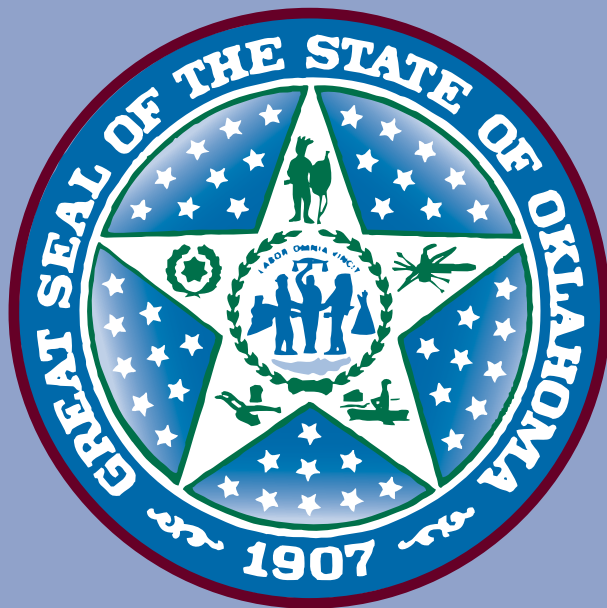


# Certification Examinations for Oklahoma Educators™

## Oklahoma Subject Area Tests™

# STUDY GUIDE

045 Elementary Principal Specialty Test



Oklahoma Commission  
for Teacher Preparation

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## STUDY GUIDE INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY GUIDE.....	1-1
KEY FEATURES OF THIS STUDY GUIDE .....	1-1
FOR OTHER CEOE STUDY GUIDES.....	1-1
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION .....	1-1

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS FOR OKLAHOMA EDUCATORS

AN OVERVIEW OF THE TESTING PROGRAM.....	1-2
Test Development Process .....	1-2
Characteristics of the CEOE Tests.....	1-3
Test Descriptions .....	1-3
Test Administration .....	1-7
Score Reports .....	1-8
HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TEST .....	1-8
Study the Competencies .....	1-8
Identify Resources .....	1-8
Study Techniques .....	1-8
Review the Practice Test Questions .....	1-8
SAMPLE TEST DIRECTIONS .....	1-9
Sample General Test Directions.....	1-9
Sample Constructed-Response Assignment Directions .....	1-10
THE DAY OF THE TEST.....	1-11
Preparation .....	1-11
At the Test Site.....	1-11

## FIELD-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION.....	2-1
Test Competencies .....	2-1
Practice Test Questions .....	2-1
TEST COMPETENCIES .....	2-3
PRACTICE TEST QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS .....	2-10
Practice Selected-Response Questions .....	2-10
Sample Directions for the Constructed-Response Assignments.....	2-20
Practice Instructional Leadership Assignment .....	2-21
A Very Good Response to the Practice Instructional Leadership Assignment .....	2-22
Practice Educational Management Assignment .....	2-24
A Very Good Response to the Practice Educational Management Assignment .....	2-25
CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT SCORING.....	2-27
Sample Performance Characteristics for the Instructional Leadership and Educational Management Assignments .....	2-27
Sample Scoring Scale for the Instructional Leadership and Educational Management Assignments .....	2-27

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# STUDY GUIDE INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS FOR OKLAHOMA EDUCATORS

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The first two sections of the study guide are available in a separate PDF file. Click the link below to view or print these sections.

[Study Guide Introduction and General Information About the Certification Examinations for Oklahoma Educators](#)





# FIELD-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

- Test Competencies
  - Practice Test Questions and Answers
  - Constructed-Response Assignment Scoring
- 

## INTRODUCTION

This section includes a list of the test competencies, as well as a set of practice selected-response (multiple-choice) questions and practice constructed-response assignments, for the test field included in this study guide.

### Test Competencies

The test competencies are broad conceptual statements that reflect the subject-matter skills, knowledge, and understanding that an entry-level educator needs to teach effectively in Oklahoma public schools. The list of test competencies for each test field represents the **only** source of information about what a specific test will cover and therefore should be reviewed carefully.

The descriptive statements that follow the competencies are included to provide examples of possible content covered by each competency. These descriptive statements are neither exhaustive nor exclusionary.

### Practice Test Questions

The Elementary Principal, Middle Level Principal, and Secondary Principal Specialty Tests consist of selected-response questions, one Instructional Leadership Assignment that requires one written response, and one Educational Management Assignment that requires one written response.

The practice selected-response questions and practice constructed-response assignments included in this section are designed to give you an introduction to the nature of the questions included in this OSAT test field. The practice test questions represent the various types of 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 to predict your performance on the test as a whole.

**Decision Set Questions.** Some of the questions on the OSAT School Administrator tests will appear in decision sets. The decision set format helps simulate situations that school leaders encounter and in which they must make decisions that affect staff, students, and the larger school community. A typical decision set includes two or more stimuli and six to nine questions that address a range of competencies. Each decision set begins with stimulus material that sets the scene and provides information to use in answering the questions that follow. The stimulus may include the level of the school (elementary, middle, or high school); a description of the community served by the school; information about the staff in general or one or more particular staff members; or data, such as survey or test results. Each decision set stimulus describes a situation that the school administrator is facing. As you proceed through the decision set, additional stimulus material is provided at one or more junctures. This stimulus material typically provides additional information or a subsequent development that you will need to consider in answering the questions that follow.

