

NEW YORK STATE TEACHER CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS™

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENTS



PREPARATION GUIDE

School District Business Leader (105/106)



NEW YORK STATE TEACHER CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS™

School Leadership Assessments

SCHOOL DISTRICT BUSINESS LEADER

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Preparing for the Test

The purpose of the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations™ (NYSTCE®) School Leadership Assessments is to help ensure that certified school- and district-level leaders have the essential knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective educational leadership in New York State public schools. These assessments have been developed by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), New York State educational leaders, and the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson in response to new regulations that became effective in 2006 for preparing, testing, and certifying educational leaders in New York State. The assessments are based on the principles of Essential Knowledge and Skills for Effective School Leadership developed by the New York State Board of Regents' Blue Ribbon Panel on School Leadership.

This preparation guide provides information to help you prepare to take the NYSTCE School Leadership Assessments as follows:

- This section includes information about available resources and their use in understanding the design and content of the assessment, and strategies for success on the day of the test.
- The following sections contain sample test questions and additional test materials to assist you in your preparation.

UNDERSTANDING THE DESIGN AND CONTENT OF THE TEST

The content knowledge assessed by the NYSTCE School Leadership Assessments is described in the test design and assessment framework for each assessment. You may view, print, or download the test design and assessment framework for any of the School Leadership Assessments by selecting "School Leadership Assessments" on the NYSTCE Web site at www.nystce.nesinc.com. This section describes how to use the test design and assessment framework to understand both the design and content of the School Leadership Assessments.

■ Test Design

Read the test design to familiarize yourself with the structure of the **assessment**. The test design outlines the following assessment components:

- the **content areas covered on each test** within the assessment
- the **approximate number of questions** for each content area
- the **types of questions** (multiple-choice questions and written assignments) contained on each test
- the **percentage of your total test score** derived from each content area and question type

Preparing for the Test

The following example illustrates the information provided by the test design.

Types of questions

Test

Part One (Test Code xxx)

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
Subarea I Title	0001-0004	30	25%	1	17%
Subarea II Title	0005-0008	30	25%	1	33%
TOTAL		60	50%	2	50%

Content areas covered on each test

Approximate number of questions

Percentage of test score derived from content area and question type

Test

Part Two (Test Code xxx)

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
Subarea I Title	0001-0005	37	31%	1	33%
Subarea II Title	0006-0008	23	19%	1	17%
TOTAL		60	50%	2	50%

■ Assessment Framework

Read the assessment framework to understand the content covered by the assessment and to determine your preparedness to test. The framework for each **assessment** is divided into two parts, each of which is measured by its own test. Each test is organized into subareas, objectives, and focus statements as follows:

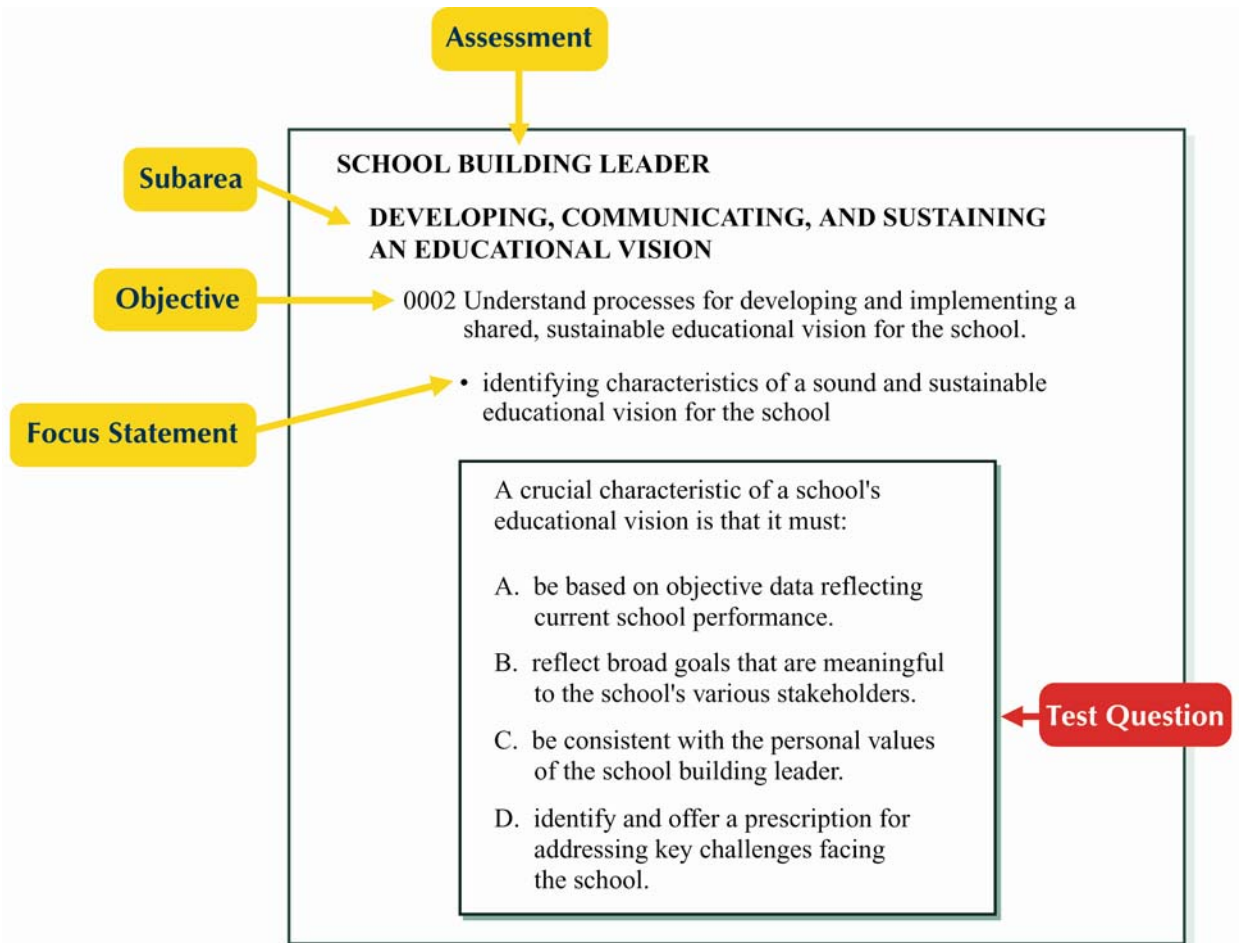
- **Subareas** define the major content domains of the assessment. Each test contains two subareas. Subareas typically consist of several objectives. The number of objectives may vary, depending on the breadth of content contained in the subarea.
- **Objectives** define the knowledge and skills that New York State educational leaders have determined to be important for educational leaders to possess. Each objective is expanded upon by focus statements.
- **Focus statements** provide examples of the range, type, and level of content that may appear on the test for questions measuring the objective.

Test questions are designed to measure specific content within each test. Each written assignment measures the content defined by a specific subarea of the test.

Each multiple-choice question measures the content defined by a specific subarea of the test. The number of objectives within a subarea generally determines the number of multiple-choice test questions that will address that subarea's content on the test. Subareas that consist of more objectives will receive more emphasis on the test than subareas that consist of fewer objectives.

Preparing for the Test

The following example from the School Building Leader assessment framework illustrates the relationship of a multiple-choice test question to the test, subarea, objective, and focus statement in the framework to which it corresponds. This same direct relationship between multiple-choice test questions and their corresponding objectives applies to all NYSTCE assessments.



STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS ON THE DAY OF THE TEST

Review the following strategies to help you do your best when taking the NYSTCE School Leadership Assessments.

