GACE® Study Companion
Educational Leadership

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About the Assessment

Assessment Name	Educational Leadership
Grade Level	P–12
Test Code	311
Testing Time	3.5 hours
Test Duration	4 hours
Test Format	Computer delivered
Number of Selected-response Questions	100
Question Format	The test consists of a variety of short-answer questions such as selected-response questions, where you select one answer choice or multiple answer choices (depending on what the question asks for), questions where you enter your answer in a text box, and other types of questions. You can review the possible question types in the *Guide to Taking a GACE Computer-delivered Test*.
Number of Constructed-response Questions	4

The GACE Educational Leadership assessment is designed to measure the standards-relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities of school and district-level educational leaders in the state of Georgia.

The testing time is the amount of time you will have to answer the questions on the test. Test duration includes time for tutorials and directional screens that may be included in the test.

The questions in this assessment assess both basic knowledge across content areas and the ability to apply principles. Questions present scenarios and content appropriate for school-level (e.g., assistant principals and principals) and system or district-level educational leaders (e.g., associate superintendents and superintendents).

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The total number of questions that are scored is typically smaller than the total number of questions on the test. Most tests that contain selected-response questions also include embedded pretest questions, which are not used in calculating your score. By including pretest questions in the assessment, ETS is able to analyze actual test-taker performance on proposed new questions and determine whether they should be included in future versions of the test.

Content Specifications

This assessment is organized into content **subareas**. Each subarea is further defined by a set of **objectives** and their **knowledge statements**.

- The objectives broadly define what a school or district educational leader in Georgia public schools should know and be able to do.

- The knowledge statements describe in greater detail the knowledge and skills eligible for testing.

- Some tests also include content material at the evidence level. This content serves as descriptors of what each knowledge statement encompasses.

See a breakdown of the subareas and objectives for this assessment on the following pages.

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Test Subareas

Subarea	Approx. Percentage of Test
I. Educational Vision	13%
II. School Culture, Fairness, and Responsiveness to the Needs of All Students	13%
III. Curriculum and Instruction	14%
IV. Managing the Organization, Operations, and Resources	13%
V. Collaborating and Communicating with Stakeholders	11%
VI. Professionalism and Ethics	11%
VII. Analysis (constructed response only)	25%

Test Objectives

Subarea I: Educational Vision

Objective 1: Knows how to collaborate with stakeholders to develop and promote the shared mission, vision, and core values that support the academic success and well- being of each student

The educational leader:

A. Works with stakeholders to articulate the core values that define the organization's culture of continuous improvement and promotes high expectations for each student and a culture of continuous improvement

B. Identifies strategies to develop a shared understanding among stakeholders of the mission, vision, and core values within the school, district, and community

C. Identifies relevant data and data-based research strategies to inform the development of the mission, vision, and core values as part of the strategic planning processes

D. Aligns processes and procedures with the core values to support rigorous academic opportunity for each student to ensure college and career readiness

E. Identifies appropriate strategies for building consensus among stakeholders to ensure the achievement of the mission, vision, and core values

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Objective 2: Knows how to use multiple data sources to monitor and evaluate progress toward the educational mission, vision, and core values

The educational leader:

A. Uses appropriate systems and processes to identify, implement, and evaluate communications, actions, and practices (e.g., financial policies, practices, and outcomes) to ensure alignment with the educational mission, vision, and core values

B. Collects, organizes, and analyzes information, including student performance data, to assess progress in achieving the educational mission, vision, and core values

C. Develops a systematic approach for reviewing and revising the educational mission, vision, and core values in response to the changing needs and situations of the students, school, and district

D. Promotes continuous and sustainable progress toward meeting the educational mission, vision, and core values in all aspects of leadership

Objective 3: Knows how to promote a culture of continuous improvement that aligns with the shared mission, vision, and core values

The educational leader:

A. Interprets relevant data to inform a culture of continuous improvement that supports the attainment of the mission, vision, and core values

B. Provides appropriate opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills staff need to effectively lead strategic teams in a systematic process of improvement

C. Selects situationally appropriate strategies for implementing, monitoring, and sustaining the improvement process (e.g., transformational, incremental, or adaptive approaches)

D. Develops the capacity of staff to evaluate the relevance of emerging trends and research for the benefit of the school or for district improvement

E. Develops a system for collecting, managing, and analyzing data to inform the improvement process

F. Uses a systematic approach to ensure alignment among improvement efforts within the school/district

G. Identifies and mitigate possible barriers and risks to the change process

H. Creates leadership opportunities for teachers and staff to engage in inquiry, experimentation, and innovation for implementing improvement

I. Collaboratively develops, implements, and monitors a school improvement plan that meets the needs of varied populations to improve student achievement

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Subarea II: School Culture, Fairness, Responsiveness to the Needs of All Students

Objective 1: Knows how to develop a school environment that promotes fairness and responsive practices

The educational leader:

A. Communicates high standards and expectations for oneself, staff, and each student

B. Recognizes and uses each student's strengths, differences, and culture as assets for teaching and learning

C. Uses data-driven processes to ensure that each student has fair access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and resources necessary for college and career readiness

D. Develops and articulates expectations and codes of conduct to address student behavior in a positive, fair, and consistent manner

E. Uses effective strategies to address fairness issues and minimize barriers associated with race, class, culture, language, gender, sexual orientation, and disability or special status

F. Identifies appropriate strategies, processes, and procedures to address fairness issues that affect the mission, vision, and core values and the goals of the school

G. Uses knowledge of the social, cultural, and political dynamics of the school community to develop and sustain a positive learning environment

H. Identifies ways to prepare students to contribute to a culturally varied society

I. Applies knowledge of fairness issues and cultural competence and responsiveness in all areas of practice (e.g., interactions, communications, and decision making)

Objective 2: Understands how to develop and promote a welcoming, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student

The educational leader:

A. Facilitates the development of a culture that supports the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student

B. Creates and supports an environment in which each student is treated fairly and respectfully, feels a sense of belonging, and is a valued, trusted, and responsible member of the community

C. Selects and implements a comprehensive system of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the needs of each student

D. Creates an environment that promotes positive mutual relationships and fosters mutual respect, concern, and empathy for students, staff, parents, and the community

E. Uses appropriate strategies to support and reinforce positive student conduct and engagement in school

F. Responds in a timely manner to the warning signs and risk factors of violence

G. Identifies appropriate ways to incorporate the cultures and languages of the school's community into the learning environment

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Objective 3: Understands how to build and support a professional community of staff

The educational leader:

A. Develops workplace conditions that support effective development of the professional knowledge, skills, and practice of all staff members through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth (e.g., coaching, creating supportive conditions, and promoting professional learning communities)

B. Promotes mutual accountability and collective responsibility among staff for meeting the needs of each student and ensuring the success of the school and district

C. Creates and supports a professional culture that promotes ethical and fair practice, collaboration, responsibility, and a commitment to the shared vision, goals, and objectives

D. Creates and supports an environment that fosters collaborative examination of practice and collective learning and encourages all staff to initiate improvement of programs and practices

E. Supports the personal and professional health, well-being, and healthy work-life balance of staff

F. Uses appropriate strategies to address his or her own learning and effectiveness (e.g., reflection, self-improvement plan, and maintaining healthy work-life balance)

G. Collaborates with staff and faculty to design and implement job-embedded opportunities and other opportunities for professional learning

H. Uses a variety of strategies to develop the capacity of highly effective teachers and staff (e.g., providing learning opportunities; encouraging leadership, innovation, and creativity; and providing support)

I. Identifies appropriate ways to provide actionable feedback about instruction and professional practice

J. Uses data to evaluate the impact of professional development on student learning and instructional practice

Subarea III: Curriculum and Instruction

Objective 1: Knows how to develop and implement a fair and rigorous instructional program that supports each student's growth and learning and reflects research-based practices

The educational leader:

A. Collaborates with stakeholders to promote a culture of high expectations for student learning

B. Applies major learning theories and principles of curriculum, instruction, and assessment design that are consistent with developmentally appropriate practices

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C. Aligns curriculum, instruction responsive to the needs of all students, and assessment within and across grade levels to promote students' academic success

D. Facilitates the selection and implementation of evidence-based curricular resources and instructional practices to meet students' varied needs

