

Study Guide for the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA)*

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Study Guide for the *School Leaders*
Licensure Assessment



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Chapter 1

Introduction to the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment*
and Suggestions for Using This Study Guide



Introduction to the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment* and Suggestions for Using This Study Guide

Introduction to the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment*

The *School Leaders Licensure Assessment* measures beginning education leaders' understanding and knowledge of a broad range of job-related topics, including whether entry-level education leaders have the standards-relevant knowledge believed necessary for competent professional practice. Such knowledge is typically obtained through experience within a school system, often in teacher leadership roles, and/or in graduate-level course work in educational leadership and administration. Educational Testing Service (ETS) has aligned the content of the test with the *Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 (ISLLC 2008)* as adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration and published by the Council of Chief State School Officers. The content of the assessment was defined by a National Advisory Committee of expert practitioners and preparation faculty and confirmed by a national survey of the field. In developing assessment material for this test, ETS works in collaboration with higher education content specialists and accomplished practicing education leaders to keep the test updated and representative of current standards.

The *School Leaders Licensure Assessment* (1011) consists of 100 multiple-choice questions and 7 constructed-response questions. Following the format of *ISLLC 2008*, the test covers the six major areas related to the standards, in the following proportions:

Content Categories	Percentage of Examination	Multiple-choice questions (approx.)	Constructed response questions
I. Vision and Goals	20%	18	2
II. Teaching and Learning	30%	25	3
III. Managing Organizational Systems and Safety	10%	15	–
IV. Collaborating with Key Stakeholders	15%	21	–
V. Ethics and Integrity	15%	21	–
VI. The Education System	10%	–	2

Test takers have 4 hours to complete the test.

Calculators are not allowed.

Suggestions for Using the “Study Topics” Chapter of This Study Guide

This test is different from a final exam or tests you may have taken for specific courses because it is comprehensive—that is, it covers material you may have learned from experience, observation, or in courses. It requires you to synthesize information you have learned from many sources and to understand the subject as a whole. Therefore, you should review and prepare for it, rather than merely becoming familiar with the question formats. A thorough review of the material covered on the test will significantly increase your likelihood of success. Moreover, studying for your licensing exam is a great opportunity to reflect on and develop a deeper understanding of educational leadership before you begin to serve as an education leader. As you prepare to take the test, it may be particularly helpful for you to think about how you would apply the study topics and sample exercises to past leadership experiences you have had within the school system and/or situations that were presented to you during your educational leadership preparation program.

We recommend the following approach for using the “Study Topics” chapters to prepare for the test

- **Become familiar with the test content.** Learn what will be assessed in the test, covered in chapter 3.
- **Assess how well you know the content in each area.** After you learn what topics the test contains, you should assess your knowledge in each area. How well do you know the material? In which areas do you need to learn more before you take the test? It is quite likely that you will need to brush up on most or all of the areas.
- **Develop a study plan.** Assess what you need to study and create a realistic plan for studying. You can develop your study plan in any way that works best for you. A “Study Plan” form is included in appendix A at the end of the book as a possible way to structure your planning. Remember that this is a licensure test and covers a great deal of material. Plan to review carefully. You will need to allow time to find the books and other materials, time to read the material and take notes, and time to go over your notes.
- **Identify study materials.** To prepare for the test you should consult textbooks in educational leadership, education journals, and published materials (books, articles, guidelines, and standards) from national organizations focused on educational administration. If you do not own texts or subscribe to journals that cover all the areas, you may want to borrow some from friends or from a library. You may also want to obtain a copy of your state’s standards for educational administrators in addition to the *ISLLC 2008* standards previously mentioned. (One way to find these standards quickly is to go to the Web site for your state’s department of education.) Use reliable, professionally prepared materials. Don’t rely heavily on information provided by friends or from searching the World Wide Web. Neither of these sources is as uniformly reliable as recognized leadership materials and textbooks.
- **Work through your study plan.** You may want to work alone, or you may find it more helpful to work with a group or with a mentor. Work through the topics and questions provided in chapter 8. Since the *SLLA* focuses on application of knowledge and problem solving, memorizing definitions from books will not be helpful to you. You should be able to define and discuss the topics in your own words and understand the relationships between diverse topics and concepts. If you are working with a group or mentor, you can also try informal quizzes and questioning techniques.

- **Proceed to the practice questions.** Once you have completed your review, you are ready to benefit from the “Practice Test” portions of this guide. Separate sections of the guide are devoted to multiple-choice and constructed-response questions.