- Follow directions** Follow all directions. This includes directions given to you by test center staff and all written directions.
- Take the tutorial** Before beginning the test, you will be given an on-screen tutorial that will show you how to navigate through the test, how to indicate your answers, and how to use the features of the computer-based test. To prepare for the computer-based testing experience, you can also take a tutorial ahead of time at www.pearsonvue.com/nystce. You can also access this tutorial from the NYSTCE Web site at www.nystce.nesinc.com.
- Pace your work** The test schedule is designed to allow sufficient time for you to complete your test. To assist you in pacing your work, a clock icon is visible in the upper right-hand corner of the test screens. This clock indicates the test time that remains. At any time, you may check which questions you have answered and how many remain, to help you determine whether you are progressing through the test at an appropriate speed. Remember to leave enough time to respond to the written assignments.
- Read carefully** Do not try to save time by skimming directions or by reading the test questions quickly. You may miss important information and instructions.
- Determine the "best answer"** Your response to each multiple-choice question should be the best answer of the alternatives provided. Read and evaluate all four answer choices before deciding which one is best.
- Guess wisely** Your results on the multiple-choice section of the test will be based on the number of questions you answer correctly. You will not be penalized for guessing. If you are unsure about a question, use your knowledge of the content area to eliminate as many of the alternatives as you can. Then select among the remaining choices.
- Respond to the written assignments fully and clearly** Be sure to read and respond to each part of the written assignments. Note the word count range suggested in the test directions for the length of your responses. A word count feature is provided for the written assignments so that you can see the length of your response as you write it.
- Check your answers** If you have time remaining at the end of the test session, use that time to check your answers. Also, reread your responses to the written assignments and make any changes that you think will improve your responses.

Part One Sample Questions and Written Assignments

This section is designed to assist you in responding to the multiple-choice questions and written assignments on Part One of the assessment.

Included in this section are:

- Sample multiple-choice questions
- Annotated answer key for the sample multiple-choice questions
- Sample directions for the written assignments
- Sample written assignments
- An example of a strong response to each sample assignment
- An evaluation of the strong response to each sample assignment
- Scoring criteria that will be used in evaluating your response to each assignment

The sample multiple-choice questions are designed to illustrate the nature of the test questions. Work through the questions carefully before referring to the annotated answer key, which follows the sample multiple-choice questions. The answer key provides the correct response to each question, describes why each correct response is the best answer, and lists the objective within the assessment framework to which each question is linked.

For each sample assignment, you may want to take the following steps to prepare for the test:

- Review the directions for the written assignments.
- Read the assignment.
- Prepare your response to the assignment. It is suggested that you type your response to the assignment without using editorial tools, such as spell check and grammar check, in order to simulate the actual testing experience. These tools will not be available to you during the test session.
- After you complete the assignment, review the sample strong response, your response, the scoring criteria, and the evaluation of the sample strong response.

QUESTIONS

1. When promoting from within to fill a leadership position in a school district, the school district business leader should give strongest consideration to individuals who have:
 - A. shown the ability to communicate effectively with others.
 - B. been employed for an extended period of time by the school district.
 - C. exhibited a high level of personal ambition in their careers.
 - D. demonstrated assertiveness in their personal interactions with others.
2. One of the goals in a school district's new vision calls for integrating computer technology into all content-area instruction. The school district business leader is most likely to be responsible for preparing which of the following pieces of information that is related to achieving this goal?
 - A. a list of the short- and long-term benchmarks that should be met to implement the goal successfully
 - B. a summary of the reasons why this particular goal is important and educationally relevant for the district's students
 - C. a list of the resources needed to implement the goal and their possible sources
 - D. a summary of the strategies that should be used to engage stakeholders in the process of implementing the goal

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

Voters in a school district are engaged in a spirited debate about the upcoming vote on passing the district's budget. The superintendent has organized a number of public forums to discuss issues relating to the vote. At one forum, the school district business leader is to give a presentation about district finances and then answer questions from the audience. The audience will include both citizens who support passage of the budget and citizens who oppose the measure.

3. During the presentation it would be most important for the business leader to:
 - A. refrain from presenting material from budgets of previous administrations.
 - B. minimize the use of charts or graphs to present financial data.
 - C. refrain from discussing actual figures for anticipated revenues or expenditures.
 - D. minimize the use of acronyms or technical language.
4. The district contains a large Spanish-speaking community, many of whose members do not speak fluent English. Members of this community have been actively involved in the debate about the upcoming vote and the business leader expects that many will attend the forum. Which of the following is the most appropriate way for the business leader to ensure that these individuals can fully participate in the forum?
 - A. Meet with leaders of the Spanish-speaking community before the forum to assure them that all constituents will be welcome to speak during the event.
 - B. Provide a Spanish-language translator at district expense to translate the forum proceedings for members of the Spanish-speaking community.
 - C. Ask a member of the Spanish-speaking community who is fluent in English to summarize the proceedings for other members of his or her community.
 - D. Take time periodically during the forum to ask specifically for comments from members of the Spanish-speaking community.

Part One Sample Questions and Written Assignments

5. It would be most important for a school district business leader to implement changes in business office procedures slowly and gradually when the changes in procedures are likely to:
- A. cause minimal disruption in the functioning of the office.
 - B. require capital expenditures to implement.
 - C. cause considerable anxiety among staff.
 - D. require staff to take part in decision making during the change.
6. Compared with implementation of tactical plans, implementation of strategic plans is likely to:
- A. require less input of district financial resources.
 - B. involve greater transformation of the district's long-term goals.
 - C. require less stakeholder input into decision making.
 - D. be more affected by local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

ANNOTATED ANSWER KEY

For question	The correct response is	Reason	Test Objective
1	A	Effective leaders in the educational environment are individuals who can motivate, inspire, and persuade others to act as a team to help achieve school goals. School leaders must be skilled communicators who can work effectively with disparate constituencies to forge compromises, help reach consensus, and mediate disputes. Therefore, when considering applicants from within the system to fill a leadership position, the school district business leader should place the highest priority on the quality of the communication skills a given individual would bring to the job.	0001
2	C	Although a school district business leader may perform a variety of tasks, his or her responsibilities relate primarily to school or district finances. Thus, business leaders are much more likely to determine the costs to the district of implementing a new program than to assess the program's educational relevance, publicize the program to stakeholders, or develop criteria for evaluating the program's success.	0002
3	D	School district business leaders may be asked to give presentations about school finances to a variety of audiences. To be effective, such presentations must be developed with an eye to the specific audience to be addressed. For example, in the situation described, the presentation is being given to an audience of district citizens, most of whom will not be familiar with specialized terminology related to budgets and financing. For such an audience, it would be important to minimize the use of acronyms (e.g., PILOT for payments in lieu of taxes) and technical language.	0003
4	B	When a vote on the budget of a school district is scheduled, all registered voters in the district have the right and responsibility to vote on the issue. If the district presents supplemental information to the voters through public forums, it has a responsibility to make the information equally available to all potential voters. In the situation described, the best way to ensure that Spanish-speaking members of the community will have equal access to the information is to provide a Spanish-language translator at district expense.	0004

Part One Sample Questions and Written Assignments

5	C	The timing and pace of change in a business office can play a significant role in how easily change is accepted by staff members. The replacement of familiar procedures with new and unfamiliar practices may require changes in roles and responsibilities and will almost certainly cause some anxiety on the part of employees. Rapid, large-scale changes are especially likely to produce stress as staff members struggle to cope with a steep learning curve. Conversely, anxiety can be reduced by implementing changes gradually and ensuring that employees have time to adjust to each change before proceeding to implement further changes.	0005
6	B	Tactical plans involve taking action to achieve short-term objectives or to respond to a particular event or circumstance. In the context of education, tactical plans may be required, for example, to deal with an unexpected increase in the price of heating oil or the loss of an anticipated grant. In contrast, strategic plans focus on achieving long-term objectives and almost always require some adjustment of the system as a whole. For example, one element of a district's strategic plan might focus on improving science instruction over the next five years by shifting a greater proportion of district resources into hiring more science teachers and constructing new science labs.	0006

DIRECTIONS FOR THE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

A sample of the directions for the written assignments is shown in the box below.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

This section of the test consists of two written assignments. Assignment One is a Work Product assignment and Assignment Two is a Case Study assignment. You are to prepare a written response of about 150–300 words to Assignment One and a written response of about 300–600 words to Assignment Two. Approximately 50% of your total test score is derived from the written assignments—approximately 17% from Assignment One, and approximately 33% from Assignment Two. You may complete the assignments in either order, and you may return to either assignment as time permits.