E. Promotes the integration of technology to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment

F. Promotes the use of rigorous, differentiated, and responsive instructional practices that are authentic to students' experiences, strengths, and needs

G. Applies the guiding principles for developing a master schedule

Objective 2: Knows how to implement an effective system of assessment and evaluation aligned with curriculum and instruction to promote students' academic success

The educational leader:

A. Selects and facilitates the use of appropriate assessments that are consistent with technical standards of measurement

B. Monitors and evaluates the use of formative, summative, and diagnostic assessments that are consistent with technical standards of measurement to inform instructional practices

C. Communicates pertinent assessment information to a variety of audiences

D. Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment practices on student learning to inform instructional changes

Subarea IV: Managing the Organization, Operations, and Resources

Objective 1: Knows how to manage operations, programs, and services to ensure a safe, fair, ethical, and efficient environment that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student

The educational leader:

A. Implements procedures for managing school and district operations in accordance with state and federal public education policies, regulations, and laws

B. Knows, complies with, and helps the school community understand legal and regulatory requirements necessary for professional practice to promote student success

C. Identifies appropriate technology to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management

D. Uses appropriate and effective data-management and communication systems to guide organizational improvement

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E. Develops productive relationships with feeder schools and connecting schools to manage enrollment and ensure effective curricular and instructional continuity for the success of each student

F. Implements fair systems for managing conflict within and among stakeholders

G. Promotes a safe school environment by implementing emergency, disaster- preparedness, and recovery plans and by training staff for their efficient application

H. Uses effective strategies to protect the work of teachers and staff, and student learning, from disruption

Objective 2: Understands the fundamental processes and elements of managing the monetary and physical resources to ensure the continued viability of the organization

The educational leader:

A. Uses ethical and responsible budgeting and accounting practices to plan, monitor, and manage the monetary resources according to the policies of state and federal public school finance

B. Uses a variety of data (e.g., student enrollment, staffing needs, and stakeholder input) to develop short-term and long-term budget goals aligned with the school improvement plan

C. Works with appropriate staff to ensure the facility is well maintained, functions properly, and meet appropriate regulations to support quality instruction and school safety

D. Manages resources to support curriculum, instruction, assessment, and community engagement

E. Adheres to school or district legal requirements and procedures associated with procurement, bidding, and vendor relationships, and understand the use of requisitions, purchase orders, and invoices

Objective 3: Knows how to build an effective staff and establishes an effective administrative system that promotes the shared mission, vision, and core values of the school/district to ensure the highest level of performance

The educational leader:

A. Implements effective and efficient processes for recruiting, selecting, hiring, assigning, and retaining personnel based on the needs of the school/district and in a manner consistent with local, state, and federal requirements

B. Uses appropriate procedures and strategies for evaluating, remediating, terminating, and advancing personnel

C. Identifies effective strategies for planning succession and managing staff turnover (e.g., identifying potential leaders and implementing induction, mentoring, and coaching programs)

D. Applies strategies for fostering productive relationships to encourage the retention of quality personnel and to advance student learning (e.g., building morale, motivating, and recognizing staff differences)

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E. Adheres to district and legal requirements related to personnel management (e.g., Family and Medical Leave Act [FMLA], Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act [COBRA], Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC], and workers' compensation)

Subarea V: Collaborating and Communicating with Stakeholders

Objective 1: Knows how to promote, develop, and support productive and collaborative relationships with families and the community

The educational leader:

A. Works with internal and external stakeholders to gather and evaluate data on economic, social, and emerging issues that affect the school and district

B. Develops productive partnerships with public and private organizations to integrate community resources to support the goals of the school and to address school and community needs

C. Cultivates an environment that values differences and fairness and serves as a resource for families and the community

D. Uses the community's cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school improvement

E. Promotes the development of collaborative partnerships between the school, community, and families to support instruction and student learning

F. Acts as an advocate for the needs of the school, the district, and the community

Objective 2: Understands how to communicate effectively when working with families and stakeholders and how to engage their support for continuous improvement efforts

The educational leader:

A. Communicates using appropriate two-way strategies to engage all stakeholders about the needs and accomplishments of the students, school, and district (e.g., social media and technology)

B. Complies with and communicates to the school community the policies, laws, and regulations on a local, state, and federal level

C. Uses proactive strategies to interact with and accommodate varied groups in the community (e.g., cultural groups, citizens' groups, and groups with conflicting perspectives) for the benefit of the students

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Subarea VI: Professionalism and Ethics

Objective 1: Understands and maintains a fair and ethical learning environment that supports the shared mission, vision, and core values to ensure student success and well-being

The educational leader:

A. Demonstrates and promotes ethical and professional behavior among faculty and staff (e.g., integrity, respect, and transparency)

B. Uses ethical and professional behavior in decision making and stewardship of resources

C. Places students and their well-being at the center of all decision making

D. Promotes and safeguards values of democracy for students and staff (e.g., individual freedom, responsibility, fair access, opportunity, and advancement for all students) while maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment

E. Applies appropriate interpersonal and communication skills that reflect an understanding of student and staff cultures

Objective 2: Knows how to create and implement policies and procedures that support the shared mission, vision, and core values of the organization

The educational leader:

A. Makes and articulates the rationales for decisions based on ethical and legal principles and maintain transparency in decision making, as permitted

B. Articulates policies, laws, and regulations that affect schools and the district to all stakeholders (e.g., school board policies, state rules and regulations, and federal acts) and appropriately apply those rules to specific situations

C. Works effectively with appropriate personnel in all matters related to school administration and governance and in accordance with local, state, and federal laws and policies (e.g., filing of academic progress reports, human resources management, and employee rights)

D. Complies with and articulates local, state, and federal laws and policies (e.g., identifying and reporting suspected child abuse, neglect, and bullying)

Subarea VII: Analysis

Educational Vision

The educational leader:

A. Collaborates with stakeholders to develop and promote the shared mission, vision, and core values that support the academic success and well-being of each student

B. Uses multiple data sources to monitor and evaluate progress toward the educational mission, vision, and core values

C. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement that aligns with the shared mission, vision, and core values

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

School Culture, Fairness, and Responsiveness to the Needs of All Students

The educational leader:

A. Develops a school environment that promotes fairness and responsive practices

B. Develops and promotes an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student

C. Builds and supports a professional community of staff

Curriculum and Instruction

The educational leader:

A. Develops and implements a fair and rigorous instructional program that supports each student's growth and learning and reflects research-based practices

B. Implements an effective system of assessment and evaluation aligned with curriculum and instruction to promote students' academic success

Collaborating and Communicating with Stakeholders

The educational leader:

A. Promotes, develops, and supports productive and collaborative relationships with families and the community

B. Communicates effectively when working with families and stakeholders and how to engage their support for continuous improvement efforts

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Practice Questions

The practice questions in this study companion are designed to familiarize you with the types of questions you may see on the assessment. While they illustrate some of the formats and types of questions you will see on the test, your performance on these sample questions should not be viewed as a predictor of your performance on the actual test. Fundamentally, the most important component in ensuring your success is familiarity with the content that is covered on the assessment.

To respond to a practice question, choose one of the answer options listed. Be sure to read the directions carefully to ensure that you know what is required for each question. You may find it helpful to time yourself to simulate actual testing conditions. A correct answer and a rationale for each sample test question are in the section following the practice questions.

Keep in mind that the test you take at an actual administration will have different questions, although the proportion of questions in each subarea will be approximately the same. You should not expect the percentage of questions you answer correctly in these practice questions to be exactly the same as when you take the test at an actual administration, since numerous factors affect a person's performance in any given testing situation

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1. An elementary school leader is contacted by the parents of a student who broke his arm over the weekend. They are concerned that he will be unable to complete assignments because of his inability to write. The school leader can best address the parents' concern by providing the student with services through

   A. temporary placement in special education
   B. Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
   C. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
   D. occupational therapy

Answer and Rationale

2. Ms. Sylvester, an elementary school leader, uses a classroom observation application during walk-throughs. She utilizes a feature that allows her to time stamp specific teacher and student behaviors and make notes about what she observes. Once a walk-through is complete, the application instantly sends a report to the teacher. By using the application, Ms. Sylvester primarily demonstrates a commitment to

   A. storing important documentation for annual teacher evaluations
   B. using technology to complete administrative tasks and duties
   C. modeling the appropriate use of observation tools
   D. having systems in place for providing timely feedback

Answer and Rationale

3. A school leader in a varied community leads a school that does not currently have a parent-teacher organization (PTO) in place. The school leader prioritizes establishing a parent-teacher organization for the upcoming school year. Which of the following is a primary benefit of establishing a PTO in the school?

