SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

STUDY GUIDE FOR THE
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN
SCHOOL BUILDING LEADERSHIP
Background

All students who are enrolled in the School Building Leadership program must pass a comprehensive examination as a requirement for graduation. The Comprehensive Examination must be taken during the term in which students are scheduled to graduate.

The Comprehensive Examination will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. and includes a one-hour lunch break:

- 8:30am: Sign-in for the exam
- 9:00 a.m. – noon: Part I of the exam
- 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.: Part II of the exam

Students will be required to answer two of the four questions presented in the morning and two of the four questions presented in the afternoon. To pass the comprehensive exam, students must receive a passing score on three of the four questions selected. Students who do not pass the examination will be required to repeat the full exam when it is offered again in the spring semester.

The content areas that will be assessed are:

1. Course  EDSA  500  Issues and Trends in American Education
2. Course  EDSA  560  School Law
3. Courses  EDSA  555  School Finance and  EDSA  565  Grants and Evaluation Strategies for Leaders
4. Courses  EDSA  552  Human Resource Management for Leaders
5. Course  EDSA  545  Critical Issues in Special Education for General Education Leaders
6. Courses  EDSA  535  Organization of Community Relations Program
7. Courses  EDSA  530  Professional School Administrator and  EDSA  540  Managing the Teaching Learning Process
8. Course  EDSA  510  Research
Study Tips

The essay questions are based on the coursework leading to a Master of Science in School Building Leadership or the Advanced Certificate in School Building Leadership. Since the courses in these programs are not identical, students will be provided a choice of essay questions.

- Prepare for the examination by re-reading the notes and other materials that you received in each of the courses that you took. Focus on broad concepts and ideas and key facts in your review.
- Do a general reading of all of the examination questions. Then, re-read the questions with an emphasis on what information is being asked.
- Choose your questions wisely. You should be able to answer at least 80% of the question.
- Look at the requirements of the question to determine the format of your answer (e.g. a bulleted list versus an essay.) Carefully follow the directions.
- Develop a brief outline that incorporates the key data pieces needed to answer each of the questions (broad concepts and ideas and key facts).
- Construct your response based on the outline. This will help you plan your time.
- Label your answer.
- Review your work to ensure that you have addressed all the points in your outline.
- Check for spelling and grammar.
- Make sure you write legibly.
- Your response should be only as long as necessary to answer the question.
- Write in blue or black ink.
- No materials are permitted except pens and white-out; this includes dictionaries and glossaries.
Sample Questions

On the following pages, you will find sample questions. The idea is to become familiar with how the questions are phrased and to learn how to properly construct your response. **These questions are samples only and do not reflect the actual questions that will constitute the Comprehensive Examination. Use them as a learning tool.**

1. Describe the basic arguments for and against bilingual education.

2. Describe the basic arguments for and against home schooling.

3. Describe the basic arguments for and against uniforms in public schools.

4. You are the principal of a school with the following profile

   Pedagogical staff:
   35 full-time teachers: 23 of the teachers have more than two years in school; 20 of the teachers have more than five years’ experience
   1 paraprofessional
   Average days absent: 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Eligible for Free Lunch</th>
<th>ELL</th>
<th>Special Needs</th>
<th>Overage for Grade</th>
<th>Meeting ELA Standard</th>
<th>Meeting Math Standard</th>
<th>Average Daily Attendance</th>
<th>Percent of Students Graduating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SchoolX</td>
<td>628: 258 male, 370 female</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a change agent, devise a plan to affect student achievement in English language arts, mathematics, or attendance. Include who you will be addressing in the plan.

5. Some of the administrative tasks or operational areas of administration within a school may be grouped into the following categories:

   a. Curriculum and Instruction
   b. Pupil Personnel
   c. Staff Personnel
   d. School Plant
   e. Finance and Business Management
While the responsibility for addressing these tasks rests with the principal, it stands to reason that no one administrator can address these tasks alone. How would you, as a school principal, organize your school and personnel to address three (3) of these operational areas?

6. Consider the 1st, 4th, and 14th Amendments to the US Constitution in a school context. Can you think of three situations where school officials might violate the rights of students who have certain protections under these Amendments?

7. Describe an administrative and supervisory strategy that would address school faculty with teachers who are committed and competent, teachers who are uncommitted and lack competence and teachers who share some commitment and some competency to perform. You may incorporate any one of several models of supervision in your answer.

8. You have been appointed the principal of a middle school in a community that is experiencing a change in its population base from a more homogeneous population to a population that is more ethnically diverse. This change has produced tensions within the school. A number of ethnic groups feel alienated from the school and sense an attempt to deprive them of their ethnic heritage. A number of parents have difficulty relating to the school staff because they do not speak English.

   Explain what strategies you would use in working with your supervisors, teachers, parents, and school curriculum to create bridges of understanding to address these tensions? Label your answer.