Suggestions for Using the “Practice Questions” and “Right Answers and Sample Responses” Chapters

- **Read chapter 4.** This chapter will sharpen your skills in reading and answering multiple-choice questions. For you to succeed on multiple-choice questions, you must focus carefully on the question, avoid reading things into the question, pay attention to details, and sift patiently through the answer choices.
- **Read chapter 7.** This chapter will help you prepare for answering the constructed-response questions. Just as with the multiple-choice questions, it is important for you to carefully read and understand the questions and documents attached to the question. Some of the questions will require that you synthesize information from several different sources in order to answer the questions.
- **Answer the practice questions in chapters 5 and 9.** Work on the practice questions in a quiet place without distractions. Remember that the practice questions are only examples of the way the topics are covered in the test. The test will have different questions.
- **Score the practice questions.** Go through the detailed answers in chapters 6 and 10 (“Right Answers” and “Sample Responses”) and mark the questions you answered correctly and the ones you missed. Look over the explanations of the questions you missed and see if you understand them.
- **Decide whether you need more review.** After you have looked at your results, decide whether there are areas that you need to brush up on before taking the actual test. Go back to your textbooks and reference materials to see if the topics are covered there. You might also want to go over your questions with a friend, administrator, or instructor who is familiar with the subjects.
- **Assess your readiness.** Do you feel confident about your level of understanding in each of the areas? If not, where do you need more work? If you feel ready, complete the checklist in chapter 11 (“Are You Ready?”) to double-check that you’ve thought through the details. If you need more information about registration or the testing situation itself, use the resources in appendix B: “For More Information.”

Note: Every effort is made to provide the most recent information in this study guide. However, The School Leadership Series tests are continually evaluated and updated. You will always find the most recent information about this test, including the topics covered, number of questions, time allotted, and scoring criteria, in the *Test at a Glance* booklet available online at <http://www.ets.org/sls.html>.

Chapter 2

Background Information on the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment*



What is the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment*?

The *School Leaders Licensure Assessment* was designed by Educational Testing Service (ETS) to provide a thorough, fair, and carefully validated assessment for states to use as part of the licensure process for education leaders. It reflects the most current research and the professional judgement and experience of educators across the country. Based on a national job analysis study, the assessment is also aligned with the *ISLLC 2008* standards, which many states will use in developing state-specific standards for licensing and performance of education leaders.

The *School Leaders Licensure Assessment* is part of a national testing program, meaning that the test covered in this study guide is required by more than one state for licensure. The advantage of a national program is that if you want to move to another state, you can transfer your scores from one state to another. However, each state has specific test requirements and passing scores. If you are applying for a license in another state, you will want to verify the appropriate test and passing score requirements. This information is available online at www.ets.org/sls.html or by calling ETS at 800-772-9476 or 609-771-7395.

What is licensure?

Licensure in any area—medicine, law, architecture, accounting, cosmetology—is an assurance to the public that the person holding the license possesses sufficient knowledge and skills to perform important occupational activities safely and effectively. In the case of education leader licensing, a license tells the public that the individual has met pre-defined competency standards for a beginning education leader.

Because a license makes such a serious claim about its holder, licensure tests are usually quite demanding. In some fields, licensure tests have more than one part and last for more than one day. Candidates for licensure in all fields plan intensive study as part of their professional preparation: some join study groups, others study alone. But preparing to take a licensure test is, in all cases, a professional activity. Because it assesses the entire body of knowledge for the field you are entering, preparing for a licensure exam takes planning, discipline, and sustained effort.

Why Does My State Require the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment*?

Your state chose the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment* because the test assesses the breadth and depth of content—called the “domain”—that your state wants its education leaders to possess before they begin to practice. The level of content knowledge, reflected in the passing score, is based on recommendations of panels of school administrators and administrator educators. The state licensing agency and, in some states, the state legislature ratify the passing scores that have been recommended by the panels.

How Were These Tests Developed?

ETS began the development of the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment* with a survey. Education leaders around the country in various administrative positions were asked to judge which knowledge and skills a beginning education leader needs to possess. Professors in schools of education who prepare education leaders were asked the same questions. These responses were ranked in order of importance and sent out to hundreds of administrators for review. All of the responses to these surveys (called “job analysis surveys”) were analyzed to summarize the judgments of these professionals. From their consensus, we developed guidelines, or specifications, for the multiple-choice and constructed-response tests. A committee of practicing leaders and leader educators wrote the specifications, which were reviewed and eventually approved by leaders. From the test specifications, groups of leaders and professional test developers created test questions that met content requirements and satisfied the *ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness*.*

When your state adopted the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment*, local panels of practicing education leaders and educational leadership preparation faculty met to examine the tests and to evaluate each question for its relevance to beginning education leaders in your state. This is called a “validity study” because local practicing leaders validate that the test content is relevant to the job. For the test to be adopted in your state, leaders in your state must judge that it is valid. During the validity study, the panel also provides a passing-score recommendation. This process includes a rigorous review to determine how many of the test questions a beginning leader in that state would be able to answer correctly. Your state’s licensing agency then reviewed the panel’s recommendations and made a final determination of the passing-score requirement.

Throughout the development process, practitioners in the educational leadership field—education leaders and leader educators—participated in defining what the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment* would cover and what score would be needed to achieve licensure. This practice is consistent with how professional licensure works in most fields: those who are already licensed oversee the licensing of new practitioners. When you pass the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment*, you and the practitioners in your state will have evidence that you have the knowledge and skills required for a beginning education leader.

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* ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness (2003, Princeton, NJ) are consistent with the “Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing,” industry standards issued jointly by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education (1999, Washington, DC).