    A. The PTO will hold fund-raising events to supplement the school budget allowing for more significant purchases to be made.
    B. The PTO will assist the school administrators in making decisions about student activities that impact education.
    C. The PTO will provide a way for parents to be more involved in their children's education and foster a sense of community between families and educators.
    D. The PTO will reduce the number of transient families and establish a common vision for improved attendance and achievement.

Answer and Rationale

4. A school leader regularly meets with grade-level teams to discuss interventions for struggling students and how to provide enrichment opportunities for students who have achieved mastery. The school leader's primary purpose for the meetings is to

    A. build relationships with faculty and staff members through professional discussions
    B. promote differentiated instruction to support varying levels of student proficiency
    C. ensure teachers use an age-appropriate instructional strategy in each lesson
    D. analyze multiple data points across classrooms that demonstrate academic gains

Answer and Rationale

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

5. To best assist with the implementation of a new shared vision and action plan, the school leader should ensure that individual teachers are

   A. given time to meet with their departments to discuss the plan
   B. able to meet with district representation before accepting new responsibilities
   C. able to select professional development opportunities of their choosing
   D. given ongoing training beyond the rollout phase of the plan

Answer and Rationale

6. A school leader is setting goals for student success in reading and wants to include all important dimensions of goal setting. Match each defined goal with the dimension of goal setting it best exemplifies.

   Students' comprehension skills will improve by the end of the second nine weeks.

   Students will score a level 3 or higher on the ELA benchmark test.

   Students' comprehension skills will improve by participating in a reading mastery program.

   Eighty percent of students will pass the ELA benchmark test.

Specific	
Measurable	
Realistic and attainable	
Time-bound	

Answer and Rationale

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

7. A local high school plans to distribute laptops to all students for use on academic assignments and homework. Staff members express some concern about students using the laptops on campus and the potential for classroom disruptions. To best assist with implementation of the new technology initiative and address teachers' concerns, the school leader should ensure that

   A. students access the Internet on the school-based network
   B. stakeholders are aware of the district's new initiative
   C. students, staff, and parents are aware of policy expectations
   D. professional development opportunities address digital learning

Answer and Rationale

8. For each row, select the answer that applies.

When developing a plan to delegate responsibilities, a school leader creates a chart of those tasks that can be delegated and those that are best kept within the leadership team. Indicate whether each task is best to delegate or to keep within the leadership team.

Task	Can Delegate	Keep Within Leadership Team
Providing performance feedback		
Handling disciplinary action		
Organizing school events		
Composing school newsletters		

Answer and Rationale

9. Which of the following factors will have the greatest impact on communication and working relationships when a school leader sends e-mails to teachers and staff?

   A. The length and syntactic complexity of the e-mails
   B. The subject line, opening, and closing of the e-mails
   C. The daily and weekly volume of the e-mails
   D. The timing, content, and tone of the e-mails

Answer and Rationale

10. A school leader can best support the development of teachers' skills in technology integration by

   A. encouraging each teacher to create and host a classroom blog
   B. requiring that technology be a part of a specific number of lessons each week
   C. creating a committee to write an example technology lesson for each grade level
   D. modeling the effective use of technology tools throughout the school year

Answer and Rationale

11. A newly appointed high school leader is developing professional learning communities (PLCs) within each content department. The school leader wants the PLCs to meet once a week for 40 minutes. The primary benefit of PLCs is that they will allow the teachers to do which of the following?

   A. Collaborate to increase student achievement across all student populations
   B. Use a flexible schedule that meets individual teacher needs and preferences
   C. Write units of instruction that are tailored to school needs and district requirements
   D. Utilize tiered interventions for at-risk students to increase the likelihood of achievement gains

Answer and Rationale

12. A school leader uses an open decision-making process regarding a proposed school initiative.

    1. Gather a broad amount of input about the initiative.
    2.
    3. Be prompt and transparent about sharing the decision made.
    4. Reexamine the decision only if there is pertinent new information.

    Which of the following best represents the missing step?

    A. Support a decision that is based on research.
    B. Have a set of decision alternatives on standby.
    C. Facilitate consensus about a decision.
    D. Communicate the outcome of the decision.

Answer and Rationale

13. A few weeks after being hired, a new school leader finds that several minor district procedures for money management are not being followed at the school. Which of the following is the most appropriate step for the school leader to take to address the problem with faculty and staff?

    A. Training all staff on implementing proper accounting controls, procedures, and records for school funds
    B. Requesting that the district assign an accountant to the school to provide daily support on procedures
    C. Reviewing the school, district, and state guidelines and procedures that outline rules for handling funds
    D. Communicating regularly with the district's business office to ensure use of proper accounting procedures

Answer and Rationale

14. Which **TWO** of the following actions by school leaders support the effective use of formative assessment data for improving student achievement?

   A. Equipping classroom and lab computers with response software that allows teachers to view students' answers to teacher-posed questions

   B. Purchasing software that assists teachers in creating and customizing rubrics, checklists, and other evaluation instruments

   C. Establishing a shared database where teachers can access state and national standards and the district's lesson-planning template

   D. Updating the school improvement plan to focus on training teachers to locate and evaluate digital resources for instruction

   E. Introducing a student information system that facilitates teachers' ability to track the progress of individual students or groups of students

Answer and Rationale

15. A school leader in an urban high school is working with the leadership team to consider disciplinary consequences that better support student achievement and build a positive school culture. Which of the following actions has the best potential for achieving the school leader's goal?

   A. Integrating character education in academic curriculums

   B. Introducing retributive strategies that match the severity of misbehavior

   C. Examining programs that provide alternative solutions to suspensions

   D. Implementing detailed discipline-tracking practices

Answer and Rationale

16. A school leader is preparing a school improvement plan. Which **TWO** of the following are the most valuable data to use for identifying the academic needs of students when setting goals for the plan?

    A. Average teacher income in the city and county
    B. Findings of a survey of local businesses regarding perceptions of the school
    C. Performance data by grade level and subject
    D. Results of parent questionnaires on school programs
    E. The number of students who participate in before- and after-school extracurricular programs

Answer and Rationale

17. A high school social studies project engages students in asset mapping as a way of identifying youth-related opportunities and services within the school community. Collected data are compiled into a master map and shared with students, staff, and families. Which of the following is the most valuable benefit of the project for the school leader?

    A. Aligning school goals to match the community's needs
    B. Increasing family involvement in school-related activities
    C. Creating community partnerships to expand current programs
    D. Discovering untapped community resources to support the school vision

Answer and Rationale

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18. At a recent staff meeting, teachers asked the school leader to purchase a color printer for each grade level. Which of the following questions should the school leader initially ask in determining whether to purchase the color printers?

    A. To what degree do color printers support advancement toward the goals outlined in the school improvement plan?
    B. What is the estimated impact to the school budget if color printers are purchased and maintained for each grade level?
    C. How will teachers use color printers to improve the efficacy of planning for instruction and assessment?
    D. Can refurbished color printers be acquired instead of purchasing new equipment from approved vendors?

Answer and Rationale

19. When managing district operations, school leaders can use Georgia's Quality Basic Education Formula to

    A. use sales tax revenue provided by the state to fund school operations, including bonded debt
    B. pay teachers a salary according to their position on the teacher salary schedule
    C. plan for revenue equal to the 50th percentile of the property tax base per pupil for the system
    D. fund the construction or renovation of individual elementary or secondary schools in need of repair

Answer and Rationale

20. According to the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators, verbally abusing any student is a violation of which of the following standards?

    A. Conduct with students
    B. Legal compliance
    C. Honesty
    D. Remunerative conduct

Answer and Rationale

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21. The best way to engage key stakeholders in fulfilling the school's vision and mission is by

    A. meeting with key stakeholders once a year to discuss progress toward school improvement goals
    B. sending an annual report on the school's academic progress to community members and parents
    C. asking key stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of the current vision and mission regularly
    D. distributing copies of the school's vision and mission to community members

Answer and Rationale

22. At the conclusion of a transportation cost study, a school board approves consolidating the number of bus stops available for high-school students. As a result, parents are upset that students have to walk farther to get to a bus stop and, in some cases, walk in areas where there are no sidewalks. Which of the following actions by the school leader best addresses the parents' concern?