Read each assignment carefully before you type. Each written assignment appears on the screen with an answer box immediately below the assignment. Type your response in this answer box. For some written assignments, you may need to use the scroll bar to view the entire assignment. As with the multiple-choice questions, you may select written assignments for review later during the testing time.

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

- **PURPOSE:** Fulfill the charge of the assignment.
- **APPLICATION OF CONTENT:** Accurately and effectively apply the relevant knowledge and skills.
- **SUPPORT:** Support the response with appropriate examples and/or sound reasoning reflecting an understanding of the relevant 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. In order to maintain your anonymity during the scoring process, do not type your name in any portion of the answer box. Remember to review what you have written and make any changes that you think will improve your responses.

SAMPLE WORK PRODUCT ASSIGNMENT

Subarea: Supporting the District Educational Vision

Assignment One: Work Product

Use the information below to complete the task that follows.

You are the business leader of a school district in which district stakeholders have recently collaborated in the development of a new district vision. One important goal associated with the new vision is to meet the diverse educational needs of individual learners, particularly in the early grades. One proposed strategy for achieving this goal is to reduce class sizes in the district's elementary schools. The rationale is that smaller classes, along with differentiated instruction, will help teachers address the needs of individual students.

All of the elementary school buildings in the district are in reasonably good condition, and the student population is distributed relatively evenly throughout the district. Districtwide the average class size is 20 students for grades K–3 and 24 students for grades 4–5. The district governing body is considering a proposal by the district's Shared-Decision-Making Committee to limit class size for grades K–3 to 16 students and to limit class size for grades 4–5 to 20 students. These limits would apply to all elementary schools in the district and would require increasing the number of classes and adding instructional staff.

The superintendent asks you to provide some preliminary information about the possible effects on district finances of the proposed reductions in elementary class sizes.

Task

Write a memorandum of about 150–300 words that effectively communicates to the superintendent the financial implications of the proposed reductions in elementary class sizes. This memorandum may be shared with other district stakeholders. State any assumptions you are making. In your memo:

- explain how implementing the proposal to reduce elementary class sizes is likely to affect the district's long- and short-term financial planning and why; and
- describe the types of data that would be useful in quantifying costs associated with the proposal to reduce elementary class sizes, and explain how those data would be useful.

■ **Strong Response to the Sample Work Product Assignment**

(Assumptions: 1. Configuration of elementary schools will remain K–5. 2. Student enrollment at each school and in the district overall is predicted to remain relatively stable.)

Re: Financial implications of proposed reductions in elementary class sizes

Implementing this proposal to reduce class sizes will require expanding classroom space and hiring more faculty and staff.

New classroom space could be created by renovating some buildings (e.g., partitioning one classroom into two), constructing new classroom wings, or leasing portable classrooms. Costs to the district may be significant for each of these options. Start-up costs for each option (e.g., planning, obtaining permits, preparing bids) may have an additional impact on district finances in the short term. Renovation or new construction would likely require passing a bond issue, which would increase long-term debt, while leasing portable classrooms would require absorbing yearly leasing costs into future budgets.

The district will need to hire additional faculty, and possibly additional aides, specialists, and custodians, to accommodate a larger number of smaller classes. Additional staff will increase district expenditures on salaries and benefits. These costs are likely to increase over time as newly hired staff accumulate service time.

Comparing each school's current capacity with its current enrollment will enable planners to estimate how much increased capacity will be necessary to reduce class size to the target level. The projected costs of renovation, new construction, and leasing can then be compared by collecting pertinent data (e.g., costs of demolition, disposal, possible asbestos abatement, debt service, architects' fees, materials, labor, leasing portable classrooms). State construction aid should also be estimated for both the renovation and new construction options.

The first step in evaluating staffing needs should be to compare current teacher/aide/student ratios with the proposed ratio by grade level and school. It is necessary to know the current size of the custodial staff in each school to project custodial needs under various scenarios. Collecting information on salary and benefit levels for a variety of step levels for new staff will help project staffing costs to the district.

Part One Sample Questions and Written Assignments

■ Evaluation of the Strong Response to the Sample Work Product Assignment

This response is considered a strong response because it reflects a thorough command of the relevant knowledge and skills.

PURPOSE: Fulfill the charge of the assignment.

The response completely fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding fully to the given task.

The response states two assumptions made by the writer (i.e., configuration of elementary schools will remain K-5 and student enrollment at each school and in the district overall will remain relatively stable). The response explains how implementing this proposal will affect district finances in the short term (e.g., start-up costs) and in the long term (e.g., increased long-term debt, increased district expenditures on salaries and benefits) and explains why these effects will occur (i.e., need for more classroom space and need for more staff). The response describes types of data needed to quantify these costs and explains how those data would be useful (e.g., current teacher/aide/student ratios and number of custodial staff will help determine how many additional staff will be needed, estimated renovation/construction costs can be compared to cost of leasing portable classrooms).

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

The response demonstrates an accurate and highly effective application of the relevant knowledge and skills.

The response demonstrates a highly effective application of the knowledge of how to support and sustain the district educational vision by accurately aligning financial considerations with the vision (e.g., smaller classes will require more staff and more space, costs of new staff are likely to increase over time as newly hired staff accumulate service time). The response demonstrates an understanding of methods for providing accurate financial information that can be shared with stakeholders in order to promote effective decision making (e.g., "Collecting information on salary and benefit levels for a variety of step levels for new staff will help project staffing costs to the district").

SUPPORT: Support the response with appropriate examples and/or sound reasoning reflecting an understanding of the relevant knowledge and skills.

The response provides strong support with high-quality, relevant examples and/or sound reasoning.

The response supports key ideas with relevant examples. For example, the idea of the need for renovation or new construction is supported with a concise description of the possibilities (e.g., partitioning one classroom into two, constructing new classroom wings). Sound reasoning supports the response throughout (e.g., reductions in class size will necessitate more staff and more space; more space may necessitate renovation, which requires demolition and disposal; renovation costs can be compared to cost of leasing).

SAMPLE CASE STUDY ASSIGNMENT

Subarea: Supporting Change and Sustainability in the District

Assignment Two: Case Study

Read the case study that follows; then write a response. The case study provides information about all relevant activities that occurred in the situation described. Citing specific evidence from the information provided, write a response of about 300–600 words in which you:

- describe what the school district business leader did well in this situation;
- describe what the school district business leader did poorly or failed to do in this situation; and
- identify and discuss three important actions that the school district business leader should take to correct things that he did poorly or failed to do, and explain why each of these actions is likely to be effective.

