

PLACE[®]

STUDY GUIDE

80 Principal



Program for Licensing Assessments
for Colorado Educators[®]

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PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLACE® AND TEST PREPARATION

Part 1 of this study guide is contained in a separate PDF file. Click the link below to view or print this section:

[General Information About the PLACE and Test Preparation](#)

PART 2: FIELD-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

TEST FIELD 80: PRINCIPAL

INTRODUCTION

This section includes a list of the test objectives, immediately followed by a set of practice multiple-choice questions. For test areas that include a performance assessment (Basic Skills, all languages other than English, Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired), one or more practice performance assignments (as applicable) will also be included.

TEST OBJECTIVES. As noted earlier, the test objectives are broad, conceptual statements that reflect the knowledge, skills, and understanding an entry-level educator needs to teach effectively in a Colorado classroom. The list of test objectives represents the **only** source of information about what a specific test will cover.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS. The practice multiple-choice questions included in this section are designed to give you an introduction to the nature of the questions included on the PLACE test. The practice questions represent the various types of multiple-choice questions you may expect to see on an actual test; however, they are **not** designed to provide diagnostic information to help you identify specific areas of individual strengths and weaknesses or to predict your performance on the test as a whole.

When you answer the practice multiple-choice questions, you may wish to use the answer key to check your answers. To help you identify how the test objectives are measured, the objective statement to which each multiple-choice question corresponds is listed in the answer key. When you are finished with the practice questions, you may wish to go back and review the entire list of test objectives and descriptive statements for your test area.

OBJECTIVES

TEST FIELD 80: PRINCIPAL

Subarea	Approximate Percentage of Questions on Test
Foundations of Educational Leadership	29%
Promoting Continuous School Improvement	21%
Leading the Instructional Program	29%
Managing the School Organization	21%

FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Understand the leadership role of the principal within the school community.

Includes:

- demonstrating knowledge of key theories, concepts, and styles of leadership as they relate to the role of the school principal
- applying knowledge of leadership principles and practices at the building level
- analyzing strategies for leading the school community in setting and achieving high standards for teaching and learning
- demonstrating knowledge of the importance of encouraging and embodying responsibility, accountability, citizenship, respect, and ethical behavior in all aspects of school leadership
- applying knowledge of effective strategies for promoting and sustaining broad community support for rigorous standards and high expectations for all students' achievement
- demonstrating knowledge of education as a fundamental right of all students and student achievement, as defined by the Colorado Model Content Standards, as the primary objective of the school
- understanding the role of social and political environments in successful school leadership

Understand principles and practices of effective communication and collaboration with all members of the school community.

Includes:

- demonstrating knowledge of how to use appropriate modes of communication to communicate effectively with various audiences and for a variety of purposes (e.g., communicating expectations for student achievement, describing assessment results to families or to the media, promoting community involvement)
- demonstrating knowledge of how to use public relations skills to communicate
- applying knowledge of speaking and listening skills that promote effective communication with students, staff, parents/guardians, and community members, including those with diverse backgrounds
- recognizing the appropriate use of technology to enhance communication in various contexts
- identifying skills and strategies for collaborating with individuals and groups inside and outside of the school, including staff, students, parents/guardians, district leaders, and community members, to promote achievement of educational goals
- applying knowledge of effective conflict-resolution and consensus-building techniques in various contexts
- demonstrating knowledge of how to encourage, develop, and maintain partnerships with parents/guardians, community agencies and organizations, businesses, and institutions of higher learning to promote student achievement and address various school goals and priorities

Understand diversity in the school and community, methods for working effectively with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds, and strategies for ensuring a positive, equitable school environment that promotes all students' learning.

Includes:

- analyzing cultural, social, economic, and political factors affecting students, schools, and society
- demonstrating knowledge of strategies for working and communicating effectively with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds in the school and community
- identifying strategies for communicating high expectations for all students and for ensuring all students an equal opportunity for educational success
- demonstrating knowledge of the significance of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity in the school and community and strategies for fostering a school culture that promotes respect for all people
- recognizing indications and manifestations of discrimination and inequitable treatment and identifying effective strategies for eliminating these practices
- applying knowledge of strategies for infusing culturally responsive teaching into the curriculum and school environment

Understand legal and ethical guidelines related to the role of the principal.

Includes:

- demonstrating knowledge of legal rights and responsibilities of students, staff, and parents/guardians (e.g., in regard to students with special needs, the right to privacy, confidentiality of student records, parental consent, the rights of home- and private-schooled students)
- applying knowledge of legal protections and due process for students (e.g., in regard to discipline, suspension, and expulsion policies and procedures) and staff (e.g., in regard to hiring, discipline, and termination policies and procedures)
- identifying procedures for applying statutes and regulations as required by federal and state law, the Colorado and U.S. Constitutions, and state rules and regulations
- demonstrating familiarity with the legal liabilities of school administration
- applying knowledge of ethical responsibilities and conduct in education-related contexts
- demonstrating familiarity with the system of public school governance

PROMOTING CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Understand how to lead the school community in creating and implementing a sustainable educational vision, setting goals, and ensuring accountability for achieving goals.