    A. Highlighting the cost savings to the district and the effort to minimize local school taxes
    B. Scheduling a public meeting to allow parents to voice their concerns
    C. Communicating the steps the district will take to ensure the safety of the students affected
    D. Examining ways to increase transportation funding to eliminate the need for consolidating bus stops

Answer and Rationale

23. Of the following evaluation methods, which would provide the most valid indication of the success of a course of study in meeting its instructional goals?

    A. Compiling results of a survey of the students' opinions of the course
    B. Reviewing anecdotal records that describe students' interpersonal growth during the course
    C. Reviewing data that indicate the degree of students' mastery of course objectives
    D. Surveying parents about the students' transfer of concepts learned in the course

Answer and Rationale

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

24. A school leader best fosters cohesion among staff members by doing which of the following?

    A. Facilitating regular conversations on common goals

    B. Basing decisions on majority opinions and views

    C. Sharing reminders on organizational procedures

    D. Creating teams of teachers to evaluate each other

Answer and Rationale

25. A school district is introducing a new reading program that requires teachers to change their approach to reading instruction. Which of the following strategies would best obtain the support of teachers for the new reading program?

    A. Modifying the reading program so that it aligns with the teachers' current instructional strategies

    B. Increasing the number of observations during the school year to hold teachers accountable for the program's implementation

    C. Scheduling a series of voluntary after-school workshops throughout the school year to support teachers' ability to use the program

    D. Identifying teachers to pilot the program and basing the program's implementation on their feedback

Answer and Rationale

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

26. Which of the following strategies best engages stakeholders in the process of creating a shared vision?

    A. Asking parents to draft a preliminary vision statement for the administrative leadership to review

    B. Offering parent meetings where the school leader presents the developed vision and goals

    C. Assessing the district's readiness through input from employees early in the development process

    D. Involving employees and community members directly in the process so each group has a voice

Answer and Rationale

27. The newly appointed school leader of an elementary school is concerned about the students' performance on the state standardized tests for mathematics. Which of the following should be the school leader's initial step in developing a plan to improve students' scores?

    A. Hire a staff developer to teach staff innovative approaches to mathematics instruction

    B. Collect information about the instructional methods, materials, and assessments currently in use

    C. Conduct a curriculum audit of the mathematics program at all grade levels

    D. Administer another assessment to identify specific areas of weakness in students' performance

Answer and Rationale

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

28. A school leader meets with the school improvement council to review progress toward achieving campus goals. During the data session, the council identifies an upward trend in the percentage of students who drop out of school. Which of the following is the most effective first step for the council to take to address the situation?

   A. Examining the school's academic program to identify the areas that are the most challenging to students at risk of dropping out
   B. Diagnosing the reasons for the change observed in order to develop a specific plan to address the issue
   C. Developing a system for identifying students at risk of dropping out and assigning a faculty mentor to each student
   D. Sharing the data with teachers and asking them to develop individual dropout prevention strategies for classroom use

Answer and Rationale

29. A new high school leader observes a long-standing pattern of high rates of disciplinary referrals among students from ethnic minorities. Which of the following is the school leader's best response to the observation?

   A. Reviewing the disciplinary records of all students for the previous year
   B. Prioritizing the recruitment of teachers who represent different cultures
   C. Arranging professional development that builds teachers' intercultural competency
   D. Revising the school's code of conduct related to disciplinary issues

Answer and Rationale

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

30. During the investigation of a teacher for possible drug abuse, school district officials search the teacher's desk. Which of the following is the standard required of school districts in this situation?

   A. The existence of probable cause
   B. A current board policy
   C. An active search warrant
   D. The existence of reasonable suspicion

Answer and Rationale

31. Which of the following is a primary benefit of teachers using technology such as e-mail, student information systems, and instant messaging to communicate with parents?

   A. The amount of time teachers will need to meet with parents will decrease.
   B. The maintenance of Internet-based communication is easier than that of other types.
   C. Parents will be more likely to acquire access to Internet technology.
   D. Parents can monitor their child's performance and give feedback to teachers.

Answer and Rationale

32. Which of the following is the best initial action for a school leader to take when building a partnership with a community group?

    A. Developing a shared vision to support student success
    B. Implementing a means for assessing the effects of the partnership
    C. Establishing roles and responsibilities for joint activities
    D. Training group members to work effectively with students

Answer and Rationale

33. To play an effective role in supporting the teacher-induction process, an educational leader at the school level should

    A. coordinate the selection and assignment of mentor teachers
    B. model lessons that exemplify current instructional best practices
    C. gather stakeholder feedback on district support of new teachers
    D. meet with each new teacher for an hour every week to discuss professional goals

Answer and Rationale

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

34. A new school leader reviews district policies and procedures related to crisis and emergency management. The most appropriate next step in crisis-management leadership is to

    A. identify specific safe zones within the community and establish routes to them
    B. elicit feedback from emergency responders and law enforcement about the school crisis plan
    C. ensure that students are ready to respond to crises by carrying out practice drills
    D. create a school crisis team and develop a tailored crisis plan that includes a clear chain of command

Answer and Rationale

35. Which of the following best creates conditions for effective data use in schools to facilitate sustainable school improvement results?

    A. Allowing teachers access to a variety of data
    B. Providing teachers explicit norms and expectations for data use
    C. Supporting individual teacher professional development plans
    D. Increasing classroom visits to evaluate teacher effectiveness

Answer and Rationale

Answer Key and Rationales

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
1	C	**Option C is correct.** This question tests the school leader's understanding of how to help maintain a supportive environment that meets the student's educational needs. One of the eligibility factors for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is a physical or mental impairment. The student can temporarily receive accommodations for completing assignments through Section 504. Back to Question
2	D	**Option D is correct.** This question tests the school leader's knowledge of the purpose and benefits of a variety of data and communication systems. The school leader has established a data system that supports her role as instructional leader by providing timely and relevant feedback to classroom teachers.. Back to Question
3	C	**Option C is correct.** This question tests the school leader's understanding of the importance of collaborating with families to support student learning. A PTO helps break down barriers and encourages collaboration between parents and teachers. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
4	B	**Option B is correct.** This question tests the school leader's understanding of using processes to improve instructional programs in order to meet students' needs. The role of the school leader is to promote individualized instruction and close the achievement gap. One way this can be done is by differentiating the instruction in the classroom based on student needs. The school leader clearly has a goal of supporting varying levels of student proficiency by facilitating conversations about interventions and appropriate learning opportunities for all students. Back to Question
5	D	**Option D is correct.** This question tests the school leader's knowledge of effective strategies to facilitate change. According to research, teachers need to be appropriately trained and supported throughout a change process in order to ensure their buy-in and commitment to its implementation. Back to Question
6	C, B, D, and A	**The correct order is C, B, D, and A.** Students' comprehension skills improving by participation in the reading mastery program is a specific dimension of goal setting because it is a specific action that the school will implement to induce change in student performance. Students scoring a level 3 or higher on the ELA benchmark test is a measurable dimension of goal setting because the data can be easily analyzed to see whether the goal was met. Eighty percent of students passing the ELA benchmark test is a realistic and attainable dimension of goal setting because it sets a goal that is achievable. Students' comprehension skills improving by the end of the second nine weeks is a time-bound dimension of goal setting because it defines a certain time to check for results. Back to Question