Case Study

For 19 years the Atwater School District was led by the same superintendent who handled all district budgeting, financial management, district and state reporting, and grant development. Three veteran bookkeepers and an administrative assistant provided the superintendent with central office support. This superintendent has recently retired, and the new superintendent, Dr. Marisa Henderson, has recommended that the district hire a school district business leader, Mr. John Powell, to oversee the operational and financial affairs of the district. In an April meeting with Mr. Powell, Dr. Henderson asks him to explore ways to modernize the district business office. "We need to have these changes well under way before the start of the next school year," the superintendent explains. "The district has already committed \$30,000 for the first year of the upgrade."

Mr. Powell first conducts a thorough study of the current operation of the business office. He interviews all members of the office about their current responsibilities and finds that each staff member has an assigned area of expertise. One bookkeeper is responsible for payroll and personnel, while the others handle accounts payable and accounts receivable. The administrative assistant handles most word processing and other secretarial duties and serves as a receptionist for visitors to the office. Mr. Powell observes that, although staff seem to take pride in their work, they show little awareness of the duties of other staff and how the business office operates as a whole. To remedy this, Mr. Powell organizes several mandatory in-services focusing on the role of the school business office in school district administration, and the goals and objectives of district business management. He also asks each staff member to train other staff members in his or her area of expertise.

Mr. Powell notes that the computers in the business office are not networked and run different programs. This incompatibility often leads to duplication of effort and records, as each employee enters and maintains his or her own data. In addition, computer hardware and peripheral equipment are several years old and the various software programs that the office uses are not the most recent versions. Accordingly, Mr. Powell decides to

Part One Sample Questions and Written Assignments

investigate replacing the hardware and many of the peripherals with faster and more versatile equipment, and standardizing the programs by purchasing the most recent version of business office software packages that is available. He also decides to network the business office computers, which will allow office workers to share data, reduce duplication of effort, and increase efficiency.

Mr. Powell meets with business office staff at the end of the school year in June to announce the coming changes and request feedback. During the meeting, Mr. Powell emphasizes the advantages of using newer equipment and software and networking the office's computers. Several staff members express reservations about the plan and their ability to smoothly transition from the old to the new system. Mr. Powell reassures them that the new system will be easy to use and that the vendor will provide technical support and assistance to any staff member who requests it.

During the summer, Mr. Powell consults with school business leaders of neighboring districts about the systems that they use in their business offices. Mr. Powell is particularly enthusiastic about the system used by the business leader of the Coulter School District, a district that borders Atwater. He contacts the vendors that provided Coulter's system and asks them to supply further information about their products and estimates for adapting the system used in Coulter to Atwater's needs. After meeting several times with the vendors, Mr. Powell assures them that he will approve contracts with them for upgrading and networking all systems in the Atwater business office. He calculates that the total cost of the changes will be \$147,000, and in early August he writes a memo to the superintendent asking her to place an item on the agenda for the September 1 meeting of the Atwater district governing body asking for approval to transfer this amount from available funds.

Mr. Powell then meets with the members of the business office staff to inform them that a new system has been selected and will be fully operational by the end of October. Mr. Powell gives them manuals and other training material provided by the vendors and suggests that they use the time before the system is installed to familiarize themselves with all aspects of system requirements and operations. Two members of the staff express considerable reservations about their ability to cope with the changes in such a short time and request that the new system be phased in gradually over the course of the school year. Mr. Powell offers them encouragement and expresses confidence in their ability to learn the new system, but says that he wants all the changes to be made as soon as possible.

Dr. Henderson, who had been on vacation, returns to Atwater in mid-August and calls Mr. Powell to request that they meet as soon as possible. She asks Mr. Powell to prepare a progress report of his plans to modernize the business office and e-mail it to her before the meeting, and Mr. Powell agrees to do so. In his report, Mr. Powell emphasizes the inefficient and disorganized nature of the district business office as it now operates and contrasts it with the well-run Coulter business office. He summarizes the features of the proposed new system and emphasizes the quality of the products and the vendors' reputation for service. He estimates that the system can be fully operational by the end of October and states that he sees no major problem with the ability of the business office staff to adjust to the changes.

■ Strong Response to the Sample Case Study Assignment

Mr. Powell did several things well in his effort to modernize the district business office. Conducting a thorough study of the office's current operations and interviewing staff members about their current responsibilities was an effective way to begin. He diagnosed weaknesses of the current system (e.g., compartmentalization, lack of a computer network, inefficiency) and suggested effective solutions (e.g., upgrading equipment and software, networking the office). He recognized the importance of involving stakeholders by requesting feedback, offering encouragement, and discussing goals and objectives with staff. He also conducted research by consulting with other district business leaders and meeting with vendors to discuss adapting the Coulter system to Atwater.

On the other hand, Mr. Powell did a number of things poorly. Most notably, he exceeded his authority by informing contractors that he would approve contracts with them without mentioning anything about a bid process and by developing a proposal that far exceeded the budget. Mr. Powell showed poor judgment by minimizing staff concerns to the superintendent and by failing to take seriously staff concerns about adapting to the new system. He exhibited weak management skills by failing to follow through on staff feedback, failing to plan for adequate staff support and training, and planning insufficient time to implement changes. In addition, Mr. Powell's emphasis on the inefficient and disorganized nature of the business office would likely cause further resentment on the part of staff. Finally, Mr. Powell failed to recognize his responsibility to consult regularly with the superintendent. His failure to communicate with Dr. Henderson, coupled with his request for quick approval of his proposed expenditure, could lead to a confrontation with the superintendent that could make it difficult to establish a good working relationship in the future.

Mr. Powell should begin to rectify his mistakes by taking steps to involve the superintendent in the process. Mr. Powell must recognize that he is an advisor to the superintendent and the governing body and does not have the power to implement costly changes without their approval. Specifically, he should immediately withdraw his request that the governing body quickly consider his proposal to spend \$147,000 on modernizing the business office. He should then work with the superintendent to develop a clear, written plan for modernizing the business office that includes identification of steps in the process and a timeline for implementing changes. This would provide a realistic outline of how modernization efforts should proceed that is supported by the superintendent and should also help Mr. Powell develop a good working relationship with the superintendent.

Second, Mr. Powell should immediately contact the vendors he talked with previously and remind them that all contracts must go through the bidding process and be approved by the district governing body. He should then develop clear, explicit criteria for choosing equipment, software, and a service provider. Rather than simply using Coulter's system as a model, he should analyze what makes it effective, and use that analysis to help design a system that meets Atwater's needs. He should then provide a number of specific options for purchases, including a discussion of the costs and benefits for each option, and make recommendations based on how well each option fits Atwater's needs. This will give Dr. Henderson and the governing body the information they need to make decisions about purchasing and allocating funds.

Third, Mr. Powell should take steps to repair his relationship with his staff and bring them fully into the process. He should meet with staff again to hear their concerns about the changes and should follow up with focused staff training, including cross-training. He should take steps to minimize stress that the staff might experience during the transition. Above all, he should communicate with staff regularly to keep them informed, hear their concerns, and receive their suggestions. Involving staff in the change process will improve morale, give staff a sense of ownership of the changes, and reduce anxiety.

Part One Sample Questions and Written Assignments

■ Evaluation of the Strong Response to the Sample Case Study Assignment

This response is considered a strong response because it reflects a thorough command of the relevant knowledge and skills.

PURPOSE: Fulfill the charge of the assignment.

The response completely fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding fully to the given task.

The response describes what the school district business leader did well (e.g., conducted a thorough study of current operations, diagnosed weaknesses, conducted research) and what the school district business leader did poorly (e.g., exceeded his authority, failed to plan for adequate staff support and training, failed to consult regularly with the superintendent). The response identifies and discusses three important actions the business leader should take and explains why each action will be effective (e.g., involving the superintendent in planning will help ensure her support, providing information about costs and benefits of specific purchase options will help the superintendent and governing body make decisions about purchasing and allocating funds, communicating effectively and regularly with staff will promote a sense of ownership and help reduce stress and anxiety associated with change).

