



NEW YORK STATE TEACHER CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS™

School Leadership Assessments

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER

Test Design

The School District Leader assessment consists of two tests. Each test contains a section with multiple-choice questions and a section with written assignments. The two sections assess the same content subareas. The subareas, the range of objectives within each subarea, and the approximate number and types of questions for each subarea are indicated in the tables below.

The multiple-choice section and written assignment section each count for 50% of the total test score, as indicated in the tables below. The multiple-choice section includes some questions that are treated as non-scorable and do not contribute to candidate scores. Each scorable multiple-choice question counts the same toward the total test score. The percentage of the total test score derived from each of the written assignments is also indicated in the tables below. Further information regarding the content included in each subarea can be found in the assessment framework.

Part One (Test Code 103)

Subarea	Range of Objectives	Multiple-Choice Section		Written Assignment Section	
		Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Test Score	Number of Assignments	Approximate Percentage of Test Score
Developing, Communicating, and Sustaining an Educational Vision	0001–0004	30	25%	1	17%
Supervising Districtwide Change and Accountability	0005–0008	30	25%	1	33%
TOTAL		60	50%	2	50%

Part Two (Test Code 104)

Subarea	Range of Objectives	Multiple-Choice Section		Written Assignment Section	
		Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Test Score	Number of Assignments	Approximate Percentage of Test Score
Leading the District Educational Program	0001–0005	37	31%	1	33%
Managing District Resources and Compliance	0006–0008	23	19%	1	17%
TOTAL		60	50%	2	50%



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER

Assessment Framework

Developing, Communicating, and Sustaining an Educational Vision
Supervising Districtwide Change and Accountability
Leading the District Educational Program
Managing District Resources and Compliance

The school district leader understands how to lead people in the development and implementation of shared goals for student learning and achievement. The district leader works with the board of education or other governing entity, building leaders, school and district staff, and key educational stakeholders to develop a vision for schooling within the district to ensure that the educational vision is embodied in each school. The district leader articulates the vision clearly to building leaders, staff, and a variety of other audiences in a shared commitment to making it a reality. The district leader communicates clearly and effectively, showing confidence and addressing hard questions effectively.

The district leader works purposefully with others, listening to them, motivating them, building trust, and communicating high standards and expectations for self, students, and staff. The district leader sustains a strong relationship with the board or other governing entity, school building leaders, the school district business leader, and key stakeholders. The district leader initiates and manages change aimed at improving student performance and engages in effective planning to support change initiatives consistent with the educational vision. The district leader is patient and persistent, taking a long and broad view and steadily building a school system and an educational program that will endure. The district leader stays the course, maintains focus on what is important, creates district and school capacity, and anticipates and overcomes resistance from inside and beyond the school system.

The district leader supports, develops, and nurtures building leaders and other staff, encouraging initiative, innovation, collaboration, responsible risk taking, and a strong work ethic. The district leader ensures compliance with applicable laws and regulations, sets a standard for ethical behavior, and provides opportunities for staff to grow personally and professionally. The district leader recognizes talent; assigns responsibility and authority wisely; and identifies, recruits, mentors, and promotes potential leaders.

The district leader accepts responsibility and accountability and expects the same of others in the district. The district leader uses data to assess the state of the district and each of its schools, identify problems, propose and support solutions, and verify accomplishments. The district leader maintains a focus on student learning and strives to provide students throughout the district with the support needed to achieve to their potential. The district leader uses effective operational management techniques, manages resources carefully, allocates them across schools equitably according to the district's educational vision and priorities, and requires schools and staff to establish and meet clear indicators of success.

The district leader never stops learning and improving. The district leader has the courage to take and to encourage others to take informed risks and the fortitude to win and to lend support even in the face of opposition.

Note: Throughout this assessment framework, the term *district* refers to a school district or comparable regional entity.



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART ONE (Test Code 103)

SUBAREA I—DEVELOPING, COMMUNICATING, AND SUSTAINING AN EDUCATIONAL VISION

0001 Understand leadership concepts and principles and their application.

For example:

- recognizing key theories of leadership, the research that supports them, and best-practice applications
- applying knowledge of leadership principles and concepts to design and execute districtwide systems to promote student achievement
- understanding the professional and political environment of district leadership in New York State (e.g., the role of the board of education or other governing entity, the structure of public schooling and governance, the functions of the Board of Cooperative Educational Services [BOCES], state and federal laws/regulations and judicial decisions affecting district management)
- demonstrating knowledge of the New York State Code of Ethics for Educators and the role of values and ethics in district leadership
- understanding the role of interpersonal skills and communication skills in successful district leadership