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
7	C	**Option C is correct.** This question tests the school leader's understanding of how to use and manage technology to improve instruction. Establishing expectations and procedures with a wide variety of groups can help members of the staff, students, and parents understand the policy, its implementation, and repercussions when expectations are not followed. These procedures will help create a school culture that addresses technology and the new policy implementation. Back to Question
8	B, D, E and G	**Options B, D, E, and G are correct.** Providing performance feedback and handling disciplinary action are tasks that the school leader should keep within the leadership team because they involve sensitive issues that leaders are responsible for. Organizing school events and composing school newsletters are tasks that can be delegated to a staff member outside the leadership team because they do not involve sensitive or confidential issues. Back to Question
9	D	**Option D is correct.** This question tests the school leader's knowledge of professional conduct. Correct timing, the content of the message in its entirety, and how the message will be perceived by the reader are key factors in the overall effectiveness of e-mails. These are all factors that a school leader should consider when sending correspondence electronically. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
10	D	**Option D is correct.** This question tests the school leader's knowledge of best practices for assisting teachers with integrating technology into the classroom. Modeling the appropriate use of technology resources is the most effective way to show the school leader's commitment to technology education as well as to build the staff's understanding of various new methods and resources for technology use. Back to Question
11	A	**Option A is correct.** This question tests the school leader's understanding of the importance of a support system that allows teachers to collaborate and learn from one another. Collaborating to increase student achievement outcomes is a main focus and benefit of PLCs. Teachers work together to examine student data and staff practices to ensure learning and better outcomes for all. Back to Question
12	C	**Option C is correct.** This question tests the school leader's knowledge of the decision-making process. Open decision making includes facilitating consensus, whereby all group members reach a decision together. Facilitating consensus would appropriately take place after input has been received. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
13	A	**Option A is correct.** The school leader should clarify expectations by providing specific training to all staff to address the money management errors identified. Back to Question
14	A and E	**Options A and E are correct.** Both actions promote teacher use of formative assessment, an essential element of the teaching process. Option A, response software, provides teachers with an immediate and effective means of monitoring student comprehension of lesson content. Option E, a student information system that tracks progress, facilitates teachers' ability to quantify student rates of improvement and the effectiveness of instruction for individual students or groups of students. Back to Question
15	C	**Option C is correct.** Research supports that suspension is ineffective in improving student behavior. Examining programs that provide alternative solutions to suspensions allows the school leader to address student misconduct while keeping students moving toward their academic and behavioral goals. Back to Question

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
16	C and D	**Options C and D are correct.** A school leader forms the most complete picture of student needs by examining both quantitative and qualitative data. Test scores provide measurable data about student performance, and parent surveys identify perceptions or beliefs that may be hindering the success of school efforts to meet student needs. Back to Question
17	D	**Option D is correct.** Discovering untapped community resources will provide the school leader with data and insight into the services in the community that could help support the school vision. Back to Question
18	A	**Option A is correct.** Purchases should relate to the school vision and goals to best support student success. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
19	B	**Option B is correct.** The Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula provides training and experience (T&E) funds to pay teachers based on their position on the teacher salary schedule. Back to Question
20	A	**Option A is correct.** The Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators addresses, in the section titled Conduct with Students, committing any act of child abuse, including verbal abuse. Back to Question
21	C	**Option C is correct.** During the school improvement process, the school council, composed of key stakeholders, will engage in regular and periodic sessions to assess the effectiveness of the current vision and mission as its most authentic and engaging activity. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
22	C	**Option C is correct.** This is a common concern among parents when this type of change happens, so the superintendent needs to work to communicate the extra steps/efforts taken to ensure student safety which would address the parents' primary concern. Back to Question
23	C	**Option C is correct.** Reviewing data and course objectives provides evaluative information directly related to students' understanding of the knowledge and skills as described in the course's instructional goals. Back to Question
24	A	**Option A is correct.** Regular conversations about the goals that school staff members are pursuing can encourage the entire staff to join forces in support of those goals. Staff conversations should be more productive than a review of the school's procedures, and they should probe deeper than making decisions based on majority opinions. To achieve cohesion, each member of the team should have a clear understanding of his or her role and a deep sense of responsibility to achieve common goals. Through this process, authentic relationships are built that help teachers see the value in their collective work. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
25	D	**Option D is correct.** District leadership can best obtain the support of teachers by asking those interested in the program's success to pilot it first. Then the district can create buy-in by sharing results and success stories and initiating changes based on feedback from the pilot. Back to Question
26	D	**Option D is correct.** By providing stakeholders, including employees and community members, an opportunity to be involved in the development of a shared vision, the school leader demonstrates an understanding that individuals affected by the implementation of the vision should be a part of creating it. That way, all stakeholders will have a sense of ownership and will be committed to the change. Back to Question
27	C	**Option C is correct.** A mathematics curriculum audit is an appropriate first step because it will allow the school leader to ensure the curriculum is properly aligned with the standards and instruction across all grade levels in order to improve student assessment outcomes. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
28	B	**Option B is correct.** After finding a trend in the campus data, the next appropriate step is to probe deeper into the problem to better diagnose the reasons for the change before any type of action plan is initiated. Back to Question
29	C	**Option C is correct.** A long-standing issue indicates an underlying insufficiency in teachers' understanding of how culture affects behavior. Building intercultural competency is the first step in addressing how teachers relate to students in ethnic minority groups. Back to Question
30	D	**Option D is correct.** While the requirement for police officers is usually probable cause, a lesser standard of reasonable suspicion of drug abuse is needed for a district official to search a teacher's desk. Generally, the courts acknowledge that school boards have the authority to support a search of employees or students and their belongings when there is evidence or reasonable suspicion of drug activity. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
31	D	**Option D is correct.** Using multiple types of technology to communicate with parents allows parents to access student information at their convenience using their preferred method, while also providing up-to-date information on their child's academic progress. Back to Question
32	A	**Option A is correct.** The school leader must first ensure that the group shares a similar vision. A shared vision sets the course for the partnership by defining the focus of all discussions and actions and directing the partners' energy and efforts toward achieving the common goal of student success. Back to Question
33	A	**Option A is correct.** Educational leaders at the school level are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and assigning mentors to new teachers. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
34	D	**Option D is correct.** After reviewing district policies and procedures on crisis and emergency management, the school leader should create a crisis team and develop a plan tailored to school needs with a clear chain of command. Back to Question
35	B	**Option B is correct.** Creating explicit norms and expectations for data use fosters an institutional culture in which teachers use data to guide instructional decisions and assume responsibility for results. Back to Question

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Constructed-response Questions

The purpose of this section is to describe the constructed-response questions that appear on the GACE Educational Leadership assessment and to explain the criteria used to score each constructed-response question.

Unlike the selected-response questions, the constructed-response questions require you to demonstrate your knowledge in a subject area by providing in-depth written responses. The assessment includes four constructed-response questions. These questions require you to read an educational leadership situation and respond in writing.

Preparing for the Constructed-response Questions

When preparing for the constructed-response questions, read the sample questions and scoring guide carefully. You may wish to draft a response to each sample question by reading the question and planning, writing, and revising your essay. You should use a total of about 15 minutes for each constructed-response question. Also, because no reference materials will be available during the test, it is recommended that you refrain from using a dictionary, a thesaurus, or textbooks while writing your practice responses.

Once you have written your practice responses, reread the scoring guide, and then read the sample responses provided for each score level. Rationales that explain how the responses characterize the score point description are provided for each of the responses. After you have read through these materials, review your own responses in light of the score point descriptions. You may also wish to review your responses and the score scale with staff in your preparation program.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Scoring Guide

Readers will assign scores based on the following scoring guide.