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

The response demonstrates an accurate and highly effective application of the relevant knowledge and skills.

The response demonstrates a highly effective application of knowledge regarding the process of change and its relationship to district financial management and planning. For example, the response reflects an understanding of appropriate steps in the change process (e.g., diagnosing weaknesses, conducting research to determine alternatives) and the importance of involving and communicating effectively with all relevant stakeholders when contemplating major changes. The response also indicates recognition of appropriate roles and responsibilities of relevant staff in planning for change and an understanding of steps in decision-making processes related to the acquisition of new technologies.

SUPPORT: Support the response with appropriate examples and/or sound reasoning reflecting an understanding of the relevant knowledge and skills.

The response provides strong support with high-quality, relevant examples and/or sound reasoning.

The response supports key ideas with relevant examples. For example, the idea of developing a clear written plan is supported with a description of the contents of such a plan (e.g., identification of steps in the process, timeline for implementing changes). The response indicates an understanding of effective management by accurately identifying examples of Mr. Powell's limitations in that area (e.g., not following through on staff feedback, failing to plan for adequate support and training, allowing insufficient time to implement change). The response shows sound reasoning throughout (e.g., linking the creation of explicit criteria for purchasing decisions and the provision of options to decision makers' ability to identify the best options, explaining how development of a plan can promote a good working relationship with the superintendent).

CRITERIA FOR SCORING THE RESPONSE

Each response will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

PURPOSE:	Fulfill the charge of the assignment.
APPLICATION OF CONTENT:	Accurately and effectively apply the relevant knowledge and skills.
SUPPORT:	Support the response with appropriate examples and/or sound reasoning reflecting an understanding of the relevant knowledge and skills.

Each response is rated on a four-point scale. The four score points of the score scale correspond to varying degrees of performance that are related to the above criteria.

Score Point	Score Point Description
4	<p>The "4" response reflects a thorough command of the relevant knowledge and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response completely fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding fully to the given task. • The response demonstrates an accurate and highly effective application of the relevant knowledge and skills. • The response provides strong support with high-quality, relevant examples and/or sound reasoning.
3	<p>The "3" response reflects a general command of the relevant knowledge and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response generally fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding to the given task. • The response demonstrates a generally accurate and effective application of the relevant knowledge and skills. • The response provides support with some relevant examples and/or generally sound reasoning.
2	<p>The "2" response reflects a partial command of the relevant knowledge and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response partially fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding in a limited way to the given task. • The response demonstrates a limited, partially accurate and partially effective application of the relevant knowledge and skills. • The response provides limited support with few examples and/or some flawed reasoning.
1	<p>The "1" response reflects little or no command of the relevant knowledge and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response fails to fulfill the purpose of the assignment. • The response demonstrates a largely inaccurate and/or ineffective application of the relevant knowledge and skills. • The response provides little or no support with few, if any, examples and/or seriously flawed reasoning.

Please note: A response that is unrelated to the assigned topic, unreadable, written in a language other than English, or lacking a sufficient amount of original work to score will be considered **unscorable**. If there is no response to the assignment, then the response will be considered **blank**.

Part Two Sample Questions and Written Assignments

This section is designed to assist you in responding to the multiple-choice questions and written assignments on Part Two of the assessment.

Included in this section are:

- Sample multiple-choice questions
- Annotated answer key for the sample multiple-choice questions
- Sample directions for the written assignments
- Sample written assignments
- An example of a strong response to each sample assignment
- An evaluation of the strong response to each sample assignment
- Scoring criteria that will be used in evaluating your response to each assignment

The sample multiple-choice questions are designed to illustrate the nature of the test questions. Work through the questions carefully before referring to the annotated answer key, which follows the sample multiple-choice questions. The answer key provides the correct response to each question, describes why each correct response is the best answer, and lists the objective within the assessment framework to which each question is linked.

For each sample assignment, you may want to take the following steps to prepare for the test:

- Review the directions for the written assignments.
- Read the assignment.
- Prepare your response to the assignment. It is suggested that you type your response to the assignment without using editorial tools, such as spell check and grammar check, in order to simulate the actual testing experience. These tools will not be available to you during the test session.
- After you complete the assignment, review the sample strong response, your response, the scoring criteria, and the evaluation of the sample strong response.

QUESTIONS

1. In general, during the late 1990s and early 2000s, the budget line for which of the following New York State school district expenditures showed the greatest percentage increase?
 - A. repairs and maintenance
 - B. staff benefits
 - C. supplies and equipment
 - D. staff salaries

2. Which of the following is likely to be the most important benefit of site-based budgeting compared with more centralized budgeting methods?
 - A. Site-based budgeting ensures that all buildings receive equal allocation of district funds.
 - B. Site-based budgeting simplifies the overall process of developing a budget.
 - C. Site-based budgeting allows principals to determine their final budget allocations.
 - D. Site-based budgeting elicits greater stakeholder input into the decision-making process.

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

A school district business leader has determined that the gymnasium floor in one of the district's elementary schools needs to be replaced. The business leader first sends out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to a variety of companies that install gymnasium floors. Several companies show interest in the project and submit proposals. After reviewing the proposals, the business leader decides to send out an Invitation for Bids (IFB).

3. Before advertising the IFB in the newspaper, the business leader should *first*:
 - A. schedule a pre-bid conference at the elementary school.
 - B. establish in the bidding documents the criteria for selection of the successful bid.
 - C. limit submission of bids to companies that submitted RFPs.
 - D. obtain state approval for reimbursement of the estimated cost of the project.

4. The IFB states that all bids must be submitted to the business leader's office by 3:00 P.M. on a specified date. At 3:00 P.M. on the day that bids are due, the business leader is in his office along with representatives from each company that has submitted a bid. At 3:10 P.M., the owner of a company enters with a sealed bid. The owner apologizes for being late and states that he was held up in traffic. The business leader has a good relationship with the owner and knows that this company has a reputation for doing high-quality work at a good price. Which of the following would be the most appropriate action for the business leader to take in this situation?
 - A. Accept the bid and document the exact time of its submission on the outside of the sealed envelope.
 - B. Obtain written approval to open the bid from each of the company representatives in attendance.
 - C. Refuse to accept the bid and explain to the owner that no bid may be submitted after the deadline.
 - D. Open and examine the bid privately and use his best judgment as to whether to accept the bid.

Part Two Sample Questions and Written Assignments

5. Pipes in the basement of an older high school building are wrapped with insulation that contains asbestos. The material is undamaged and shows no signs of blistering, cracking, or crumbling. According to federal regulations, the most appropriate action by the school district business leader would be to:
- A. have the insulation regularly inspected to ensure that it remains intact and nonfriable.
 - B. require all persons who enter the basement to use a respirator and wear protective clothing.
 - C. hire a certified contractor to immediately remove and dispose of the insulation.
 - D. ask custodians to regularly vacuum the pipes and the surrounding area of the basement.
6. Which of the following most accurately describes the responsibilities of a school district with regard to an employee who qualifies for a leave of absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)?
- A. Upon return, the district must provide the employee with a substantially equivalent position to the one the employee held prior to taking leave.
 - B. The district must pay for up to 12 weeks of leave if the employee has a tenured position in the district.
 - C. The district must continue to make FICA payments to the federal government throughout the employee's leave.
 - D. The district must inform the federal government that the employee is requesting leave under the FMLA.
7. When planning school bus routes, bus stops, and bus schedules, the highest priority for the school district business leader should be:
- A. minimizing the distance that each bus travels on its route to and from school.
 - B. maximizing the number of students that each bus carries on its route to and from school.
 - C. minimizing the amount of time that each child spends traveling to and from school.
 - D. maximizing the safety of all students while riding, getting on, and getting off the buses.