To help you prepare for your OSAT, each practice selected-response question in this section is preceded by the competency it measures and followed by a brief explanation of the correct response. On the actual test, the competencies, correct responses, and explanations will **not** be given.

A sample response is provided immediately following the practice Instructional Leadership constructed-response assignment and the practice Educational Management constructed-response assignment. The sample responses in this guide are for illustrative purposes only. This component of the test assesses your ability to prepare a reasoned response to a specific prompt. Your written responses should be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work.

A description of the process that is used for scoring the constructed-response assignments is provided in addition to the OSAT performance characteristics and score scales.

When you are finished with the practice test questions, you may wish to go back and review the entire list of test competencies and descriptive statements for your test field.

## TEST COMPETENCIES: ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL SPECIALTY TEST

### SUBAREAS:

- I. School Vision and Leadership
- II. Instructional Leadership
- III. Organizational, Operational, and Resource Management

### SUBAREA I—SCHOOL VISION AND LEADERSHIP

#### Competency 0001

**Understand how to facilitate the development and articulation of a school vision that promotes learning for all students.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Demonstrate knowledge of techniques for collaborating with other administrators, teachers, students, parents/guardians, community members, and state and federal agencies to develop a school vision of learning that promotes the success of all students.

Analyze the use of data-based research strategies (e.g., analysis of student assessment results, student and family demographic data, and data on community needs) to develop a school vision of learning.

Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for developing a school vision based on relevant educational theories, models, and practices, including an understanding of the goals for learning in a pluralistic society, the needs of diverse learners, the nature of schools as interactive social and cultural systems, and the dynamics of social and organizational change.

Recognize the value of reflecting on the current status of the school and using that knowledge to inform the process of defining educational goals.

Demonstrate knowledge of strategies and procedures for ensuring that the school vision addresses the diversity of learners and community needs.

Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for articulating the school vision throughout the development process.

Demonstrate knowledge of communication techniques, including the use of technology, symbols, ceremonies, stories, and other activities, for conveying the school vision to staff, parents, students, and community members.

## Competency 0002

**Understand how to facilitate implementation and stewardship of a school vision that promotes learning for all students.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Demonstrate knowledge of leadership processes necessary to implement and support the school vision, including effective communication strategies and strategies for motivating staff, students, and families.

Identify procedures for implementing the school vision, including procedures for initiating change and for overcoming obstacles to change.

Demonstrate knowledge of procedures for defining educational goals related to the school vision.

Analyze the use of data-based research strategies to monitor school improvement efforts, evaluate the school's progress toward achieving its goals and vision, ensure accountability, and make needed adjustments.

Analyze the use of management techniques and group processes to define roles, assign functions, delegate effectively, facilitate teamwork and collegiality, encourage innovation and autonomy, and determine accountability for attaining goals related to the school vision.

## Competency 0003

**Understand how to promote community collaboration and involvement in supporting the school vision of learning.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Analyze varied strategies for encouraging the involvement of staff, students, parents/guardians, and community members in supporting the school vision.

Identify strategies for drawing on the diversity of the community to improve educational programs, meet diverse student needs, and support the school vision.

Identify strategies for collaborating with community agencies to integrate health, social, cultural, and other services in the schools to address student needs.

Demonstrate knowledge of community relations techniques that make effective use of varied media to help support the school vision.

Identify outreach strategies for involving business, religious, political, and service organizations in supporting the school vision.

Analyze the use of community relations models, marketing strategies, and data-driven decision making to develop educational partnerships among schools, businesses, community organizations, government agencies, and higher education institutions.

Describe ways to support the involvement of families in the education of their children.

Describe ways to acknowledge that families have the best interests of their children in mind.

## Competency 0004

**Understand the significance of diversity for the school's vision of learning and ways to exercise leadership in supporting and valuing diversity.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Examine ways to use the experiences and perspectives of members of the school community with diverse backgrounds to help achieve the school vision and meet the learning needs of all students.

Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for creating an atmosphere in the school that encourages respect, sensitivity, and appreciation for all people.

Analyze factors involved in working effectively with diverse groups within the school and community.

Examine cultural, social, and economic factors affecting students and society.

Analyze the implications of diversity for education.

Demonstrate knowledge of ways to work with others in the school community to address prejudice and ensure that all students have an equal opportunity for educational success.

Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for infusing diversity awareness into the curriculum.

Identify policies and strategies to help students and staff learn how to function effectively in a multilingual, multicultural, and economically diverse society.

## Competency 0005

**Understand how to support the school vision by using human relations skills and communication skills to solve problems and facilitate decision making.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Analyze the use of communication skills and public relations techniques in disseminating information to the public and engaging the community in dialogue to support the school vision.

Demonstrate knowledge of techniques for facilitating communication with and among members of the school community.

Apply knowledge of skills for listening and speaking effectively in small- and large-group contexts.

Identify procedures to promote collaborative decision making and creative problem solving in various school situations.

Demonstrate knowledge of various theories of conflict resolution and appropriate application of these models to specific communities.

Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for applying group process skills and for using research-based data to build consensus and resolve conflicts.

## Competency 0006

**Understand how school leadership and the school vision relate to the larger political, social, economic, cultural, legal, and ethical context of education.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Examine how an understanding of the larger political, social, economic, and cultural context of education informs the development of effective policies and practices to benefit the school and its students.