Score	Description
3	Demonstrates a thorough understanding and response to the issues presented in the documents and/or scenario. The response is well-developed and synthesizes important information. • Demonstrates detailed, specific, and convincing evidence that shows an understanding of the issues presented and provides reasonable strategies for resolution • Responds appropriately to all parts of the question • Applies appropriate knowledge of underlying processes involved when addressing various points of view or conflict in a situation • Prioritizes, outlines, or organizes steps or actions in a logical and insightful manner • When required, provides a strong explanation and rationale for the response
2	Demonstrates a basic/general understanding of the important information in the scenario. The response demonstrates an application or resolution to the issues presented in the scenario. • Demonstrates basic evidence of an understanding of the issues presented in the materials and reasonable, basic ways to resolve the issues • Responds appropriately to most parts of the question • Applies general knowledge of the process to address the different points of view and resolve conflict in a reasonable way • Prioritizes, outlines, or organizes steps or actions in a general manner • May contain minor errors in terminology or process that detract from the demonstration of an overall understanding of the educational leadership role • When required, provides an adequate explanation or rationale for the response

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Scoring Guide (continued)

Score	Description
1	Demonstrates a limited understanding of the scenario and supporting documents. The response analyzes the situation in a manner that is clearly limited or flawed. • Demonstrates limited evidence of an understanding of the issues presented in the materials and presents unreasonable ways to resolve the issues • Fails to respond appropriately to some parts of the question • Applies weak knowledge of the process to address the conflicting points of view • Prioritizes, outlines, or organizes steps or actions unclearly or with gaps in logic • Applies weak knowledge to resolve conflict in a reasonable way • May contain serious misconceptions in terminology or process that detract from the demonstration of an overall understanding of the role of an educational leader • When required, provides a simplistic explanation or rationale for the response
0	Demonstrates little or no understanding of the scenario presented. The response fails to address essential components of the question. • Demonstrates little or no evidence of an understanding of the issues presented in the question or materials and provides unreasonable ways to resolve the issues • Fails to respond to any part of the question or rephrases the question • Applies little or no knowledge of the process to address the conflicting points of view • Fails to prioritize, outline, or organize steps or actions • Applies little or no knowledge to resolve conflict or understand various points of view • May contain mostly serious misconceptions in terminology or process that detract from the demonstration of an overall understanding of the role of an educational leader • When required, provides no explanation or no rationale for the response **Note:** The mere presence of leadership-specific words or phrases that might be used in an adequate response does not, by itself, indicate knowledge.

Constructed-response Question 1: Promoting Continuous and Sustainable Progress toward the District's Educational Vision

The first constructed-response question illustrates the kind of question in the test. It is not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Sample answers with commentary follow the question.

General Directions

Plan to use approximately 15 minutes to complete this question.

Read the constructed-response question carefully before you begin to write your response to ensure that you address all components. Think about how you will organize what you plan to write.

The final version of your response should conform to the conventions of standard written English. Your written response should be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work. You may, however, use citations when appropriate.

Sample Question

Decker Middle School (DMS) is a large, urban school serving students in grades six through eight. All students take district-developed benchmark tests twice a year in core subject areas. Benchmark tests assess the knowledge and skills required by the district's scope and sequence at that point in the school year. The questions on the benchmark are appropriately aligned to the state-mandated assessment for the content covered. Ms. O'Malley, the new school leader, reviews school-level and teacher-level results to identify trends and student progress. Ms. O'Malley recognizes a concerning trend in the results of Ms. Slocum, an experienced seventh-grade science teacher.

Ms. O'Malley completes several walkthroughs and reviews recent lesson plans by Ms. Slocum and records some notes. Based on these actions and observations, Ms. O'Malley wants to work with Ms. Slocum to provide instructional coaching to improve student success in her class.

Documents

- Decker Middle School seventh-grade science benchmark results
- Ms. O'Malley's notes regarding lesson plans and walkthroughs of Ms. Slocum's classes

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Decker Middle School Seventh-Grade Science Benchmark Results
Department Results vs Ms. Slocum's Students' Results
% of students achieving Mastery

Department Results			
	Matter and Mass	Energy	Force and Motion
This Year	89%	90%	83%
Last Year	86%	85%	78%
Ms. Slocum's Students' Results			
	Matter and Mass	Energy	Force and Motion
This Year	76%	78%	70%
Last Year	80%	76%	72%

Ms. O'Malley's Notes Regarding Recent Walkthroughs of Ms. Slocum's Classes

Performance Area	Comment
Instructional planning	The instructional objective of the lesson is provided in student-friendly language on the board. Lesson plans are completed independently following the district scope and sequence chart. I see no evidence of the use of instructional data to plan lessons or interventions for student weaknesses.
Instructional strategies	Direct instruction is supplemented with scientific inquiry labs on occasion. When working in group labs, students are engaged but not recording investigations. During group lessons, some students take notes. When I asked students about the direct instruction lessons, students shared that they "listen and the teacher provides a review sheet with questions before the test."
Assessment	Ms. Slocum reviews the class average for assignments and tests to see if students studied hard. She feels that these data are best for informing parents of student learning. Ms. Slocum uses teacher-developed assessments, but upon review, I see that most questions are selected-response questions with few open-ended questions.
Professionalism	Ms. Slocum participates in professional growth opportunities when provided by the school.
Communication	At the department meeting reviewing the results of the benchmark, the department head provided the school-level and teacher-level results. A couple of teachers stayed after the meeting to complete an item analysis of the area of force and motion. Ms. Slocum created lesson plans for an upcoming unit during this time.

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

The school leader, Ms. O'Malley, plans to meet with Ms. Slocum for instructional coaching to improve her professional practice. Together they review trends in benchmark results for the last two years and Ms. O'Malley's notes.

- Using information in the documents provided, identify **THREE** actions the school leader should include in a plan to help Ms. Slocum improve her professional practice. Justify each identified action.
- For **EACH** identified action, explain how the action will help improve Ms. Slocum's professional practice.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Sample Responses and Rationales for Question 1

Sample Response Earning a Score of 3

A review of the science benchmark results and Ms. O'Malley's notes, indicates that there are serious issues that need to be addressed with Ms. Slocum's instructional practice.

The first action the school leader should include in a plan would be to have Ms. Slocum review her teacher-made assessments in order to make sure that they are aligned with the state-mandated assessments and benchmarks in both rigor and expectation. Ms. O'Malley's notes state that Ms. Slocum's teacher-made assessments are primarily made of up selected-response questions and that there are very few open-ended questions. As well, Ms. Slocum feels that assignment averages inform parents of learning, but she doesn't mention how valuable they are to her instruction. The school leader should review with the teacher the use of short daily formative assessments to receive regular feedback about how student learning is progressing. Ms. Slocum's practices with student assessment are not providing her a good picture of how her students are progressing toward the instructional objectives of each lesson. Open-ended questions are really important to include regularly so that students can explain their thinking and delve into topics more deeply. Reviewing and improving Ms. Slocum's assessments will help her set the bar appropriately for student performance, give students more varied opportunities to demonstrate their understanding in different ways, and give the teacher regular data to use to inform instruction.

The second action the school leader should include in a plan is to have Ms. Slocum complete an item analysis of the benchmark results. With the benchmark questions in hand and her student responses, Ms. Slocum can look to see what content students are struggling with. Then she can look for common misconceptions in their learning. She can identify concepts and underlying knowledge and skills that students may be missing and incorporate this into her instruction. She can identify concepts that need to be retaught to the whole class and concepts that need to be retaught to certain students in small groups based on the data. In comparing the department's results on the science benchmark tests with Ms. Slocum's, it is obvious that Ms. Slocum's students consistently perform below the department's results and in some cases did not improve from the prior year. Ms. Slocum didn't appear to participate when other teachers did some of this data analysis work, so she would benefit from coaching in this area. By completing the data analysis, Ms. Slocum can learn to use the information to better inform future lesson planning.

The third action that the school leader should include in a plan to help Ms. Slocum improve her professional practice would be to have her take the information she has learned by improving her teacher-made assessments and student performance on the benchmark and begin to create lesson plans. She needs to better engage students in the learning process and make lessons more meaningful to them. With appropriately aligned formative assessments, she knows what knowledge and skills students need to be able to demonstrate by the end of the learning. Now she must create engaging lessons that provide students the learning experiences to reach that level of mastery. She will need to consider using a variety of high-leverage instructional strategies that could be implemented in order to increase student engagement and differentiate learning based on student needs. Ms. O'Malley's notes indicate that Ms. Slocum's students are not engaged in the learning process to the extent that they should be. Few students were taking notes and the students indicated that they could just listen to the lessons because the teacher would provide them with review questions before a test. If Ms. Slocum purposely plans lessons that target instructional strategies and activities that ensure students have experiences that will lead to their mastery of the instructional objectives, students' learning will be more purposeful and they will be more engaged. This will improve her professional practice because the more the students are engaged in the learning process, the more they will master the skills being taught.

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Rationale for the Score of 3

This response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the important role of a school leader in being an instructional leader, including working with teachers to implement a rigorous, standards-based curriculum and effective instructional practices to ensure student academic success. The response begins by recognizing that there is evidence in the scenario that the teacher's professional practice needs to be improved.