Includes:

- demonstrating knowledge of procedures for leading the development and implementation of the school's educational vision and goals and for promoting broad support for the vision and goals within the school community
- analyzing the role of internal and external factors in developing and implementing the school's educational vision and goals
- applying knowledge of how to use the school's educational vision and goals to analyze needs and accomplishments
- identifying effective strategies for monitoring and evaluating progress in achieving the school's educational vision and goals and for making modifications as needed to support and enhance student achievement
- recognizing the relationship between leadership and accountability and the importance of accepting personal and professional accountability for educational processes and outcomes
- demonstrating knowledge of the role of assessment and the appropriate use of data to evaluate instructional effectiveness, support educational improvement, and ensure educational accountability
- analyzing strategies for creating a culture of accountability within the school community and for establishing accountability systems that support achievement of the school's educational vision and goals

Understand the process of change within the school environment and strategies for initiating, managing, and monitoring change.

Includes:

- applying knowledge of principles and processes of change within the school environment
- analyzing strategies for building support for change (e.g., identifying needs, clarifying goals, identifying outcomes)
- demonstrating knowledge of strategies for initiating change in the school environment, including working closely with district leadership and gaining the support of key stakeholder groups within the school community
- recognizing effective strategies for overcoming resistance to change and facilitating the process of change
- demonstrating knowledge of how to effectively manage and monitor the change process and make adjustments as needed to achieve goals

Understand principles and practices of comprehensive planning and the use of data-driven decision making and problem solving to promote achievement of defined goals.

Includes:

- demonstrating knowledge of social, economic, political, and other factors that affect educational planning and of how to use data-driven, results-based planning to support student achievement of the Colorado Model Content Standards
- recognizing the importance of including stakeholders in comprehensive planning and strategies for working effectively with stakeholders in various planning contexts
- recognizing the importance of developing plans that define specific goals and objectives, provide for an appropriate allocation of resources, assign responsibility, define a timeline for achieving goals, and identify methods for evaluation and modification as needed
- applying knowledge of procedures for implementing plans and for monitoring implementation processes and outcomes
- demonstrating knowledge of skills and strategies for effective decision making and problem solving (e.g., involving stakeholders, applying research skills, evaluating alternative solutions and outcomes)
- recognizing effective strategies for developing consensus, facilitating problem solving, and promoting collaborative decision making in various educational contexts

LEADING THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Understand principles of and procedures for planning curriculum and instruction.

Includes:

- demonstrating knowledge of individual education techniques as they relate to the design of effective curriculum and instruction
- analyzing strategies for planning, organizing, and supervising curriculum and instruction to achieve the Colorado Model Learning Standards and to prepare students for everyday life and the world of work
- demonstrating knowledge of factors and procedures for planning curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of all students
- identifying effective methods for assisting staff in establishing effective schedules, classroom structures, and grouping practices to support student learning and achievement
- applying knowledge of procedures for leading faculty in planning, developing, modifying, and evaluating curriculum and instruction to promote student learning and ensure alignment with the Colorado Model Learning Standards

Understand principles of instruction and how to implement effective instruction and assessment to promote all students' achievement of learning standards.

Includes:

- demonstrating knowledge of how to design and deliver effective, developmentally appropriate instruction and assessment that promote all students' achievement of learning standards
- applying knowledge of various instructional approaches and of how to adapt instruction to respond to students' diverse cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds; learning styles; and special needs (e.g., physical or medical conditions, educational or emotional disabilities, giftedness)
- applying knowledge of instructional strategies that promote students' acquisition of knowledge, development of critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, and creativity
- demonstrating knowledge of the purposes of assessment, various types of assessment tools and approaches, and the use of sound assessment practices to monitor student learning and adjust instruction as needed
- demonstrating knowledge of how to maintain, analyze, and evaluate data regarding students' academic progress
- recognizing effective strategies for integrating technology into instruction (e.g., to reinforce learning, to serve as an information resource) and for using technology to manage information about student learning and track students' progress

Understand how to create a safe, positive, and supportive school learning environment focused on student achievement and characterized by appropriate and acceptable standards of student conduct.

Includes:

- demonstrating knowledge of factors and procedures for creating a safe and positive school learning environment focused on student learning and achievement
- identifying procedures for developing school and classroom codes of conduct that encourage student responsibility and reflect relevant laws and policies
- demonstrating knowledge of effective behavior management strategies and of how to promote fair, appropriate, and consistent implementation of codes of conduct
- applying knowledge of internal and external support services and their use in meeting the needs of all students, including students who are English language learners, students with disabilities, and other students with diverse needs
- recognizing procedures for developing positive, productive relationships with community agencies to support students and their families
- applying knowledge of how to maintain a safe learning environment for students, including recognizing warning signs of violence and strategies for preventing school violence

Understand how to supervise and evaluate instructional staff and promote the professional development of self and staff.