Recognize how economic and political factors shape a community and affect the opportunities available to children in particular schools.

Recognize the importance of communicating regularly with all members of the school community, including representatives of diverse community groups, concerning trends, issues, and policies affecting the school.

Identify ways to advocate for policies and programs at the local, state, and federal levels that promote equitable learning opportunities and success for all students, regardless of socioeconomic background, ethnicity, gender, disability, or other individual characteristics.

Analyze community norms and values and explain how they relate to the role of the school in promoting social justice.

Recognize how the Oklahoma and U.S. Constitutions; district policies; and statutory, common, and case law regulate the behavior of students, staff, and administration in the schools.

Demonstrate knowledge of the system of public school governance and strategies for working effectively with local governing boards.

Recognize how to demonstrate honesty, integrity, impartiality, fairness, sensitivity to student diversity, respect for confidentiality, and ethical behavior in interactions with members of the school community.

## SUBAREA II—INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

### Competency 0007

**Understand how to use knowledge of human development, learning and teaching theories, educational research, and best practice to promote the success of all students.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Recognize the characteristics and stages of physical, cognitive, and social/emotional development and their educational significance.

Analyze how sociological, linguistic, cultural, and other factors may affect students' development and needs and the implications of these factors for instruction.

Examine ways to apply research-based knowledge of human development, learning, motivation, and best-practice instruction to optimize learning for all students.

Identify strategies for collaborating with counseling staff, teaching staff, and community agencies to address student needs and ensure student access to adequate counseling, guidance, and other services.

Evaluate the implications of various behavior management practices.

Examine strategies for promoting successful learning experiences for students with disabilities and ensuring that these students have access to appropriate resources.

Recognize the role of various types of activity programs in meeting all students' developmental, social, cultural, athletic, leadership, and academic needs.

## Competency 0008

**Understand how to apply principles of curriculum planning, development, and evaluation to promote the success of all students.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Identify basic principles of curriculum design and recognize relationships between child/adolescent/adult development and the curriculum.

Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for designing and implementing curricula that fully accommodate learners' diverse needs.

Identify appropriate criteria for use in evaluating, modifying, and integrating curricula.

Apply knowledge of procedures for involving and leading stakeholders in curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation.

Demonstrate knowledge of the relationships between Oklahoma's Priority Academic Student Skills and local curricula.

Analyze issues and procedures related to the development of curricula to meet the needs of all students.

Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for infusing diversity awareness into the curriculum.

Apply knowledge of current research in curriculum development and strategies for developing an inclusive curriculum that reflects the diversity of the classroom, the community, the nation, and the world.

## Competency 0009

**Understand how to apply principles of instruction and instructional leadership to promote the success of all students.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Apply knowledge of strategies for helping school personnel apply best practices and sound educational research to improve instructional programs.

Demonstrate knowledge of principles and techniques associated with various instructional methods, including technology-based methods.

Examine the significance of student differences (e.g., in regard to learning styles, cultural background, home language, disabilities) for instructional planning and implementation.

Describe methods of assessing student learning and achievement and examine the role of student assessment for instruction and program evaluation.

Examine how various staffing patterns, student grouping arrangements, behavior management practices, class scheduling formats, school organizational structures, and facility designs affect teaching and learning.

Identify strategies for using resources within the community (e.g., school-business partnerships) to enhance education and promote achievement.

Describe how to use technology and information systems to enrich the school's curriculum and instruction.

## Competency 0010

### **Understand strategies for promoting professional growth and development and strategies for creating a positive school culture for learning.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Demonstrate knowledge of research-based professional development that includes authentic problems and tasks, mentoring, coaching, conferencing, and other techniques for promoting adult learning and developing new knowledge and skills in the workplace.

Identify procedures for working collaboratively with school personnel to develop and implement comprehensive professional growth plans.

Recognize how to evaluate professional development programs to ensure that they advance the school's vision of learning.

Recognize the importance of encouraging reflective practice for one's self and staff, including reflection on the role that one's own attitudes, biases, and preconceptions play in interactions with students, colleagues, and others.

Demonstrate knowledge of principles and procedures for effective personnel evaluation and developmental supervision.

Describe how to create a personal development plan that reflects commitment to life-long learning and best practices and that takes advantage of varied resources for continuing professional development.

Analyze strategies for creating and maintaining a positive school culture that draws on the diversity of the school community and fosters the belief that all children can learn and succeed.

## **SUBAREA III—ORGANIZATIONAL, OPERATIONAL, AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### Competency 0011

#### **Understand principles of organizational management, budgeting, resource utilization, financial management, and technology use.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Examine ways to apply knowledge of organizational development and data management to optimize learning for all students.

Analyze ways to apply long-range planning procedures and problem-solving skills to promote effective and equitable resource allocation that focuses on teaching and learning.

Identify characteristics of school budgets, stages in the budgeting process, and strategies for working effectively with stakeholders to develop the school budget.

Apply knowledge of effective procedures for managing scarce resources and creative strategies for seeking new resources to support student learning, including grant money and other nonbudgetary resources.

Identify basic principles of financial and cost accounting, methods for financial record keeping and reporting, and effective procedures for managing activity funds.

Demonstrate knowledge of current technologies and information systems designed to facilitate management, business, and scheduling practices.

