge and skills from the test objectives.** • The response generally fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding in a general way to the given task. • The response demonstrates a generally accurate, effective application of the relevant content knowledge and skills. • The response provides some supporting examples, evidence, and rationales based on the relevant content knowledge and skills.
2	**The "2" response reflects a limited understanding of the relevant content knowledge and skills from the test objectives.** • The response partially fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding in a limited way to the given task. • The response demonstrates a partially accurate, partially effective application of the relevant content knowledge and skills. • The response provides limited supporting examples, evidence, and rationales based on the relevant content knowledge and skills.
1	**The "1" response reflects very weak or no understanding of the relevant content knowledge and skills from the test objectives.** • The response fulfills little of the purpose of the assignment by responding inadequately to the given task. • The response demonstrates a largely inaccurate, ineffective application of the relevant content knowledge and skills. • The response provides very weak or no supporting examples, evidence, and rationales based on the relevant content knowledge and skills.
U	**The response is unscorable because it is illegible, not written to the assigned topic, or written in a language other than English or does not contain a sufficient amount of original work to score.**
B	**There is no response to the assignment.**

OVERVIEW

The score report indicates whether or not you passed the test and how you performed on each test subarea. The passing scores for the Illinois Licensure Testing System were established by the Illinois State Board of Education based on recommendations from panels of Illinois educators. The passing score for each content-area test is designed to reflect the level of content knowledge and skills required to perform the job of an educator receiving an initial certificate in Illinois.

Passing Score

To pass the Principal as Instructional Leader test you must obtain a scaled total test score of 240 or above on both subtests (195 and 196).

Total Test Score

The total test score is based on your performance on the entire test, specifically the number of multiple-choice questions you answered correctly and the scores you received on the two constructed-response assignments.

Subarea Scores

- Subarea scores are presented on the same scale as the total test score.

- Subarea scores contain different numbers of questions and are weighted differently in the computation of the total test score; therefore, the average of the subarea scaled scores generally will not equal the scaled total test score.

- Subarea scores will help you assess your areas of relative strength and weakness.

Reporting of Scores

Your results will be forwarded to the Illinois State Board of Education and to the Illinois institution(s) you indicate during the registration process. You should keep the score report you receive for your own records.

READING YOUR REPORT: A SAMPLE

A sample of the Principal as Instructional Leader Subtest 1 score report is provided below.
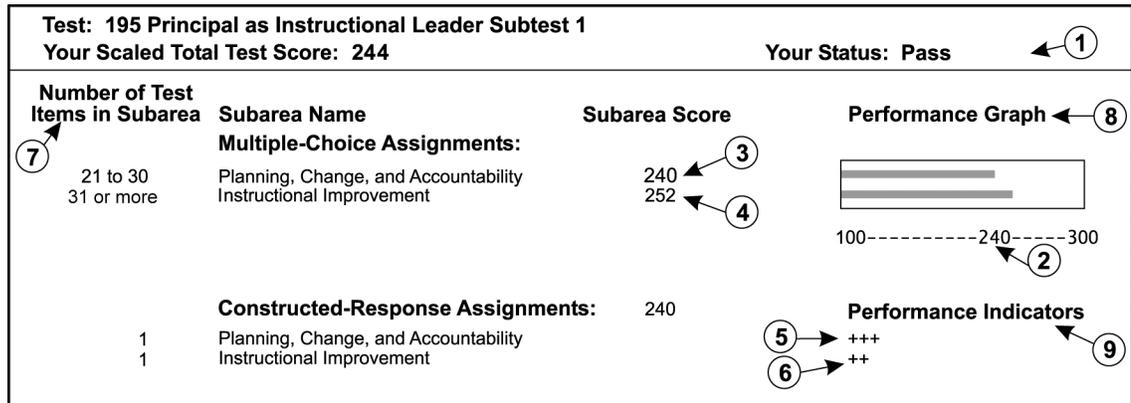
According to the above sample, the examinee passed the Principal as Instructional Leader Subtest 1 ①, because the examinee's scaled total test score of 244 is above the passing score of 240 ②.

With regard to the multiple-choice section of the test, the examinee did better on the Instructional Improvement section ④ than on the Planning, Change, and Accountability section ③. The examinee did better on the constructed-response assignment for Planning, Change, and Accountability ⑤ than on the constructed-response assignment for Instructional Improvement ⑥.

The score report indicates the approximate number of multiple-choice test questions for each subarea and the number of constructed-response assignments on the test ⑦. The Performance Graph ⑧ indicates the examinee's subarea score on a range from 100 to 300. The Performance Indicators ⑨ can be interpreted as follows: ++++ indicates a constructed-response assignment score of 7–8, +++ indicates a constructed-response assignment score of 6, ++ indicates a constructed-response assignment score of 4–5, and + indicates a constructed-response assignment score of 2–3.

Your score report also lists your status on each Principal as Instructional Leader subtest and the date you passed the subtest, if applicable. Each subtest you have not yet taken is noted as "Not Taken."

For the subtest(s) that you did not pass, you will find a second page of information for each subtest showing the number of multiple-choice questions as well as the percentage of these questions that you answered correctly by an applicable objective.

HOW TO INTERPRET THE TEST CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE SCORES

The responses are scored by educators trained in assessment, using the same standards for all examinees, by a process called focused holistic scoring. The process allows the scoring of examinee responses based on overall quality rather than on an analysis of the components. Scorers base their judgments on the quality of the response. In general, if a passing score is attained for the

constructed-response test section, it is likely that the performance characteristics have been demonstrated in the responses.

Each response is scored on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 representing a totally undeveloped response and 4 representing a response that is very well developed. Each response is read and scored by two readers; the sum of the two readers' scores is the total score assigned to the essay. This score is then converted to the scaled score that is reported on your score report.

Scaled scores are reported on a range from 100 to 300. A total test score of 240 or above is necessary to pass the test. Further explanation regarding the interpretation of your constructed-response scores will be provided on your score report.