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Preface

Those who hire educational leaders usually thrust them into conditions that require a skill set that prospective leaders have not honed. Educational leaders often come from teaching ranks. Professional leadership programs try their best to prepare those candidates for success. However, no program can prepare the candidate for the intensity of instant decision making required to be a building or district level leader. We are sharing our sixty years of expertise and varied experiences in the case studies and “in-basket” exercises provided in this book. We hope to help you, the prospective educational leader, understand the complexity of leadership and the daily decision-making required for success. The Educational Testing Service and Pearson Education are the two major testing and evaluation companies that provide assessments for prospective administrators. Both tests require candidates to make quick decisions based upon a skill set of state and/or national standards for educational leaders. We used sample questions found on the test preparation websites of both companies as models in creating testing scenarios. We believe this preparation material will be helpful for you the candidate to be successful during the assessment process.

School leadership in the United States has coalesced around a set of standards, the ISLLC (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium) standards, with 35 states adopting them. ISLLC, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards were developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers to help strengthen preparation programs in school leadership in 1996. The other set of standards, ELCC, the Educational Leadership Constituents Council standards, were published in January 2002. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) used ISLLC standards to develop ELCC (Educational Leadership Constituents Council) standards. Candidates for principal licensure nationwide may be required to take ISLLC or ELCC based licensing examinations. Professional licensure programs revised their curricula to be in alignment with either ISLLC or ELCC standards. Organizations such as the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) have openly recommended the use of the ISLLC standards by their membership. This does not mean ELCC Standards are not worthwhile; they definitely are. They are quite literally parallel to the ISLLC standards as illustrated below. However, ISLLC standards are the only common set of standards developed by a national body of state departments of education (originally 23 states) and national leadership.
organizations. Originally, 12 states were included as the members of National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA). Standards were designed for all school leaders, pre-K through 12, and were universally accepted and recognized. National membership organizations, such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), all use the ISLLC standards. Both sets of standards developed for educational administration programs are parallel so that our case analyses and discussions are organized by ELCC standards. We think it is important that in order to resolve each problem, some basic facts should be established which helps to clarify the solution of the case. Assessment systems try to ascertain a potential administrator’s knowledge in relation to a set of standards.

**Standard 1:**

- **ELCC:** Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning supported by the school community.
- **ISLCC:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

**Standard 2:**

- **ELCC:** Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning, and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.
- **ISLCC:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
Standard 3:
- **ELCC**: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
- **ISLCC**: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Standard 4:
- **ELCC**: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- **ISLCC**: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Standard 5:
- **ELCC**: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairly, and in an ethical manner.
- **ISLCC**: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Standard 6:
- **ELCC**: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.
- **ISLCC**: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.
Educational leadership requires that individuals make decisions on an on-going basis and usually in rapid-fire succession. Therefore, this book will provide the opportunity for individuals to practice decision-making skills as well as sharpening test-taking strategies. We have divided the book into three sections, multiple choice questions, case studies, and work products. The case studies chapters include responses to typical educational decision-making cases that might be found in licensure examinations by ISLLC standards. Being successful during any written examination requires that the candidate rapidly and accurately size up a problem presented and make a judgment based upon facts presented in a particular case while considering a variety of alternate solutions. Cases provided are all real life situations that we have had to resolve over our many years as building and district level administrators. Responses to cases reflect what test administrators might ask of candidates taking these exams. Both ETS and Pearson provide samples of questions and model responses for prospective administrators’ review. We have included three scenarios for your consideration in resolving cases included in this book.

- **Scenario 1:** (1) establish one strength of the administrator, (2) give one strategy for building on this strength, (3) specify one weakness of the administrator, (4) give a strategy for addressing that weakness, and (5) knowing this information, why might this strategy be effective in resolving the case.

- **Scenario 2:** (1) what did the administrator do well, (2) what did the administrator do poorly, (3) three actions the administrator might take to resolve the problem, and (4) why each action is likely to be effective.

- **Scenario 3:** (1) identify two key issues in the case, (3) give one strategy you might employ to resolve each issue identified, and (3) explain how that strategy might be effective in resolving the issues.

All case studies are authentic and have been validated by colleagues and field-tested by students in the Stony Brook Educational Leadership Program. Case studies in chapters 1–6 are categorized by standard and are either school-based or district-based situations.

Likewise, in Chapter 7 we provide you with a number of multiple choice questions organized by standards and are either school-based or district-based problems. Multiple-choice questions came from our
everyday experiences as successful building or district administrators. Candidates must employ quick decision-making skills to make a sound educational decision in each example. Educational leaders face many situations each day that require immediate action. Sound judgment, knowledge, and experience factor into making good decisions. We ask that you read each question, think about possible alternatives, and make a decision to resolve the problem presented in the question. We then provide you with a solution and a rationale for making a particular decision. Multiple-choice questions are likewise divided into school-based and district-based questions.

In chapter 8, we provide you with two work products: one involving a school-based problem and another involving a district-based problem. Work products are similar to case studies. Both require careful analysis. However, in a work product, the candidate is given a variety of supplementary information attached to the problem, which requires interpretation and response. We feel it is important for candidates to develop a competency in reading and reacting to information provided through looking at a variety of documents and making informed judgments about particular situations.

We would like briefly to discuss test-taking strategies. Since the examination is given on the computer, you can decide on the order you wish to respond to the test questions. We believe that you should consider completing the essays first since they require extensive time for appropriate and comprehensive completion. When writing your response, it might be helpful if you outline for yourself the components of the response you want to include in your essay. Respond exactly as the question requires and in the order of the question components. Introductory and concluding paragraphs are nice, but only set the stage for the sections of required response. After you complete the essay, re-read it making sure that you responded exactly as required by the specific component of the question. If you provide additional information in your response, you demonstrate your mastery of the topic, which may be helpful in distinguishing a high quality response from a satisfactory response. Some essay questions ask the examinee to include assumptions, if any, that may influence the way in which an essay is read.

In responding to short answer questions, most short answer questions are structured so that two of the four answer choices are possible correct responses. Learn to find the inappropriate choices, exclude them
from consideration, and then decide which of the two possible remaining responses best fits the question. Remember your first choice for a response is mostly likely the correct response for that question.
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