## Competency 0012

### **Understand principles of human resource planning and management.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Demonstrate knowledge of procedures and legal requirements (e.g., EEOC, ADA) for recruiting, screening, and selecting personnel.

Analyze issues of equity and diversity in human resource management.

Examine the relationship between personnel practices and quality and justice in the workplace.

Apply knowledge of skills and procedures for supervising and evaluating school personnel.

Apply knowledge of procedures for disciplining and dismissing staff in accordance with due process.

Identify requirements and effective practices in situations involving contract negotiation and management and employee grievances.

## Competency 0013

### **Understand how to manage the school's physical plant and auxiliary services to ensure a safe and effective learning environment.**

*The following topics are examples of content that may be covered under this competency.*

Identify the features of a safe and effective learning environment.

Examine strategies for ensuring the safety of students and school personnel and for addressing suspected problems related to safety.

Identify procedures for crisis planning and for responding to crises.

Demonstrate knowledge of public school safety, security, and emergency procedures.

Identify procedures for monitoring and evaluating the operation, use, maintenance, and efficiency of school facilities.

Identify legal issues related to the operation and maintenance of school facilities (e.g., providing access for individuals with disabilities).

Demonstrate knowledge of regulations, issues, and procedures related to purchasing, food services, transportation services, information management services, and health services in the school.

## PRACTICE TEST QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL SPECIALTY TEST

### Practice Selected-Response Questions

Use the information below to answer the two questions that follow.

Mr. Hogan is the new principal of a small elementary school in a culturally diverse community. During his first weeks as principal, Mr. Hogan observes that students tend to socialize primarily with other students who share the same cultural background. This pattern is evident in the classroom when students choose partners for assigned projects, as well as on the playground, where children tend to play in culturally homogeneous groups.

After reflecting on this pattern, Mr. Hogan is convinced of the need to initiate changes in the way members of the school community perceive and respond to cultural diversity. He is especially interested in helping teachers adjust their instructional methods to address this goal.

### Competency 0002

Understand how to facilitate implementation and stewardship of a school vision that promotes learning for all students.

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1. As a new principal, Mr. Hogan should follow which of the following guidelines when introducing instructional changes to address issues of diversity?
  - A. Urge faculty to assess their own willingness to overcome obstacles to change.
  - B. Suggest possible teacher actions, but allow teachers to make their own decisions about whether and how to implement change.
  - C. Emphasize the importance of responsibly taking risks to achieve professional growth.
  - D. Allow time to build trust with faculty members before challenging them to consider major changes in their teaching methods.

**Correct Response: D.** Instructional strategies can play an important role in influencing students' attitudes toward cultural diversity and their understanding of cultural issues. In the situation described, the new principal has correctly identified the need to focus on this aspect of instruction. However, the new principal must first earn the trust of the faculty, demonstrating respect for their judgment and experience before initiating discussion of instructional changes designed to address issues of diversity.

## Competency 0004

Understand the significance of diversity for the school's vision of learning and ways to exercise leadership in supporting and valuing diversity.

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2. Which of the following teacher strategies is likely to be most effective in encouraging students from different cultural backgrounds to work and play together?
  - A. Lead a series of class discussions that explore the value of diversity inside and outside of school.
  - B. Provide positive acknowledgment of students who voluntarily choose to work with students who are not in their usual group of friends.
  - C. Assign students to heterogeneous cooperative learning groups for a variety of classroom activities.
  - D. Create frequent opportunities for students to move about the classroom and interact with each other freely during class.

**Correct Response: C.** A teacher's choice of instructional strategies can affect the willingness of students to work and play with other students who have different cultural backgrounds. In the situation described, there is an established pattern in which students interact primarily with other students who share the same cultural background. For this reason, the principal should take the initiative in working with teachers to encourage greater interaction among students with diverse backgrounds. Assigning students to heterogeneous cooperative learning groups can motivate students from diverse cultural groups to interact in mutually beneficial ways to accomplish a shared goal.

### Competency 0006

Understand how school leadership and the school vision relate to the larger political, social, economic, cultural, legal, and ethical context of education.

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3. When determining an appropriate discipline strategy for a student who receives special education services, an elementary school principal should be aware that:
  - A. discipline tends to be most effective when special education students are subject to the same guidelines as all other students.
  - B. special education students are generally exempt from school disciplinary policies unless their Individualized Education Programs prescribe otherwise.
  - C. detailed federal and state regulations specify the types of discipline procedures that may be used with special education students.
  - D. school officials must notify the students' parents/guardians and request their permission before imposing any disciplinary penalties.

**Correct Response: C.** In most situations, decisions regarding student discipline are the prerogative of the principal supported by school staff. However, in the case of students with disabilities, detailed federal and state regulations apply. These regulations are based on federal court cases interpreting the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Principals must remain informed about these procedural restrictions regarding conditions under which basic disciplinary actions may or may not be used for students with disabilities.

## PRINCIPAL DECISION SET BEGINS HERE

Ms. Jackson, an elementary school principal in Oklahoma, is working with the school's site-based decision-making team on a plan to improve curriculum and instruction. The plan has three major components:

- Evaluate the school's curriculum in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies and recommend appropriate revisions.
- Encourage teachers to enhance the quality of instruction by applying knowledge of current educational research and innovative instructional strategies.
- Expand professional development opportunities for teachers and modify formal teacher appraisal procedures.