ANNOTATED ANSWER KEY

For question	The correct response is	Reason	Test Objective
1	B	During the late 1990s and early 2000s, health-care costs in the United States rose at a rate greater than that of any other sector of the economy. To keep pace with this increase in costs, health insurance companies raised their premiums. Since health insurance comprises a major portion of a typical benefits package for staff, district expenditures on staff benefits also increased. Benefits expenditures increased at a more rapid rate than expenditures for most other budget lines, including those for salaries, supplies and equipment, and repairs and maintenance.	0001
2	D	Under site-based budgeting, schools are usually given funds by category (e.g., a certain amount to be spent on staffing), but many of the specific decisions about how the funds will be allocated are made by stakeholders at the individual school. Thus, site-based budgeting serves to increase the involvement of school stakeholders in the decision-making process.	0002
3	B	To ensure that all potential bidders have the same opportunity to prepare and submit a bid for a particular good or service, it is necessary that the rules and procedures governing the bidding be established early in the process and be known to all bidders. By including the criteria for selecting the winning bid in the bidding documents, the school district business leader ensures that all potential bidders are provided with information that is necessary for them to prepare their bids.	0003
4	C	To avoid an appearance of favoritism in the bidding process, district administrators, including the school district business leader, must take care to treat all bidders equally and in accordance with the stated procedures. This means that rules established at the beginning of the process must be followed explicitly. In the situation described, the business leader must adhere firmly to the 3:00 p.m. deadline for bids in order to ensure that no advantage, or even the appearance of an advantage, is provided to the individual submitting the late bid.	0003

Part Two Sample Questions and Written Assignments

For question	The correct response is	Reason	Test Objective
5	A	According to federal regulations, asbestos abatement procedures (e.g., removal, encapsulation) are required whenever airborne asbestos fibers may be present. However, intact asbestos that does not show signs of blistering, cracking, or crumbling does not generally shed fibers into the air. Federal regulations permit school districts to leave intact asbestos in place while carefully monitoring it for signs of deterioration. The removal of intact and undamaged asbestos may, in fact, result in more serious problems than would leaving it in place, since the removal process itself is likely to release asbestos fibers into the air.	0004
6	A	The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows qualified employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave upon the birth or adoption of a child; to recover from a serious illness; or to care for a seriously ill spouse, child, or parent. Under the terms of FMLA, the employee is not entitled to receive pay during the leave, but he or she is entitled to return to the same position or a position equivalent to the one held before the leave.	0005
7	D	A school district is responsible for the safety of the children in its care. When planning bus routes, bus stops, and schedules, the school district business leader must first consider safety issues (e.g., buses traveling on dangerous roads, children crossing busy streets to a bus stop) before considering second-tier priorities (e.g., minimizing the time spent on buses, maximizing the number of children on each bus).	0006

DIRECTIONS FOR THE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

A sample of the directions for the written assignments is shown in the box below.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

This section of the test consists of two written assignments. Assignment One is an Administrative Problem Solving assignment and Assignment Two is a Resource Analysis assignment. You are to prepare a written response of about 150–300 words to Assignment One and a written response of about 300–600 words to Assignment Two. Approximately 50% of your total test score is derived from the written assignments—approximately 17% from Assignment One, and approximately 33% from Assignment Two. You may complete the assignments in either order, and you may return to either assignment as time permits.

Read each assignment carefully before you type. Each written assignment appears on the screen with an answer box immediately below the assignment. Type your response in this answer box. For some written assignments, you may need to use the scroll bar to view the entire assignment. To view all parts of Assignment Two, you will need to click on buttons at the top of the screen labeled "Document 1," "Document 2," etc. As with the multiple-choice questions, you may select written assignments for review later during the testing time.

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

- **PURPOSE:** Fulfill the charge of the assignment.
- **APPLICATION OF CONTENT:** Accurately and effectively apply the relevant knowledge and skills.
- **SUPPORT:** Support the response with appropriate examples and/or sound reasoning reflecting an understanding of the relevant 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.

A calculator is available to you for this test. To access the calculator, click on the calculator icon, which will appear in the left corner of the screen. You may not use any other reference materials during the test. In order to maintain your anonymity during the scoring process, do not type your name in any portion of the answer box. Remember to review what you have written and make any changes that you think will improve your responses.

SAMPLE ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING ASSIGNMENT

Subarea: Administering Human and Support Resources to Support Learning Goals

Assignment One: Administrative Problem Solving

Use the information below to complete the assignment that follows.

Ms. Johanna Klein is the new school district business leader of a school district. Shortly after she was hired, Ms. Klein reviewed the personnel files containing employee data such as years of service, sick leave, and health benefits. Ms. Klein noted that the system used to organize these files is inefficient, forcing staff to expend an excessive amount of time responding to requests for information. Ms. Klein also found that incorrect information had been given out on several recent occasions, causing tension between human resource office staff and employees. In one case, the union representative contacted the superintendent to complain that an employee had been mistakenly deprived of accrued sick time. A search of the employee's file was not able to provide information that could resolve the dispute.

Ms. Klein is asked by the superintendent to begin developing plans to implement a computerized system for maintaining personnel records. Employee files are currently not computerized, although the business office has an extensive computer system in place.

Task

Write a response of about 150–300 words about developing plans for computerizing files of district employees. State any assumptions you are making. In your response:

- identify three significant questions that Ms. Klein will need to investigate before developing plans for computerizing files of district employees;
- explain why each of these three questions is important to consider; and
- for *each* of the three questions, describe one type of data or other information that would be useful in addressing that question.

■ **Strong Response to the Sample Administrative Problem Solving Assignment**

The first question Ms. Klein must answer is, "What are our needs for a system of computerized employee files?" This question is important because the needs of the district will determine the size, configuration, and capabilities required of the new system. In addressing this question, Ms. Klein should gather information to determine which records should be computerized (e.g., health insurance, salary) and which should remain in paper form (e.g., evaluations). Other useful information might include the number of people who will use the system and the level of security that is required.

A second question is, "What are our current computer capabilities?" This question is important because it will help determine whether the current platform can be used or if the district will need to change the system. For example, if the system is old, it may be more cost-effective to replace it than to try to update it. To address this question, Ms. Klein needs to determine the type of system currently in use and its age, which software packages are currently used, and the specifications of the current hardware. This will provide information about the current capabilities and limitations of the current system and help determine where upgrades will be necessary.

Once the needs of the district and the capabilities of the current system have been identified, the next question is, "What are the costs associated with various options for upgrading or replacing the system?" This question is important because the answer will provide decision makers with the information needed to compare costs and choose the most cost-effective option that meets district needs. Ms. Klein should investigate software and hardware costs, labor costs associated with implementation and maintenance of the new system, and staff-training costs for a variety of upgrading and replacement options.

Part Two Sample Questions and Written Assignments

■ Evaluation of the Strong Response to the Sample Administrative Problem Solving Assignment

This response is considered a strong response because it reflects a thorough command of the relevant knowledge and skills.

PURPOSE: Fulfill the charge of the assignment.

The response completely fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding fully to the given task.

The response identifies three significant questions and explains why each of these questions is important. Answering the question "What are our needs for a system of computerized employee files?" will help identify system size and capabilities necessary to meet those needs. Answering the question "What are our current computer capabilities?" will help determine how the system will need to be upgraded. Answering the question "What are the costs associated with various options for upgrading or replacing the system?" will give decision makers the cost comparisons they will need to make an appropriate decision. For each question, one type of data or other information useful for addressing the question is identified (e.g., which records should be computerized, software packages currently in use, costs of hardware and software).