The first appropriate action presented in the response is to have Ms. Slocum review her teacher-made assessments to ensure that they are aligned with the state-mandated assessment and benchmark in both rigor and expectation. This action is also justified with evidence from the walkthrough notes. The response explains that this action will help to improve the teacher's professional practice by assisting her in seeing that her assessments are not as rigorous as they need to be and also giving her examples of the types of open-ended questions that she needs to include in her teacher-made assessments.

The second appropriate action presented is to have Ms. Slocum complete an item analysis of the benchmark results in order to identify the skills her students are not able to master and to look for common student misconceptions. Again, this action is justified with evidence from the communication portion of the walkthrough notes. The response goes on to explain that this action will help improve the teacher's professional practice because she will be able to target instruction to address her students' needs.

The third appropriate action presented in the response is for Ms. Slocum to review, analyze, and update her lesson plans to show where a variety of instructional strategies could be implemented in order to increase student engagement. This action is justified with evidence presented in the scenario. This action will help improve the teacher's professional practice because the more the students are engaged in meaningful learning targeting areas of improvement, the better their academic performance will be.

This thorough and detailed response provides clear and appropriate actions the school leader should include in a plan to help the teacher improve her instructional practice. The plan is organized into actions that are logical, detailed, and insightful. The justifications are specific and convincing. Overall, this response demonstrates a thorough understanding of how to develop plans to meet and monitor identified needs through appropriate curricular and instructional practices.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Sample Response Earning a Score of 2

As a science teacher myself, one area that I found most concerning was that Ms. Slocum did not require all students to record their investigations during labs. This is a critical step in the scientific process and provides great evidence to the teacher of student engagement. In addition, requiring students to record their observations also assists in keeping students actively engaged in the lab. I would ask Ms. Slocum to provide me with a copy of her lab protocols for students and I would review these with her to ensure that they clearly contained all appropriate steps and especially that they required students to record their investigations and conclusions.

Another example of Ms. Slocum's lack of understanding of the need to keep students actively engaged in the lesson was the observation that "few students took notes during lessons." It was noted that "they can just listen because the teacher will provide a review sheet with questions before tests." This is another indication that Ms. Slocum lacks an understanding of the importance of student engagement. Ms. O'Malley should discuss this with Ms. Slocum and explain how critical student engagement is. Ms. O'Malley should follow up these discussions with a visit to both labs and classes to ensure that greater student engagement is occurring.

Finally, in addition to addressing the lack of student engagement and rigor regarding labs and note-taking, it is also critical to review and update teacher-developed assessments for rigor and their alignment to state-mandated assessments. This can be done by having Ms. Slocum work with the science department chairperson and having them work together to review her current assessment instruments and revise them to better reflect the rigor found in the benchmarks and the state-mandated assessment. This action is critical if Ms. Slocum is going to prepare her students to be more successful on both the benchmark tests as well as on the state-mandated assessments to follow. If Ms. Slocum improves her skill in developing more rigorous assessments, she can then more accurately determine the needs of her students so that they may be more successful.

Rationale for the Score of 2

This response begins by stating that Ms. Slocum's lack of requiring students to record their investigations during labs was very concerning as it was a critical step in the scientific method but also because it provides great evidence to the teacher of student engagement. The first appropriate action was then recommended when it stated that students would be required to record their observations. This action would improve the teacher's professional practice because it would assist in keeping students actively engaged in the lab. Ms. O'Malley would then review Ms. Slocum's lab protocols to ensure that they contained all appropriate steps and that they required students to record their investigations.

Next, this response provides another example of Ms. Slocum's lack of understanding of the need to keep students actively engaged in the lesson when it pointed out that few students took notes during class lessons because they knew they would be provided a review sheet with questions before the tests. It was then recommended that Ms. O'Malley discuss the concern with Ms. Slocum and explain how critical student engagement is and then recommended that Ms. O'Malley follow up with a visit to both labs and classes to ensure that greater student engagement is occurring. This represented a second action to address greater student engagement.

Finally, this response recommends another appropriate action when it states that the teacher-developed assessments be reviewed and updated for rigor and alignment to the state-mandated

assessments. It was recommended that this be done by having Ms. Slocum meet with the science department chairperson and having them work together. It was explained that this action would improve her professional practice because it would prepare her students to be more successful on both the benchmark tests as well as on the state-mandated assessments to follow.

Although this response provides three actions that the school leader should include in a plan to help the teacher improve her instructional practice, and justifies each, the first two actions address the same concern, the lack of student engagement. The justifications and explanations are general and tend to repeat the idea of "student engagement." Overall, this response demonstrates a general understanding of how to develop plans to meet and monitor identified needs through appropriate curricular and instructional practices.

Sample Response Earning a Score of 1

The first action Ms. O'Malley should include in a plan to help Ms. Slocum improve her professional practice would be to have her complete an analysis of her students' results on the matter and mass section of the benchmark test and compare them with the results of the department overall. Ms. Slocum's students had a mastery of only 76% this year and 80% last year compared with the department's mastery results of 89% this year and 86% last year. This analysis will help to improve Ms. Slocum's professional practice because she can use this information to plan her future lessons in matter and mass.

The second action Ms. O'Malley should include in a plan to help Ms. Slocum improve her professional practice would be to have her complete an analysis of her students' results on the energy section of the benchmark test and compare them with the results of the department overall. Ms. Slocum's students had a mastery of only 78% this year and 76% last year compared with the department's mastery results of 90% this year and 85% last year. This will help to improve Ms. Slocum's professional practice because she can use the information to plan how she will meet the needs of the students who need remediation.

The third action Ms. O'Malley should include in a plan to help Ms. Slocum improve her professional practice would be to have her complete an analysis of her students' results on the force and motion section of the benchmark test and compare them with the results of the department overall. Ms. Slocum's students had a mastery of only 70% this year and 72% last year compared with the department's mastery results of 83% this year and 78% last year. This will help Ms. Slocum improve her professional practice because she will be able to use this analysis to help meet her students' needs in the future.

Rationale for the Score of 1

This response provides three similar actions Ms. O'Malley should include in a plan to help Ms. Slocum improve her professional practice. The response justifies each of the actions with data provided in the scenario. However, each of the actions involves Ms. Slocum completing an analysis of her students' results on the benchmark and comparing them with the results of the department overall. Therefore, taken together they provide limited evidence of the candidate's understanding of the issues presented in the scenario. The candidate missed the opportunity to address other issues presented in the scenario that would show a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of ways to improve the teacher's professional practice. Overall, this response demonstrates a limited understanding of how to develop plans to meet and monitor identified needs through appropriate curricular and instructional practices.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Sample Response Earning a Score of 0

After viewing the benchmark results and the school leader notes provided, Ms. O'Malley should have some genuine concerns regarding Ms. Slocum's instructional practices.

First, I would recommend that Ms. O'Malley meet with Ms. Slocum and present to her the benchmark data. Perhaps Ms. Slocum is really unaware of how important it is to ensure student success in her classroom. I think it is important to set a positive tone for the conference and ensure that it is a safe environment for the teacher to learn how to improve her practice and how to ensure student success.

Then Ms. O'Malley should review a copy of her walkthrough notes with Ms. Slocum. She should highlight the important text in the following areas: instructional planning, instructional strategies, and assessment. Walkthroughs are an important way that the principal can get into the classrooms and see students and teachers in their day-to-day interactions.

Finally, Ms. O'Malley should remind Ms. Slocum that in addition to the areas identified for improvement, it was also noted that she always participated in professional growth opportunities when they were provided. It is important to end with a positive note when working with teachers to improve their instructional practice.

Rationale for the Score of 0

Following a general opening statement that suggests that Ms. O'Malley should have some concerns about Ms. Slocum's instructional practices, this response begins by recommending that Ms. O'Malley should present Ms. Slocum the benchmark results. However, Ms. Slocum was already presented the results at the department meeting. So this action shows little or no understanding of the situation.

The response then recommends that Ms. O'Malley review a copy of her walkthrough notes with Ms. Slocum, highlighting the important text. The response show little or no understanding of the areas that should be addressed or how to provide coaching to address the important areas of concern.

Finally, the response recommends that Ms. O'Malley should refer to an area in which Ms. Slocum's practice was adequate, specifically that she participated in professional development opportunities when provided. This action shows little or no understanding of ways to improve the teacher's instructional practice.