### Competency 0008

Understand how to apply principles of curriculum planning, development, and evaluation to promote the success of all students.

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4. Ms. Jackson convenes a committee of faculty, staff, and parents/guardians to begin the process of evaluating the school's curriculum and recommending revisions. The committee's primary responsibility during this process should be to:
- A. modify the school curriculum to reflect the most recent educational trends.
  - B. ensure that state and district curriculum guidelines are adequately covered in the school curriculum.
  - C. create as many interdisciplinary links as possible.
  - D. ensure that detailed specifications are included for each of the main curricular objectives.

**Correct Response: B.** State and district curriculum guidelines are meant to ensure that students in all schools acquire essential knowledge and skills. A committee engaged in the process of evaluating a school's curriculum should begin by determining whether the curriculum fully incorporates these essential elements. School leaders can then proceed to the next stage of curricular reform: customizing the curriculum to meet the needs of students in this particular school community.

## Competency 0005

Understand how to support the school vision by using human relations skills and communication skills to solve problems and facilitate decision making.

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5. Ms. Jackson plans a schoolwide forum for faculty, staff, and other stakeholders to discuss the efforts that are now underway to enhance curriculum and instruction. This communication strategy can be expected to facilitate the school improvement process by:
- I. demonstrating for district leaders the collaborative nature of school decision making.
  - II. providing decision makers with useful feedback on key issues.
  - III. reducing the likelihood that various stakeholder groups will have differing priorities.
  - IV. helping prevent misconceptions about planned changes from developing.
- A. I and III only
  - B. I and IV only
  - C. II and III only
  - D. II and IV only

**Correct Response: D.** Major curricular reform inevitably generates a certain amount of conflict, controversy, and apprehension among stakeholders. In the situation described, the principal's decision to organize a schoolwide forum serves several important purposes, including enhancing school improvement by gaining broad-based feedback on key issues and reducing anxiety and misconceptions about the ways in which proposed changes may affect the interests of various stakeholders.

Ms. Jackson meets with the district coordinator of staff development to discuss ways of modifying the school's teacher appraisal procedures to provide each teacher with more helpful feedback and support. The coordinator stresses the importance of conversations between the teacher and the principal before and after the principal's formal classroom observation.

**Competency 0007**

Understand how to use knowledge of human development, learning and teaching theories, educational research, and best practice to promote the success of all students.

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6. During a preobservation conference with Ms. Jackson, a teacher describes the lesson plan he intends to present during the principal's observation the following week. Ms. Jackson suggests that he begin by discussing with students what they already know about the topic and what they would like to know. According to current educational research, this instructional strategy is likely to offer which of the following advantages?
- I. reinforcing students' recall through structured repetition
  - II. helping students construct new understandings by drawing on prior knowledge
  - III. stimulating student interest in the upcoming lesson
  - IV. helping students eliminate misperceptions they may have about the topic
- A. I and II only
  - B. I, II, and III only
  - C. III and IV only
  - D. II, III, and IV only

**Correct Response: D.** Preobservation conferences can enhance the value of teacher appraisals by motivating the teacher to reflect on the objectives of the planned lesson and consider alternative instructional strategies. In the situation described, the principal encourages the teacher to apply knowledge of current educational research to improve the planned lesson. The research-based instructional strategy recommended by the principal is likely to promote student learning by activating and clarifying students' prior knowledge of the topic, eliminating misperceptions students may have, and engaging their interest and attention.

**Competency 0010**

Understand strategies for promoting professional growth and development and strategies for creating a positive school culture for learning.

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7. During a postobservation conference with the teacher, Ms. Jackson could best promote the teacher's learning if she has him begin by:
- A. comparing the expected and actual outcomes of the lesson.
  - B. reassessing the importance and appropriateness of the lesson's instructional goals.
  - C. noting aspects of teaching that he considers his strengths.
  - D. identifying students who appeared to benefit from the lesson and those who did not.

**Correct Response: A.** Teacher appraisals are most effective when the principal's feedback encourages the teacher to engage in self-evaluation. In the situation described, the principal prompts the teacher to assess whether the lesson objectives identified by the teacher in the preobservation conference were successfully achieved. This nonthreatening approach can promote honest self-assessment by guiding the teacher to recognize professional strengths and to target areas for improvement.

**PRINCIPAL DECISION SET ENDS HERE**

## Competency 0011

Understand principles of organizational management, budgeting, resource utilization, financial management, and technology use.

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8. A principal has been working with a committee of parents/guardians and teachers to prepare a plan for upgrading the school's computer resources. The group decides to apply for a grant from a corporation, foundation, or government agency to fund the proposed improvements. Which of the following steps should members of the committee take *first* to begin securing grant funding for this purpose?
- A. Develop a proposal and submit it to as many funding sources as possible.
  - B. Hire a professional grant writer to help produce the most effective proposal.
  - C. Target several funding sources and learn as much about them as possible before writing a grant proposal.
  - D. Arrange for the principal to meet with representatives of potential funding sources.

**Correct Response: C.** Competition for access to funding from outside sources is often intense, so those applying for grants should be aware of strategies commonly used to improve the chances that a project will be funded. Sending vague, loosely written proposals to a large number of agencies tends to have a low probability of success. A more successful strategy is likely to involve developing highly specific, tightly written proposals that are tailored to the funding priorities (e.g., providing educational software, updating maps and globes) of a few institutions. A thorough investigation of the granting policies and procedures of the targeted institutions is an important component of this strategy.