9. Mr. Miller was recently appointed principal of Springview Elementary School with a student population of 800. The students are from across the city, as Springview has an open enrollment policy.

   Everyone appears to be pleased with the racial make-up of the faculty, which is 90% Caucasian and 10% African-American. They are also pleased with the racial composition of the student body, which is 90% Caucasian, 8% African-American, and 2% Asian-American. Mr. Miller is only the second principal. Mr. Williams, the former principal, opened the school 10 years ago. Under his authoritarian leadership and firm control, the school became the pride of the Springview School District.

   The second week of school, Mr. Miller looked at his calendar to find that he had an appointment with a group of parents from the section of the city that everyone refers to as the “old money part of the city.” He was also scheduled to meet with a group of parents from a new area of the city called Lekehills. Lakehills was recently developed, and a large number of minority first-time homeowners have moved into the area.
Very little was said in the first meeting. Indeed, the parents welcomed Mr. Miller to the school and advised him that he could depend on their support. However, they had one request, which was to establish ability grouping at the school. They gave a number of reasons for wanting this change; however, the major reason expressed was instructional time. It was their contention that the slow children took up a large portion of instructional time, and there was not enough left to challenge the gifted students. The meeting ended with Mr. Miller saying he would consider the request and give them a response in the next several days.

In the second meeting, Mr. Miller was met with quite a different situation, no direct request at all. The parents welcomed him to the school and advised him how pleased they were with the education their children were receiving. They also said that they would provide any assistance he needed and hoped there would be no major changes in the instructional program. The meeting ended with all smiling.

Address the following:
A. List what are the primary issues in this scenario.
B. List what information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies you would advise Principal Miller to utilize to ensure quality decisions and universal acceptance?
C. Describe what approaches and actions should Principal Miller use to ensure a quality decision is made to the above issue?

10. A. How is education financed and controlled by the states?
    B. How are schools financed and managed at the local level?
    C. Fiscal equity is currently an issue with statewide ramifications. Is fiscal equalization a goal that is achievable? If not, what alternative financial plans for equalizing educational opportunity would you propose?

11. Answer both questions below:
    a. Describe in detail the essential considerations and elements of a Community Relations Program?
    b. Outline the steps that you would take in order to promote a school construction plan within your school?

12. There are several sources available for administrators to bring monies into schools beyond their designated school budget. However, a proposal must be submitted as part of the application process.

Answer the following questions:
A. List the types of possible funding sources available
B. Describe what you would include in a grant proposal when asking for funding.
**SCHOOL BUILDING LEADERSHIP STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**EDSA500  Issues and Trends in American Education**

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
At the completion of the course, the student will:

1. Have knowledge and familiarity with current major issues and trends affecting American education. (NYS Learning Standards for Leadership 1-9) (ISLLC Standards 1-6)
2. Be able to reflect upon and discuss the emerging trends and their potential impact on the school’s curriculum in the 21st century. (NYS Learning Standards for Leadership 1-9) (ISLLC Standard 1-6)
3. Appreciate the scope, diversity and complexity of American education and the difficulties in preparing teachers to meet the challenges of the new millennium. (NYS Learning Standards for Leadership 1-9) (ISLLC Standards 4, 6)
4. Have skills in critical thinking, personal theorizing, and collaborative research regarding controversial educational issues. (NYS Learning Standards for Leadership 1-8) (ISLLC Standards 1-6)
5. Understand the relationship between societal change and educational movements, trends, and innovations. (NYS Learning Standards for Leadership 1-9) (ISLLC Standards 1-6)

**EDSA560  School Law**

**Student Learning Outcomes**
At the completion of EDSA 560, candidates, as well as the practicing school professional will:

1. Recognize legal principles that provide the basis for defensible school practice and regulation at the federal, state, and level level. (ELCC Standards 3, 5, 6; ISLLC Standards 3, and 6)
2. Analyze case law decisions and findings that impact the work performance of educators at all levels of the school district. (NYS-DESLS Standards 7 and 8; ELCC Standards 5 and 6; ISLLC Standards 3, 5, and 6).
3. Interpret legal findings and connect such analysis to contemporary school issues and problems (ELCC Standard 2; ISLLC Standards 3, 5 and 6; NYS-DESLS Standards 1 and 2).
4. Strike a balance between the rights of students and parents and the obligation of teachers as agents of the state as prescribed by the US Constitutions, Supreme Court Case Law decisions, relevant State Court decisions, and statutory regulations. (ELCC Standard 2, 5, and 6; ISLLC Standards 3, 5 and 6; NYS-DESLS Standards 1, 6 and 7)
EDSA 555  School Finance

Student Learning Outcomes
At the completion of this course students will:

1. Understand the relationship of social, political, and economic values to school finance issues. (NYS-DESLS 1,2,4,5); (ISLCC 1,4,6); (ELCC 1,3,4,6).
2. Understand political processes as they affect the enactment and implementation of school finance legislation. (NYS-DESLS 1,2,4,5); (ISLCC 1,4,6); (ELCC 3,4,6).
3. Understand the relationship of the economic system to school finance policy. (NYS-DESLS 1,2,5); (ISLCC 1,4,6); (ELCC 3,6).
4. Understand the relationships between financial inputs, schooling provisions, and pupil achievement. (NYS-DESLS 1,2,4,7); (ISLCC 2,3,5); (ELCC 1,2,4,6).
5. Know the characteristics of revenue sources for public school support, including the property tax and state and federal aid. (NYS-DESLS 1,2,4); (ISLCC 1,6); (ELCC 3,6).
6. Understand proposals for reform of school finance policy, school governance and allocation patterns, and their potential effect on various objectives of public policy. (NYS-DESLS 1,2,4,7,9); (ISLCC 1,2,4,5); (ELCC 1,2,4,5,6).
7. Understand current resource use patterns in education and how to reallocate resources to better uses in order to produce higher levels of student achievement. (NYS-DESLS 1,2,4,7,9); (ISLCC 2,3,4,5); (ELCC 1,2,5,6).

EDSA 565  Grants and Evaluation Strategies for Leaders

Student Learning Outcomes
At the conclusion of the course, the candidate will do the following:

1. Analyze and discuss the role of the administrator in the grants process.
2. Gain an understanding of the grants process for both entitlement and competitive grants.
3. Identify funding sources in both the private and public sectors.
4. Respond to an RFP: Request for Proposal.
5. Complete and submit an actual grant proposal.
6. Gain an understanding of grant budgets.
7. Analyze and apply evaluation strategies needed for successful grants.

EDSA 552  Human Resource Management for Leaders

Student Learning Outcomes
At the conclusion of this course, students will be expected:

1. To understand the role and function of human resource administration in organizations (ISLLC Standard 1; NYS Standard 1,2,4, 8 and 9)
2. To establish an understanding of staffing patterns based on enrollment, services and budget implications. To analyze the employment process by defining vacancies, recruiting for such vacancies and interviewing for such vacancies in a diverse society (ISLLC Standard 1,2,3,4,5,6; NYS Standard 1,2,48,and 9).
3. To be familiar with the employment process including legal requirements and constraints, appropriate method of appointment and certification requirements (ISLLC Standard 2,3, 5; NYS Standard 2, 4,8, and 9).
4. To understand the implications of permanent appointment with respect to seniority and tenure (ISLLC Standard 2,5, 6; NYS Standard 3, 5, 6,8, and 9).
5. To understand the implications of supervision and evaluation with respect to staff development, improvement of instruction and state standards. To review causes for termination (ISLLC Standard 2, 4, 5; NYS Standard 3,4, 5, and 6).
6. To understand the culmination of employment through resignation, retirement and reduction in force (ISLLC Standard 1, 2, 4,5; NYS Standard 3,4, 8, and 9).
7. To understand salary administration, alternative compensation and fringe benefits (ISLLC Standard 2, 3, 4; NYS Standard 2,5, 7, 8 and 9).
8. To understand contract administration, negotiations and the grievance and arbitration process (ISLLC Standard 3; NYS Standard 7, 8, and 9).
9. To become familiar with critical issues facing human resources, including teacher and administrative shortages, FMLA and ADA (ISLLC Standard 3, 5, 10; NYS Standard 7, 8 and 9).
10. To demonstrate skills that enable administrators to support, develop and nurture staff in the workplace (ISLLC Standard 2, 4; NYS Standard 6, 8 and 9).
11. To develop strategies that hold themselves and others responsible and accountable (ISLLC Standard 1, 3, 5, 6; NYS Standard 7).
12. To demonstrate the ability to have the courage to take informed risks as demonstrated in class discussions and demonstrated decision-making skills(ISLLC Standard 1, 3, 5, 6; NYS Standard 9).