The three actions provided in this response suggest that the school leader share information provided in the scenario with the teacher. The response does not provide any justification for the actions nor does it provide any explanation as to how the actions will help to improve the teacher's professional practice, as required by the question. Overall, this response demonstrates little or no understanding of how to develop plans to meet and monitor identified needs through appropriate curricular and instructional practices.

Constructed-response Question 2: Monitoring Instructional Programs and Developing a Shared Culture of Success

The second constructed-response question illustrates this kind of question in the test. It is not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Sample answers with commentary follow the question.

General Directions

Plan to use approximately 15 minutes to complete this question.

Read the constructed-response question carefully before you begin to write your response to ensure that you address all components. Think about how you will organize what you plan to write.

The final version of your response should conform to the conventions of standard written English. Your written response should be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work. You may, however, use citations when appropriate.

Sample Question

A principal observes Mr. Kang, an experienced teacher, and finds that his lessons do not reflect the district and campus focus on alignment with state standards. The teacher is resistant to the mandated curriculum standards and considers them an infringement on his control of the classroom. The principal wants to help the teacher better understand how to align his lessons to the Georgia Performance Standards.

- Describe THREE actions the principal can take to help Mr. Kang better understand how to align his lessons with the performance standards.
- For EACH action, identify the participants involved in the action and the timetable for implementation.

Sample Responses and Rationales for Question 2

Sample Response Earning a Score of 3

To address the situation, I would take the following actions:

1. Meet with Mr. Kang to explain my understanding of the situation.

   a. Participants: Principal, Mr. Kang
   b. Timetable: Within 24 hours of the observation

   During the meeting, I would review the data I have to support my observation that his lessons are not aligned with the state standards. I would provide a strong rationale for the need to align his lessons as required by district/campus policy. I would discuss with him how textbooks are not state specific, and how tracking student progress helps assess grade-level mastery of state standards. We would utilize student results by competency on a recent state-mandated assessment as a starting point to see gaps that may be apparent.

2. Create an action plan for addressing the situation, because addressing the situation will take time.

   a. Participants: Principal, Mr. Kang, supervisor of instruction or grade-level chairperson
   b. Timetable: Within a week of the first meeting

   When creating the plan, I will want to discuss with Mr. Kang the different possible supports to consider for the plan. Together we will consider: staff development on understanding state standards, selecting staff development on analyzing the parts or verbs in each standard, creating standards-based lessons, providing him a mentor to provide support, setting specific goals, monitoring lesson plans for compliance and progress toward goals we establish.

3. Monitor the action plan created collaboratively

   a. Participants: Principal, Mr. Kang, curriculum coordinator/grade-level chairperson
   b. Timetable: monitor progress toward goals regularly until goals are met

   To best ensure that the teacher learns to align lessons with the state standards, the principal will need to monitor progress toward the goals and ensure that the teacher uses the standards when creating his lessons and creates a checklist to monitor gaps and overlap and ensure thorough coverage and student mastery until this practice becomes a standard part of the teacher's planning process.

Rationale for the Score of 3

The response presents a thorough understanding of the steps needed to address the situation. The response is detailed, specific, and clearly defines the role of the principal and other support personnel when changing teacher behavior to improve classroom instruction. The response also outlines an effective plan that proposes a logical and reasonable course of action. The plan shows the principal's depth of understanding of the various strategies needed to improve instructional change, such as clearly presenting the problem and helping the teacher understand the rationale for the needed change, including the teacher in the development of the plan to address the situation, using other support personnel, and monitoring the plan until the goals are achieved.

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Sample Response Earning a Score of 2

Since state standards are a core and essential component of ensuring that schools provide the instruction students need to progress through the grades with the knowledge and skills the state has deemed important, the principal needs to work with Mr. Kang to change his practice.

Within a couple of days of observing his class and reviewing his lesson plans to find this lack of alignment, the principal needs to meet with Mr. Kang and discuss the situation.

The principal needs to call on the help of the district curriculum and instruction coordinator to provide staff development in the next couple of weeks to Mr. Kang so he can better understand why this change is important and how to actually make the change in his practice.

The principal needs to go back into Mr. Kang's classroom in a couple months to see whether he has changed his practice.

Rationale for the Score of 2

The response presents a general understanding of the important information in the scenario. The response demonstrates awareness, rather than clear recognition, of the actions needed to help Mr. Kang understand the situation and change his practice. The three steps presented respond to most of the parts of the question, but they do so without strong rationales, logic, or insight. One action presents a response that is contrary to effective practice (waiting several months to visit Mr. Kang's classroom again). Holistically, the answer is general with minor errors in process that detract from a demonstration of an overall understanding of the educational leader's role.

Sample Response Earning a Score of 1

Within a couple of days of the observation of Mr. Kang, the principal is going to have to request help from the curriculum coordinator to change Mr. Kang's practice and beliefs about what is important when lesson planning. Mr. Kang must understand the importance of developing lessons that ensure he teaches the correct content to his students without gaps. Additionally, he must monitor students' progress toward closing these gaps. The principal should ask the curriculum coordinator to review Mr. Kang's textbook for alignment with the state standards and teach him the process of aligning his lessons and documenting this alignment.

Rationale for the Score of 1

The response demonstrates some competence in analyzing the situation, but it is weak in organizing the three steps the principal should take. The response is incomplete because it does not clearly identify who should be involved in each step and the timeline for the steps. Overall, the organization of the response is unclear, which makes it difficult to understand the steps needed.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Sample Response Earning a Score of 0

Teachers have a responsibility to teach students the state-adopted standards. This is basic and essential to their job. The principal has to hold Mr. Kang accountable to teach what is being assessed by the state. After all, Mr. Kang is not going to be pleased with his evaluation at the end of the year if he doesn't improve in this area.

Rationale for the Score of 0

The response demonstrates little or no understanding of the situation and fails to address the components of the question. It focuses on the teacher's responsibility to change his practice rather than on providing specific actions the principal can take to ensure Mr. Kang adjusts his practice.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Preparation Resources

The resources listed below may help you prepare for the GACE assessment in this field. These preparation resources have been identified by content experts in the field to provide up-to-date information that relates to the field in general. You may wish to use current issues or editions of these materials to obtain information on specific topics for study and review.

Guide to Taking a GACE Computer-delivered Assessment

This guide explains how to navigate through a GACE assessment and how to answer different types of test questions. This free download is available in the Test Preparation Resources section of the GACE website at *www.gace.ets.org/prepare*.

Reducing Test Anxiety

This guide provides practical help for people who suffer from test anxiety. Designed specifically for GACE test takers, but useful to anyone who has to take tests, this guide reviews the major causes of test anxiety and offers practical advice for how to counter each one. Download this guide for free from the Test Preparation Resources section of the GACE website at *www.gace.ets.org/prepare*.

Study Tips: Preparing for a GACE Assessment

This document contains useful information on preparing for selected-response and constructed-response tests. The instruction, tips, and suggestions can help you become a better-prepared test taker. See the Test Preparation Resources section of the GACE website at *www.gace.ets.org/prepare* for this free download.

Journals

American Educational Research Journal, American Educational Research Association

American Journal of Education, University of Chicago Press

American School Board Journal, National School Boards Association

ASCD Education Update, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

ASCD Express Yearbooks, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Comparative Education Review, University of Chicago Press

Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, American Educational Research Association

Educational Leadership, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Educational Researcher, American Educational Research Association

Georgia Educational Researcher, Georgia Educational Research Association

Harvard Educational Review, Harvard Education Press

International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership (IJEPL), ASCD

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

International Journal of Research and Method in Education, Routledge

Journal of Education, Boston University School of Education

New Superintendents E-Journal, American Association of School Administrators

Phi Delta Kappan, Phi Delta Kappa

School Administrator, American Association of School Administrators

Other Resources

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Online Resources

Education Commission of the States — ***www.ecs.org***

Georgia Education Laws and Rules — ***www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/AskDOE/Pages/Laws-and-Rules***

Georgia Department of Education — ***www.gadoe.org***

National Center on Educational Outcomes — ***nceo.info***

Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.), Title 20 Education — ***www.fultoncountyga.gov/commissioners/clerk-to-the-commission/code-of-georgia***

Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia, Chapter 160, Georgia Department of Education — ***http://rules.sos.state.ga.us/pages/index.html***

U.S. Department of Education — ***www.ed.gov***

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