## Competency 0012

Understand principles of human resource planning and management.

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9. An elementary school principal has decided not to renew the contract of a member of his teaching staff. The teacher has received consistently poor evaluations and, despite numerous warnings, has shown little interest in working with the principal to improve his performance. In this situation, it is most important for the principal to ensure that:
- A. every effort has already been made to reassign the teacher to another position within the district.
  - B. problems with the teacher's performance and efforts to remedy the problems have been carefully documented.
  - C. the teacher's poor performance can be shown to have resulted in lowered student achievement as reflected in standardized test scores.
  - D. the teacher is informed about the nonrenewal decision before any other school or district personnel are informed.

**Correct Response: B.** Sections 125–130 of the School Laws of Oklahoma (1998) establish the procedures to be followed in cases of nonrenewal of teacher contracts and outline the rights of both employer and employee. The law specifies that the reasons for nonrenewal must be communicated to any teacher who is not renewed. The principal must document thoroughly both the problems with the teacher's performance and the efforts that have been made to remedy those problems.

### Competency 0013

Understand how to manage the school's physical plant and auxiliary services to ensure a safe and effective learning environment.

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10. An elementary school principal arranges for the school's carpeting to be cleaned during spring vacation. Upon returning to school early in the morning on the day classes are to resume, the principal notices a faint chemical odor in the air. Later in the morning, the school nurse reports that several students have complained of nausea and dizziness and are being sent home. After discussing the situation with the school nurse, the principal concludes that residual fumes from the carpet cleaning may be harmful to students and staff. In this situation, which of the following steps should the principal take *first*?
- A. Evacuate all students from the school while the building is being inspected and evaluated.
  - B. Survey teachers and students to determine how many of them have felt discomfort.
  - C. Open all windows and turn on ceiling fans to ventilate the school building.
  - D. Call the local health inspector and request that the school be evaluated as soon as possible.

**Correct Response: A.** One of the primary responsibilities of a school principal is to ensure the health and safety of members of the school community and to respond quickly if conditions arise that may threaten health and safety. In this case, the first concern of the principal should be to take all necessary steps to avoid further student and staff exposure to a potentially harmful substance. Evacuation of the school building until it can be inspected and declared safe is an appropriate response under these circumstances.

## Sample Directions for the Constructed-Response Assignments

This section of the test consists of two constructed-response assignments: an Instructional Leadership Assignment and an Educational Management Assignment. Your response to each assignment should be of sufficient length to cover the topic in depth (up to four pages). You should use your time to plan, write, review, and edit your responses to the assignments.

Read each assignment carefully before you begin to write. Think about how you will organize each of your responses. You may use any blank space provided following each assignment to make notes, write an outline, or otherwise prepare your response to that assignment. However, your final response to each assignment must be recorded in the appropriate answer document.

Your responses to the assignments will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- **PURPOSE:** the extent to which the response achieves the purpose of the assignment
- **CONTENT KNOWLEDGE:** accuracy and appropriateness in the application of content knowledge
- **SUPPORT:** quality and relevance of supporting details
- **RATIONALE:** soundness of argument in relation to the assigned topic

As a whole, your responses must demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge and skills of the field. In your responses to the assignments, you are expected to demonstrate the depth of your understanding of the content area through your ability to apply your knowledge and skills rather than merely to recite factual information.

The constructed-response assignments are intended to assess content knowledge and skills, not writing ability. However, your responses must be communicated clearly enough to permit valid judgment of the scoring criteria. Your responses should be written for an audience of educators in this field. The final versions of your responses should conform to the conventions of edited American English. Your written responses must 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. Please write legibly. You may not use any reference materials during the test. Remember to review what you have written and make any changes you think will improve your responses.

Write your response to the **Instructional Leadership Assignment** in **Written Response Booklet B**.

Write your response to the **Educational Management Assignment** in **Written Response Booklet C**.

## Practice Instructional Leadership Assignment

### Instructional Leadership Assignment

For this assignment, you will be asked to write on an instructional leadership topic relevant to the position of a school principal.

You are a school principal. One of the school's current goals is to provide effective assistance for students who are academically at risk.

Write a response of up to four pages for an audience of Oklahoma educators. In your response:

- identify and discuss three strategies or procedures for assisting students who are academically at risk;
- explain why each of the strategies or procedures you have identified is likely to be effective; and
- describe your role as principal in helping achieve the goal of providing effective assistance for students who are academically at risk.



**FOR YOUR REFERENCE ONLY**—*The Instructional Leadership constructed-response item is written to assess understanding in Subarea II, Instructional Leadership, which consists of the competencies listed below.*

*Understand how to use knowledge of human development, learning and teaching theories, educational research, and best practice to promote the success of all students.*

*Understand how to apply principles of curriculum planning, development, and evaluation to promote the success of all students.*

*Understand how to apply principles of instruction and instructional leadership to promote the success of all students.*

*Understand strategies for promoting professional growth and development and strategies for creating a positive school culture for learning.*

## A Very Good Response to the Practice Instructional Leadership Assignment

My school has recently completed a comprehensive school improvement plan that clearly delineates the areas we must focus on to improve student achievement and to ensure long-term success for all of our students. One of our current goals is to provide effective assistance for our students who are academically at risk. We have researched a number of existing programs for at-risk students in schools and communities whose demographics and student needs are similar to ours, so that we can select, combine, and revise various elements to suit our specific requirements. Typically, most programs include an academic component, a health and counseling component, a home/parent component, and often a community involvement component. Most also address extensive staff development for all faculty who have at-risk students in their classes.