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

The response demonstrates an accurate and highly effective application of the relevant knowledge and skills.

Discussion of the first question ("What are our needs for a system of computerized employee files?") demonstrates a highly effective application of knowledge related to procedures for maintaining accurate records (e.g., determining which records should be computerized and which should not) and criteria for evaluating data management technology and systems (e.g., how many people will use the system, what level of security is required). Discussion of the second question ("What are our current computer capabilities?") and the third question ("What are the costs associated with various options for upgrading or replacing the system?") demonstrates a highly effective application of knowledge regarding criteria for evaluating, selecting, and implementing data-management technology and systems (e.g., Ms. Klein needs to determine the type of system currently in use and its age, which software packages are currently used, and the specifications of the current hardware; Ms. Klein should investigate software and hardware costs, labor costs associated with implementation and maintenance of the new system, and staff training costs for a variety of upgrading and replacement options).

SUPPORT: Support the response with appropriate examples and/or sound reasoning reflecting an understanding of the relevant knowledge and skills.

The response provides strong support with high-quality, relevant examples and/or sound reasoning.

High-quality, relevant examples are used in the response (e.g., examples of costs to implement the system include software and hardware costs, labor costs associated with implementation and maintenance of the new system, and staff training costs for a variety of upgrading and replacement options). Sound reasoning is used in discussions of the importance of each question (e.g., the question "What are our needs for a system of computerized employee files?" is important because the needs of the district will determine the size, configuration, and capabilities required of the new system; the question "What are our current computer capabilities?" is important because it will help determine whether the current platform can be used or if the district will need to change the system).

SAMPLE RESOURCE ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT

Subarea: Overseeing District Financial and Physical Resources

Assignment Two: Resource Analysis

You are the new school district business leader of Groverton School District. Read the five documents on the pages that follow. Some information may be addressed in more than one document. Using *only* the information provided to you in these documents, write a response of about 300–600 words in which you:

- describe two significant problems in the management of financial and/or physical resources by district personnel;
- for each of these two problems, describe one strategy for addressing that problem; and
- explain why each strategy would be effective in addressing the problem.

**Document #1: Memo from Groverton School District Superintendent of Schools to
previous Groverton School District Business Leader**

Memorandum

TO: Steven Harris, School District Business Leader

FROM: Carmen Frazier, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: November 2

SUBJECT: Proposed Budget

Steve, first let me say congratulations on the new job, then apologize for presenting you with this problem just before you leave.

As you know, our teachers are currently in their first year without a current contract, and negotiations between the teachers' union and the district governing body are at an impasse. This is unfortunate, because there has been a long history of good relations between the teachers' union and the district governing body until the recent changes that occurred in the leadership of each group. What we need to do at this point is prevent this dispute from escalating into a strike or otherwise disrupting our real task, which is the education of the students in the district.

When it was apparent that negotiations were going to break down, the hard-liners on the district governing body retaliated by insisting that no money be put into the proposed budget to provide for salary or benefit increases to teachers. I guess they felt that this would ratchet up the pressure on the teachers to settle. However, you and I both know what this means. When the contract is finally settled, we'll have to find the money somewhere, so we have to make sure that we have enough extra buried in the budget to cover the likely increased costs. To be on the safe side, I suggest we put away enough for two years of increases at around 3.75 percent increase each year. While I don't profess to know very much about finance, I'd guess around 1.5 million would suffice.

I'll have a talk with your successor as soon as he comes on board. Let me know where you decide to put the money, and please keep this matter totally confidential.

Thanks and good luck in your new position,

Carmen

Document #2: Text of a statement presented to the Groverton School District governing body by the president of Groverton Teachers' Association

"Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Jeffrey O'Brian, and I am the president of the Groverton Teachers' Association. I am here tonight to ask you publicly to begin negotiating with us in a good faith effort to bring our dispute to an end.

The public should know that, after 18 months of meetings, your offer of a 0.5 percent increase in salaries is totally unacceptable.

Every school district in our area settled contracts with teachers for a minimum increase of 7 percent over two years. We feel we are successfully preparing our youth for the challenges of tomorrow and should be receiving a fair and competitive wage.

Our internal review of the school budget indicates that you have set aside a fair amount of money for teacher salary increases but continue to say that there are no funds.

Please, in the interest of fairness to all, let us come to a reasonable settlement so that we can devote all of our time and efforts to educating the youth of Groverton."

Document #3: Text of a report to the previous school district business leader of the Groverton School District by an architectural firm hired to conduct a capital audit of the Adams High School

DENNIS HALEY, ARCHITECT

TO: Steven Harris, School District Business Leader, Groverton School District
FROM: Dennis Haley, Architect
DATE: January 3
SUBJECT: Capital Audit of J. Q. Adams High School

As you requested, our firm has completed a prioritized list of major capital improvements to the J. Q. Adams High School that should be completed in the next two or three years. We have divided the list into two categories—those improvements that should be begun immediately and completed as soon as possible and those that may be put off for a year or two. However, we recommend that all improvements in this second category be completed within three years.

CATEGORY I: IMMEDIATE NEED	
Resurface roof—east wing	This roof is currently leaking in several places; delay in resurfacing will result in damage to the underlying structure.
Replace concrete sidewalks leading to front and side entrances	Sidewalks are cracked and uneven; injuries could lead to lawsuits against the school.
Replace playground equipment	Existing climbing structure is partially rotted and constitutes a safety hazard.
Inspect and upgrade wiring and electrical outlets	Wiring may be inadequate for present use; some outlets lack ground-fault interrupters.
Replace carpet in teacher's break room and all offices	Existing carpet is contaminated with mold and constitutes a health hazard.

CATEGORY II: COMPLETE WITHIN THREE YEARS	
Replace main boiler	The existing boiler is in need of extensive repairs and is much less efficient than current models.
Renovate kitchen; replace dishwasher and freezer	Existing equipment is outdated and prone to breakdown; both the dishwasher and freezer are much less efficient than current models.
Resod soccer field	Field is presently dirt and is muddy and unusable after rains.
Replace all entrance doors	Existing doors are a source of major heat loss; replace with energy-efficient models.

We would be pleased to meet with the members of the district governing body at their convenience to elaborate on the above priorities and provide estimates for each of the needs that we have identified.

Sincerely,

DENNIS HALEY

Dennis Haley, President

Document #4: Debt schedule from the proposed budget of the Groverton School District

**GROVERTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
Proposed Budget Debt Schedule**

Name of Issue	Date of Issue	Percent Interest	Term (years)	Amount of Issue*	P/I	2 years ago	1 year ago	current	proposed (+1 year)	+2 years	+3 years
Adams HS	30 years ago	7.8	30	30,000	P	1,500	1,500	1,500	0	0	0
					I	223	119	0	0	0	0
Franklin ES	7 years ago	3.5	10	3,000	P	300	300	300	300	300	300
					I	147	121	95	65	34	0
Monroe MS	6 years ago	3.3	10	6,000	P	600	600	600	600	600	600
					I	385	342	293	242	188	130
Madison ES	5 years ago	3.3	10	4,000	P	400	400	400	400	400	400
					I	310	284	257	228	196	162
Total Principal					P	2,800	2,800	2,800	1,300	1,300	1,300
Total Interest					I	1,065	866	645	535	418	292
Total Principal and Interest						3,865	3,666	3,445	1,835	1,718	1,592