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART ONE (Test Code 103)

0002 Understand processes for developing and implementing a shared, sustainable educational vision for the district.

For example:

- demonstrating an understanding of procedures for engaging building leaders and other stakeholders in the development of an educational vision for the district and its schools
- identifying characteristics of a sound and sustainable educational vision focused on assisting students to meet state learning standards
- demonstrating an understanding of how to align the district-level educational vision with the policies and goals of the board of education or other governing entity and the instructional program
- demonstrating an understanding of how to align district-level and school-level educational visions and how to support the development of mutually supportive vision statements at each school
- relating the educational vision to the broader context of schooling (e.g., elements of the political, economic, social, and cultural systems of the community, the state, and the nation)
- understanding methods for promoting implementation and support of the educational vision among district constituencies and stakeholders, including various methods for securing the financial and human resources necessary to promote the educational vision
- analyzing the roles of individuals and groups within and beyond the district in promoting the educational vision
- demonstrating an understanding of how to use the educational vision as a benchmark for analyzing the needs and accomplishments of the district and its schools
- demonstrating knowledge of strategies for continually evaluating and refocusing the educational vision and for addressing obstacles to realizing the educational vision in specific content areas



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART ONE (Test Code 103)

0003 Understand principles and practices of clear and effective communication.

For example:

- applying knowledge of skills for engaging building leaders, board members, community members, parents/guardians, students, and school staff in an ongoing dialogue regarding core values, goals, policies, practices, and achievements
- understanding requirements and procedures for communicating regularly and effectively with board members or members of other governing entities
- understanding processes for communicating effectively with diverse audiences through multiple communication modes and for various occasions (e.g., individual and group meetings, activities, media releases, formal presentations)
- analyzing methods for articulating the district's educational vision in ways that will promote its implementation and generate support (e.g., relating it to student learning outcomes, core values, shared norms, and educational research)
- demonstrating knowledge of strategies for communicating assessment results to parents/guardians and other stakeholders
- demonstrating knowledge of how to communicate goals, expectations, and performance/assessment results clearly and accurately, addressing both advances and setbacks
- demonstrating an understanding of community relations and public relations in communicating about district needs, goals, and accomplishments
- demonstrating knowledge of the uses of technology to support effective communication
- demonstrating knowledge of how to use effective writing, speaking, and listening skills in interactions with stakeholders
- demonstrating knowledge of how to use effective communication in crises and other heightened emotional environments



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART ONE (Test Code 103)

0004 Understand processes of collaboration and cooperation.

For example:

- understanding strategies for working effectively and collaboratively with the board of education or other governing entity, building leaders, staff, parents/guardians, students, and community members to identify and implement goals, objectives, and methods for achieving the district's educational vision
- demonstrating an understanding of strategies for working with key groups within and outside the district that are essential to success (e.g., employees' organizations, businesses, legislators, the state education department, higher education, the media)
- understanding strategies for building effective ongoing partnerships with building leaders, community agencies and organizations, and institutions of higher education
- demonstrating an understanding of how to work effectively with diverse groups in the community; create an environment that encourages respect, trust, and appreciation for all people; and use the experiences and perspectives of those with diverse backgrounds to achieve the educational vision
- demonstrating an understanding of how to apply effective conflict-resolution and consensus-building techniques in varied contexts
- understanding strategies for planning with colleges to provide experiences for prospective educators that will enhance the learning of both the college's candidates and the district's students
- demonstrating an understanding of behaviors that affirm and communicate the importance of integrity and ethics in all interpersonal contact



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART ONE (Test Code 103)

SUBAREA II—SUPERVISING DISTRICTWIDE CHANGE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

0005 Understand the process of change and its management in the educational environment.

For example:

- identifying key concepts, principles, and applications of the change process (e.g., the role of the change agent, methods for building consensus, strategies for overcoming obstacles)
- demonstrating an understanding of processes for making the case for change (e.g., eliciting input, identifying needs, clarifying goals, focusing on outcomes)
- demonstrating an understanding of methods for supporting the change initiatives of schools and for empowering constituents to drive the improvement process
- demonstrating an understanding of strategies for initiating change affecting schools (e.g., working with building leaders and members of the board of education or other governing entity, anticipating resistance, establishing the context for change) and monitoring change and making needed adjustments to achieve goals
- understanding and analyzing community culture and power structures and developing strategies for overcoming resistance and enlisting support for change initiatives

0006 Understand comprehensive, long-range planning and implementation.

For example:

- demonstrating knowledge of principles and practices of data-driven, long-range planning aligned with the district's core values, goals, and mission
- demonstrating knowledge of factors to consider in comprehensive, long-range planning, including the importance of involving all key stakeholders in planning processes
- demonstrating knowledge of the role of the district leader in comprehensive, long-range planning
- demonstrating an understanding of techniques for initiating, leading, implementing, and sustaining comprehensive, long-range planning efforts at the school and district level, informed by multiple data sources and with the use of technology applications
- demonstrating an understanding of processes for succession planning, including identifying, recruiting, developing, mentoring, retaining, promoting, and coaching potential leaders to expand the capacity of the district and sustain its vision



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART ONE (Test Code 103)

0007 Understand data-driven decision-making and problem-solving skills and procedures.

For example:

- demonstrating knowledge of procedures for effective decision making and problem solving (e.g., clarifying issues, identifying goals, analyzing options)
- demonstrating an understanding of procedures for gathering, analyzing, and using data from a variety of sources for decision making and problem solving
- demonstrating an understanding of risk taking and its appropriate use, procedures for assessing risks continuously and adjusting course quickly to meet identified goals, and strategies for deciding to take a principled risk even without unanimous support
- applying principles of critical thinking to decision making and problem solving (e.g., using logic and evidence, recognizing and questioning assumptions, evaluating preconceptions, distinguishing beliefs from provable statements)
- applying knowledge of procedures for promoting collaborative decision making and problem solving (e.g., valuing diverse views, applying negotiation skills) to facilitate accomplishment of goals
- understanding strategies for developing consensus and facilitating creative problem solving

0008 Understand how to promote accountability.

For example:

- demonstrating an understanding of the importance and implications of accountability
- identifying methods for assessing educational quality and progress and enforcing educational accountability
- demonstrating knowledge of the role of testing in educational accountability and the use of testing data to evaluate instructional effectiveness and promote continuous educational improvement
- analyzing procedures for establishing school and district monitoring and accountability systems with respect to educational goals and objectives
- demonstrating an understanding of strategies for establishing a culture of accountability
- demonstrating an understanding of procedures for reporting district progress toward meeting learning goals and accepting responsibility for outcomes



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART TWO (Test Code 104)

SUBAREA I—LEADING THE DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

0001 Understand and support learning throughout the district.

For example:

- analyzing concepts, principles, and best-practice applications of developmental and learning theories, curriculum development, instructional delivery, and classroom organization and practices with regard to the diverse needs of all students (e.g., special education students, English language learners, gifted and talented students)
- understanding procedures for planning and implementing sound assessment practices to support schools and their staff
- understanding the implications of student differences (e.g., cultural background, home language, disabilities, family characteristics, learning style) for learning and instruction
- demonstrating knowledge of practices that support a district culture of learning and growth and sustain a culture of equity and diversity
- demonstrating knowledge of instructional technology and procedures for working with building leaders, teachers, and other professional staff to integrate technology into instruction and assessment
- understanding methods for providing schools with resources, flexibility, organizational structures, and policies that support achievement of educational goals

0002 Understand procedures for establishing and promoting standards and expectations.

For example:

- recognizing methods for communicating high standards and expectations for oneself, staff, and students
- demonstrating knowledge of the role of explicit standards and expectations for students, teachers, and school leaders in promoting achievement of shared goals and fulfilling the educational vision
- demonstrating an understanding of strategies for encouraging, at the district and school levels, a culture that promotes excellence and supports informed, responsible risk taking to achieve goals
- understanding methods for clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of district and school staff
- understanding methods for embodying and promoting ethical conduct, high expectations, and a strong work ethic



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART TWO (Test Code 104)

0003 Understand effective methods for providing support to students.

For example:

- demonstrating an understanding of methods for identifying, securing, and leveraging internal and external resources to support student learning and activities
- understanding methods for allocating resources to district schools in an equitable way that supports goals and addresses diverse student needs
- demonstrating an understanding of procedures and practices for providing a safe, secure, healthy, and supportive learning environment that is age appropriate and developmentally sound
- understanding methods for gathering information about student needs through background research, incisive questioning, and perceptive analysis
- recognizing procedures for using resources to provide support services for students, including students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, and at-risk student populations
- recognizing procedures for building mutually beneficial collaborative relationships with social service and health service providers and others to meet the needs of students
- demonstrating an understanding of the warning signs of violence and other troubling behaviors, strategies for preventing school violence, techniques for intervening in situations involving school violence, and procedures for consulting with police and emergency services



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART TWO (Test Code 104)

0004 Understand effective methods for providing support to building leaders, teachers, and other staff.

For example:

- demonstrating an understanding of strategies for encouraging leadership, creativity, innovation, initiative, action research, informed and responsible risk taking, stress management, collaboration, interdependence, trust, mutual respect, and a strong work ethic
- demonstrating knowledge of methods for creating effective induction and retention plans for staff
- demonstrating knowledge of procedures for diagnosing staff needs and implementing strategies to address needs and provide ongoing support
- demonstrating knowledge of a variety of supervisory models (e.g., developmental, clinical, coaching) used to monitor and improve performance
- analyzing strategies for developing staff capability through supervision and evaluation of teachers and building leaders, effective staff assignments, and systems of mentoring, support, and development
- demonstrating an understanding of procedures for delegating authority appropriately without abrogating responsibility
- demonstrating knowledge of strategies for providing effective professional support and development to school staff that focuses on authentic problems and student outcomes



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART TWO (Test Code 104)

0005 Understand effective strategies for fostering ongoing staff development and sustaining personal professional growth.

For example:

- demonstrating an understanding of strategies for integrating opportunities for continuous learning into the educational environment (e.g., collaborating with staff, identifying needs, setting goals, implementing professional development plans) and for engaging staff in ongoing informal and formal self-assessment and evaluation
- understanding the use of effective and equitable personnel processes—including recruiting, selecting, inducting, assigning, terminating, advancing, and awarding tenure—in order to retain a highly qualified and diverse staff who will further the district's educational vision
- demonstrating knowledge of the uses of technology and other resources to support learning and professional development throughout the organization
- applying knowledge of adult learning principles and motivation theory to ensure appropriate and effective professional development opportunities
- recognizing the need to allocate adequate time, funding, and other resources to ensure the effective implementation of professional development plans
- identifying techniques for developing and maintaining a personal plan for self-improvement and continuous learning and for using listening and reflection to foster ongoing learning
- demonstrating knowledge of various types of resources and activities for promoting one's own professional development and stress management
- demonstrating an understanding of effective time management procedures and strategies, including the use of technology to enhance efficiency



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART TWO (Test Code 104)

SUBAREA II—MANAGING DISTRICT RESOURCES AND COMPLIANCE

0006 Understand district-level operational management.

For example:

- recognizing major theories and research from education and other disciplines relating to the management and development of organizations and people
- applying knowledge of group dynamics, team building, process skills, systems theory, and formal and informal power structures and relationships in various contexts
- demonstrating an understanding of processes for the supervision and direction of school-level management and other staff within the district
- demonstrating knowledge of processes of collective bargaining and contract management that support and extend the educational vision
- analyzing the use of data and technology to monitor and evaluate school and district management and to identify and address potential issues
- applying procedures for assessing effectiveness in meeting goals and reaching out to the broader community
- demonstrating an understanding of processes for aligning resources and making resource decisions based on the identified mission, goals, and priorities



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART TWO (Test Code 104)

0007 Understand district financial and facilities management.

For example:

- demonstrating knowledge of political, economic, and social factors that can affect a district's financial planning
- understanding procedures for effective budget planning and management and for working with stakeholders to establish a district budget
- understanding procedures for managing district finances and facilities to support achievement of educational goals and objectives
- demonstrating knowledge of procedures for building district capacity by securing and creatively allocating resources to fulfill the district's vision and by planning for and obtaining additional resources as needed
- applying knowledge of public school financing at the federal, state, and local levels, including tax revenues and other sources of funding, and restrictions on uses of funding
- demonstrating knowledge of procedures for communicating regularly and effectively with the board of education or other governing entity, and reporting financial information to a variety of audiences
- demonstrating knowledge of procedures for emergency management and crisis response
- understanding strategies for enabling the district's physical plant, equipment, and support systems to operate safely, efficiently, and effectively



SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADER, PART TWO (Test Code 104)

0008 Understand how to supervise compliance with federal, state, and local mandates.

For example:

- understanding laws and regulations governing district and building management, human resource management, student rights and responsibilities, parent/guardian rights and responsibilities, and other matters
- demonstrating knowledge of education case law and its relevance to district and building management
- demonstrating an understanding of techniques for communicating effectively with local, state, and federal representatives
- demonstrating knowledge of procedures for applying statutes and regulations as required by law, techniques for developing and implementing policies in accordance with the law, and strategies for limiting a district's vulnerability to legal action
- demonstrating an understanding of federal, state, and local reporting requirements
- demonstrating an understanding of student safety and welfare requirements, including New York State requirements related to the identification and reporting of suspected child abuse and maltreatment