Our program will focus on three major strategies:

1. We will use a multifaceted instructional approach, guided by assessment results and research on best-practice instructional methods. Such an approach is needed to address the individual educational needs and abilities of the extremely varied group of students whom we describe as academically at risk. Current research indicates that the most effective instructional methods for at-risk students are student-centered, inclusive of the voices and experiences of the students, and designed to accommodate their learning styles. These methods include small-group instruction, collaborative learning activities, and individual tutoring and mentoring. Instruction at all levels should involve an emphasis on higher-order thinking skills. Innovative, technology-based instruction should be an integral part of this instructional approach; it can help motivate these students and promote their active engagement in learning.
2. We will provide high-quality support services, including counseling and health services to all students who need them. Such services can play a significant role in addressing the needs of students who are academically at risk. Because a variety of factors, including physical and emotional difficulties, can contribute to weak academic performance, it is important to ensure that students have full access to support services, as appropriate, within the school building.
3. We will initiate and support a collaborative working relationship among school staff, parents/guardians, and community groups to address the needs and abilities of at-risk students. A collaborative approach helps foster commitment on the part of each of these constituencies to addressing the interrelated abilities, needs, and problems of each student who is academically at risk, including factors in the home and community as well as at school.

(continued)

## A Very Good Response to the Practice Instructional Leadership Assignment (continued)

My role as principal in helping achieve these goals will include the following:

1. Enlisting the support of our district administration, including staff time and other resources.
2. Identifying sources of funding, ranging from local to federal entitlement programs, and making sure that our program meets identified needs and closely follows funding requirements.
3. Assembling a team of stakeholders, including parents/guardians and community representatives who have a commitment to equal educational opportunities for all students, to help plan and implement the program and monitor its progress. I will lead team meetings. The team's initial charge will be to formulate the mission of the program and determine its basic focus. Critical decisions will have to be made by the team about elements to include in our comprehensive at-risk program. Broadly, these might include desired academic focus; admissions criteria, including appropriate and authentic assessments; supportive elements such as tutoring or mentoring programs and related counseling and health services; type and extent of parental involvement; and appropriate instructional strategies. Regarding instructional strategies, we will want to address, for example, how to assess and provide for individual learning styles, how to adapt typical instructional approaches, how to use hands-on manipulatives, and how to use cooperative learning techniques. We must also determine how to use technology to meet program and student needs, including identifying appropriate software and ensuring adequate student access to computers.
4. Arranging for appropriate staff development relating to the program. Staff development is likely to be needed in several areas, including awareness of learning styles, awareness of and respect for diverse cultures, ways to convey high academic expectations and engage students in higher-order thinking, and ways to make the best use of technology in instruction. Collaboration among members of the teaching staff and counselors is an essential part of ongoing staff development.
5. Communicating about the program on an ongoing basis with stakeholders, especially students' families and appropriate social service agencies. It is especially important to provide opportunities for families and community groups to participate in planning, developing, and implementing the program, as well as to keep them in touch with each other so that families can be made aware of support services and other resources that are available to them.

## Practice Educational Management Assignment

### Educational Management Assignment

For this assignment, you will be asked to write on an educational management topic relevant to the position of a school principal.

You are a school principal. You have appointed a team to develop a plan for creating and maintaining a safe environment for all students and school personnel.

Write a response of up to four pages for an audience of Oklahoma educators. In your response:

- identify and discuss key issues involved in creating and maintaining a safe environment for all students and school personnel;
- describe specific elements that the team should include in the plan for creating and maintaining a safe environment for all students and school personnel, and explain why these elements are important; and
- describe your role as principal in developing and implementing the plan.



**FOR YOUR REFERENCE ONLY**—*The Educational Management constructed-response item is written to assess understanding in Subarea III, Organizational, Operational, and Resource Management, which consists of the competencies listed below.*

*Understand principles of organizational management, budgeting, resource utilization, financial management, and technology use.*

*Understand principles of human resource planning and management.*

*Understand how to manage the school's physical plant and auxiliary services to ensure a safe and effective learning environment.*

## A Very Good Response to the Practice Educational Management Assignment

The team that I have appointed will serve as the Safe-School Committee. The plan developed by this committee should include recommendations regarding all aspects of school safety. Key issues include the following.

Maintaining a safe, orderly, healthy physical environment. The school building and grounds (including athletic fields) should be well-maintained and free of hazards that could cause accidents. The school site should be free of chemical contaminants and pollutants. Deferred maintenance should not pose a potential threat to the safety of students and staff. School leaders should make sure that children are safe on school buses and along bus routes.

Monitoring security to prevent theft and other crime. The school should have in place effective security procedures to protect school property, to prevent unauthorized persons from entering the building, and to detect the presence of weapons or other dangerous/illegal materials.