* all sums are expressed in thousands of dollars

Document #5: Budget page for Groverton School District showing debt expenditures

**GROVERTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
Proposed Budget Expenditures**

Account Code	Name of Account	Previous Year Budget	Current Adjusted Budget	Current Estimated Actuals	Proposed Budget
9700	Term Bonds	0	0	0	0
9711	Serial Bonds—School Construction	3,666,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,400,000
9722	Statutory Bonds—Bus Purchases	161,870	132,000	131,000	170,000
9730	Bond Anticipation Notes	0	0	0	0
9760	Tax Anticipation Notes	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
9770	Revenue Anticipation Notes	0	0	0	0
Total Debt Service		5,827,870	5,632,000	5,631,000	5,570,000

■ Strong Response to the Sample Resource Analysis Assignment

One problem in the management of Groverton School District's financial resources stems from hiding money from the district's leadership within the budget. Document #1 shows that the district governing body wanted no money included in the proposed budget for salary or benefit increases for teachers. Superintendent Frazier disobeyed this directive by asking the departing business leader to put away \$1.5 million in the budget to cover an expected increase in these costs. Frazier goes on to caution Harris to keep the matter totally confidential. Harris apparently complied, disguising this amount as debt. Thus, Document #4 shows actual projected debt service for the year as \$1,835,000 in Total Principal and Interest. However, Document #5, account code 9711, uses a Proposed Budget figure of \$3,400,000. The difference of \$1,565,000 covers the \$1.5 million that was to be "buried" in the budget. While the governing body presumably does not know about the buried money and believes there is no money available for salary and benefit increases, Document #2 reveals that the union leadership has discovered the subterfuge: "Our internal review of the school budget indicates that you have set aside a fair amount of money . . . but continue to say there are no funds." Thus, bad decisions about financial management have contributed to problems in relations between union and district leaders. The discovery of hidden money lends credence to union President O'Brian's charge that the superintendent and district governing body have not been negotiating in good faith (Document #2).

As the new business leader of Groverton, one strategy I would use to address this problem would be to alert Superintendent Frazier to the inadvisability of deceiving the governing body and union leadership about funds available in the budget and discuss with her the implications of her actions on collective bargaining.

This strategy would be effective because it would allow me, as the new business leader, to distance myself from my predecessor's actions while notifying the superintendent that I am aware of the attempt to hide funds and the consequences of this action. When the superintendent recognizes that discovery of the hidden funds will cause even more problems for collective bargaining (and undermine her credibility in the future), she can start taking proactive measures to diffuse potential disruptions in negotiations. A more open approach to financial management may help restore good relations between the union and the district governing body noted in Document #1.

A second problem is the district's failure to use the opportunity created by expiring capital debt to address needed capital repairs. Document #4 shows that no new debt was added to replace the expiring \$1.5 million debt for Adams H.S. However, Document #3 lists capital improvements that should be addressed immediately. By failing to replace retired debt with new debt, the district risks a sudden increase in the budget in future years.

One way to address this problem is to begin immediately exploring ways to use the money buried in the debt service fund for capital improvements (e.g., exploring the legality of transferring these funds to a capital improvements/reserve fund) and planning capital projects to coincide with retiring the next debt obligation of the district (Document #4 shows that the debt for Franklin will expire in 3 years).

This strategy would be effective because it addresses the need for improvements noted in Document #3 and prevents more costly repairs or liability for injuries that may result from delaying these improvements. For example, if the leaking east wing roof of Adams H.S. is not resurfaced, the underlying structure will be damaged. In addition, the rotting climbing structure is currently unsafe. Planning capital projects now will help prevent a repeat of the current situation. In addition, by transferring money out of debt service and using it for needed capital improvements, I will be making a visible effort to mitigate the negative effect the discovery of hidden funds has had on public relations.

Part Two Sample Questions and Written Assignments

■ Evaluation of the Strong Response to the Sample Resource Analysis Assignment

This response is considered a strong response because it reflects a thorough command of the relevant knowledge and skills.

PURPOSE: Fulfill the charge of the assignment.

The response completely fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding fully to the given task.

The response describes two significant problems in the management of financial resources (i.e., deceiving the district governing body and union leadership and failing to use the opportunity created by the expiring capital debt to address needed capital repairs). For each problem, the response describes a strategy for addressing that problem and explains the effectiveness of that strategy (e.g., alerting Superintendent Frazier to the inadvisability of deceiving the governing body and union leadership and discussing with her the implications of her actions on collective bargaining will allow her to take proactive measures to diffuse potential disruptions in negotiations and help restore good relations between the union and the district governing body; exploring ways to use the money buried in the debt service fund for capital improvements and planning capital projects to coincide with retiring the next debt obligation will address the need for improvements and mitigate the negative effect the discovery of hidden funds has had on public relations.)

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

The response demonstrates an accurate and highly effective application of the relevant knowledge and skills.

In the discussion about hiding money in the budget, the response demonstrates a highly effective application of knowledge about accepted government accounting procedures (e.g., the comparison of actual projected debt service in Document #4 with the proposed budget figure for serial bonds in Document #5). This discussion also demonstrates an effective application of knowledge about issues in managing district resources (e.g., "bad decisions about financial management have contributed to problems in relations between union and district leaders"). The discussion of the district's failure to add new debt to undertake necessary repairs to the Adams school demonstrates a highly effective application of knowledge about budget planning, the role of debt in financial management, and strategies for managing debt to ensure financial stability.

SUPPORT: Support the response with appropriate examples and/or sound reasoning reflecting an understanding of the relevant knowledge and skills.

The response provides strong support with high-quality, relevant examples and/or sound reasoning.

The response supports key ideas with relevant examples and sound reasoning. The description of each problem is supported with examples of the evidence used to identify the problem. For example, identification of the problem of the failure to use the opportunity created by expiring capital debt to address needed capital repairs is supported from Document #4 (no new debt was added to replace the expiring \$1.5 million debt for Adams H.S.) and Document #3 (a list of capital improvements that should be addressed immediately). Sound reasoning is demonstrated in the discussion of the problems (e.g., bad decisions about financial management have contributed to problems in relations between union and district leaders) and solutions to the problems (e.g., "a more open approach to financial management may help to restore good relations between the union and the district governing body").

CRITERIA FOR SCORING THE RESPONSE

Each response will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

PURPOSE:	Fulfill the charge of the assignment.
APPLICATION OF CONTENT:	Accurately and effectively apply the relevant knowledge and skills.
SUPPORT:	Support the response with appropriate examples and/or sound reasoning reflecting an understanding of the relevant knowledge and skills.

Each response is rated on a four-point scale. The four score points of the score scale correspond to varying degrees of performance that are related to the above criteria.

Score Point	Score Point Description
4	<p>The "4" response reflects a thorough command of the relevant knowledge and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response completely fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding fully to the given task. • The response demonstrates an accurate and highly effective application of the relevant knowledge and skills. • The response provides strong support with high-quality, relevant examples and/or sound reasoning.
3	<p>The "3" response reflects a general command of the relevant knowledge and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response generally fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding to the given task. • The response demonstrates a generally accurate and effective application of the relevant knowledge and skills. • The response provides support with some relevant examples and/or generally sound reasoning.
2	<p>The "2" response reflects a partial command of the relevant knowledge and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response partially fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding in a limited way to the given task. • The response demonstrates a limited, partially accurate and partially effective application of the relevant knowledge and skills. • The response provides limited support with few examples and/or some flawed reasoning.
1	<p>The "1" response reflects little or no command of the relevant knowledge and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response fails to fulfill the purpose of the assignment. • The response demonstrates a largely inaccurate and/or ineffective application of the relevant knowledge and skills. • The response provides little or no support with few, if any, examples and/or seriously flawed reasoning.

Please note: A response that is unrelated to the assigned topic, unreadable, written in a language other than English, or lacking a sufficient amount of original work to score will be considered **unscorable**. If there is no response to the assignment, then the response will be considered **blank**.