EDSA 545  Critical Issues in Special Education for General Education Leaders

Student Learning Outcomes
Based on the Standards for School Leaders of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), CEC standards, and the Regulations of the New York State Commissioner of Education, upon successful completion of this course, the candidate will:

1. Understand the historic foundations, major legislation, including IDEA and NCLB, and current issues related to knowledge and practice of educating students with disabilities (SWDs). [ISLLC Standards 5–6; NYS Standard 2 CEC Standards 1–2]
2. Foster environments in which diversity is valued and individuals are taught to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world. [ISLLC Standards 1 & 3; NYS Standard 2; CEC Standards 3, 5–6]
3. Understand the concepts and strategies for integrating affective, social, and life skills with academic curricula for SWDs. [ISLLC Standard 4; NYS Standards 6–8; CEC Standard 7]
4. Understand and be able to implement test accommodations and curricular modifications for SWDs. Interpret information from formal and informal assessments. Use assessment information in making eligibility, program, and placement decisions for individuals with
exceptional learning needs, including those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. [ISLLC Standard 4; NYS Standards 1–2, 4 CEC Standard 8]

5. Understand the obligations for professional and ethical conduct of the highest level and the need to participate in on-going professional development throughout one’s career. [ISLLC Standard 2; NYS Standards 1, 6, 8–9; CEC Standard 9]

6. Understand the concepts and skills related to effective collaboration with colleagues, personnel from outside agencies, and families of SWDs. [ISLLC Standards 4, 5, 6; NYS Standard 4; CEC Standard 10]

**EDSA 535  Organization of Community Relations Program**

**Student Learning Outcomes**

At the completion of the course, students will:

1. Understand the importance of school communication (NYS-DESLS Standards 1, 2, 3, 4; ELCC Standards 1, 2, 4, 6; ISLLC Standards 1, 4).

2. Understand the importance of public opinion for the school and school district (NYS-DESLS Standards 1, 2; ELCC Standards 1, 4, 6; ISLLC Standards 1, 4).

3. Understand the importance of community power structures (NYS-DESLS Standards 1, 3, 4; ELCC Standards 1, 4, 6; ISLLC Standards 4, 6).

4. Be able to conduct public opinion surveys (NYS-DESLS Standards 3, 8; ELCC Standards 4; ISLLC Standards 6).

5. Understand the elements of communication, persuasion, and how to present issues (NYS-DESLS Standards 1, 3, 4; ELCC Standards 1, 2, 6; ISLLC Standards 1, 4, 6).

6. Understand how internal communication contributes to improved staff morale and school tone (NYS-DESLS Standards 1, 2, 4; ELCC Standards 2, 6; ISLLC Standards 1, 4).

7. Understand how good external communication contributes to improved pupil, parent and community relations (NYS-DESLS Standards 1, 2, 7, 8; ELCC Standards 1, 4, 5, 6; ISLLC Standards 1, 4, 5).

8. Know how to handle crisis situations (NYS-DESLS Standards 1, 4, 7, 9; ELCC Standards 3, 4; ISLLC Standards 5, 6).

9. Understand the strengths of different channels of communication (NYS-DESLS Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 9; ELCC Standards 1, 4, 6; ISLLC Standards 1, 2).

10. Understand the importance of ongoing evaluation to a public relations plan (NYS-DESLS Standards 1, 2, 6; ELCC Standards 1, 2, 6; ISLLC Standards 1, 3, 6).

**EDSA 530  Professional School Administrator**

**Student Learning Outcomes**

At the conclusion of the course, the students will do the following:

1. Have and apply knowledge of theories of Educational Administration, leadership, managerial and communication skills, decision making, and organizational dynamics. (NYS Learning Standards for Leadership 1-9) (ISLLC Standards 1-6)
2. Have an understanding of the roles the Board of Education, school personnel, and state and federal mandates. (NYS Learning Standards for Leadership 1-9) (ISLLC Standards 1-6)
3. Understand how individuals qualify for positions in educational administration and establish goals and strategies specifically related to such. (NYS Learning Standards for Leadership 1-9) (ISLLC Standards 1-6)

EDSA540 Managing the Teaching Learning Process

Student Learning Outcomes
At the completion of the course, the students will do the following:
1. Understand how to work with supervisory procedures, processes, practices, and technology integration specifically related to the administration of the teaching-learning process. (NYS Learning Standards for Leadership 1-9) (ISLLC Standards 1-5)
2. Have the ability to critique the strengths and weaknesses of various ways of managing the teaching-learning process. (NYS Learning Standards for Leadership 1-9) (ISLLC Standards 1-5)
3. Understand the administrative skills, staff motivation, and organizational and emotional factors as contributing forces in building a successful teaching learning environment. (NYS Learning Standards for Leadership 1-9) (ISLLC Standards 1-5)
4. Recognize and understand how effective principals and assistant principals bring out the best in teachers to maximize teacher and student performance levels through quality teaching and leadership practices. (NYS Learning Standards for Leadership 1-9) (ISLLC Standards 1-5)

EDSA510 Research

Student Learning Outcomes
1. The students will define the various types and appropriate use of data, and their connection to the broad concepts related to educational research.
2. The student will use educational research terminology to appropriately describe research practices.
3. The student will become familiar with of educational, legal, and social research, and the appropriate application of such.
4. The student will hold informed discussions on the role of the educational leader’s vision in educational research and the role of community-based organizations to complement the school’s goals.
5. The student will apply the research techniques developed through the course to an original action research project.