Preventing school violence and student victimization. The school's approach to discipline and conflict resolution should be effective in preventing bullying and other forms of student victimization or school violence. School counseling services and student leadership programs should provide effective support for all students. Parents/guardians should be actively engaged in working with school staff to prevent student victimization. The school also should have effective approaches to promoting students' cultural/social awareness and appreciation for diversity.

Ensuring that the school has an effective crisis management plan. The school should have procedures in place to regularly review/update the school's crisis management plan. All school staff should clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in the event of a crisis.

Promoting student wellness. The school's health curriculum should effectively educate students about issues relating to physical, mental, and emotional health, and school programs should help students learn to make healthy choices. Students should be well-informed about the dangers of substance abuse.

In addition to setting goals and monitoring progress in these areas, the school needs to have clear policies and procedures in place to maintain safety. Staff responsibilities should include supervisory duties to ensure that the school campus is properly managed and monitored at all times. Budgetary factors also should be considered, as measures to improve school safety may require supplemental funding.

I will encourage the Safe-School Committee to include a number of specific elements in the plan for creating and maintaining a safe environment for all students and school personnel.

(continued)

## A Very Good Response to the Practice Educational Management Assignment (continued)

A description of the ideal environment of a safe school. Envisioning an ideal school environment can help the committee consider the "big picture" and achieve consensus about the direction of changes that are needed to enhance school safety.

A comprehensive report on current conditions at the school, reporting on all aspects of school safety. This report should be based in part on the results of a schoolwide survey of all students, staff, and parents/guardians each fall, with a follow-up in the spring regarding school safety issues. The report should clearly identify current safety measures/procedures that are working effectively as well as measures/procedures that are lacking or need improvement.

A summary of guidelines and requirements relating to safe schools. In formulating its recommendations, the committee must make sure that current and planned measures to maintain and improve school safety comply with all relevant laws and regulations.

A review of the district's Crisis Response Manual. The committee needs to verify that the specified response steps in the district's Crisis Response Manual can be implemented effectively in our school.

A plan to publish a handbook of school-safety policies and guidelines. Creating, updating, and distributing a school-safety handbook is one effective way to help inform all members of the school community about issues relating to school safety.

My responsibilities as principal in helping develop and implement the school safety plan include the following:

- enlisting the assistance and support of district staff as appropriate;
- linking safety goals to the school vision;
- communicating the school-safety plan to all stakeholders and clearly explaining the rationale for revised/new safety procedures;
- arranging for staff to research best-practice safety programs at other schools with similar demographic profiles and student needs;
- helping promote a school climate that discourages bullying/abusive behavior; and
- implementing the recommendations and decisions of the team (e.g., ensuring consistent enforcement of disciplinary policies).

## CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT SCORING

All responses to OSAT constructed-response assignments (written and oral) are scored using scoring scales that describe varying levels of performance. These scales were approved by committees of Oklahoma educators who reviewed both the performance characteristics and the scoring scales.

Each response is scored by multiple scorers according to standardized procedures during scoring sessions held immediately after each administration of the CEOE. Scorers with relevant professional backgrounds are oriented to these procedures before the scoring session and are carefully monitored during the scoring sessions.

A constructed-response assignment response is designated unscorable if it is blank, not on the assigned topic, illegible or unintelligible, not in the appropriate language, or of insufficient length to score. If you do not provide a scorable response for each constructed-response assignment on your test, you cannot pass the test regardless of your scores on the other section(s) of the test.

### Sample Performance Characteristics for the Instructional Leadership and Educational Management Assignments

<b>Purpose</b>	the extent to which the response achieves the purpose of the assignment
<b>Content Knowledge</b>	accuracy and appropriateness in the application of content knowledge
<b>Support</b>	quality and relevance of supporting details
<b>Rationale</b>	soundness of argument in relation to the assigned topic

### Sample Scoring Scale for the Instructional Leadership and Educational Management Assignments

<b>SCORE</b>	<b>SCORE POINT DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>The "4" response reflects a thorough knowledge and understanding of the content.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is fully achieved.</li> <li>• There is a substantial, accurate, and appropriate application of content knowledge.</li> <li>• The supporting evidence is strong; there are high-quality, relevant examples.</li> <li>• The response reflects an ably reasoned argument in relation to the assigned topic.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>The "3" response reflects a general knowledge and understanding of the content.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is largely achieved.</li> <li>• There is a generally accurate and appropriate application of content knowledge.</li> <li>• The supporting evidence generally supports the discussion; there are some relevant examples.</li> <li>• The response reflects a reasoned argument in relation to the assigned topic.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>The "2" response reflects a partial knowledge and understanding of the content.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is partially achieved.</li> <li>• There is a limited, possibly inaccurate or inappropriate application of content knowledge.</li> <li>• The supporting evidence is limited; there are few relevant examples.</li> <li>• The response reflects a poorly reasoned argument in relation to the assigned topic.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>The "1" response reflects little or no knowledge and understanding of content.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is not achieved.</li> <li>• There is little or no appropriate or accurate application of content knowledge.</li> <li>• The supporting evidence, if present, is weak; there are few or no relevant examples.</li> <li>• The response reflects little or no reasoning in relation to the assigned topic.</li> </ul>
<b>U</b>	<b>The response is unscorable because it is illegible, not written to the assigned topic, written in a language other than English, or of insufficient length to score.</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>There is no response to the assignment.</b>

**CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS FOR OKLAHOMA EDUCATORS  
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