Includes:

- demonstrating knowledge of supervisory models used to monitor and improve staff performance and instructional delivery
- recognizing effective techniques for communicating high standards and expectations for staff, including clear performance objectives, and for encouraging initiative, leadership, innovation, and a strong work ethic
- identifying strategies for designing, implementing, and documenting staff performance evaluations in accordance with the requirements of Colorado law and linked to student achievement
- applying knowledge of how to develop staff capacity through recruitment and retention strategies, supervision, mentoring, support, and evaluation
- applying knowledge of how to assess the professional development needs of staff and how to provide staff with effective professional development aimed at improving student learning outcomes, including promoting the use of technology to enhance instruction
- recognizing the need to allocate adequate time, funding, and resources to ensure adequate and effective professional development
- demonstrating knowledge of how to use various methods and resources to engage in continuous learning and promote one's own professional growth and development

MANAGING THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Understand organizational, operational, and human resource management.

Includes:

- applying knowledge of principles of organizational behavior and management in schools and effective procedures for the daily management of school operations
- applying knowledge of group dynamics and team building in various school contexts
- recognizing fair and equitable personnel procedures and legal requirements for recruiting, hiring, inducting, and retaining a highly qualified and diverse licensed and classified staff
- demonstrating knowledge of standards and procedures for personnel decisions and actions, including those related to disciplining and dismissing licensed and classified staff
- demonstrating an awareness of employee group contracts, policies, and personnel procedures
- applying knowledge of strategies for developing operational policies and schedules
- recognizing the effective use of technology for facilitating, monitoring, and evaluating school operations
- recognizing roles and responsibilities of licensed and classified staff

Understand procedures for ensuring a safe, secure learning environment and for managing the school's physical plant and auxiliary services.

Includes:

- applying knowledge of safety procedures and security measures to help ensure student and staff safety in and around the school, including student safety traveling to and from school
- identifying strategies for maintaining a close working relationship with law enforcement and other external agencies
- recognizing the importance of taking a proactive approach to school security and knowing how to plan and implement stress-management, crisis-management, and conflict-resolution procedures before, during, and after emergency situations
- recognizing the relationship between an attractive, well-maintained physical environment and instructional program effectiveness
- demonstrating knowledge of procedures for building repair and maintenance
- demonstrating knowledge of issues and procedures related to the management of auxiliary services (e.g., food services, transportation services, information-management services, health services)

Understand fiscal and resource management in schools.

Includes:

- demonstrating knowledge of fiscal management in schools, including steps in the budgeting process and procedures for developing and managing a balanced school budget
- demonstrating knowledge of financial record keeping and reporting in schools
- demonstrating knowledge of public school financing
- demonstrating knowledge of effective strategies for obtaining and managing grant funds and other external resources
- applying knowledge of principles and practices for managing scarce resources and for involving stakeholders in the development of budgets and resource distribution plans
- demonstrating knowledge of technology applications in fiscal and resource management

PRACTICE QUESTIONS: PRINCIPAL



1. A school principal wants to establish a tennis team to accommodate increased student interest in the sport. The school does not have its own tennis courts, so the principal would like to obtain permission for the school to use the tennis courts in a nearby public park. The principal can best pursue this goal by taking which of the following actions *first*?
 - A. arranging a meeting with local officials to discuss the feasibility of allowing a school tennis team to use the public tennis courts
 - B. writing a letter to the editor of the local newspaper describing how a tennis team would benefit the school and requesting support for school use of the public tennis courts
 - C. asking the school's athletic director to draft a proposal to present at the next meeting of the district school board requesting permission to use the public tennis courts
 - D. encouraging interested students to begin a petition drive to solicit signatures supporting the school's use of the public tennis courts
2. A principal learns that her school has been designated as in need of "school improvement" based on the most recent administration of the reading tests in the statewide student assessment program. In focusing faculty on the need to strengthen student achievement in reading, the principal should emphasize that, based on provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act, the school will be released from this designation when:
 - A. students in relevant grades are able to demonstrate through testing or other means that their reading skills are at or above grade level.
 - B. students in relevant grades meet established state targets for two consecutive years.
 - C. the school provides evidence that all students reading below grade level are receiving appropriate and effective remedial instruction.
 - D. the school has made necessary improvements in its reading program and has received state approval of the program changes.

3. A principal who is leading an effort to establish a strong accountability system within the school should place the greatest emphasis on ensuring that the system:
 - A. encourages teachers to define for themselves the criteria that will be used to determine their success.
 - B. includes measurable goals and procedures for evaluating individual and group progress toward achieving the goals.
 - C. is based on input from all key constituencies within the school and the broader community.
 - D. offers faculty substantial autonomy in determining steps and procedures they will use to achieve the school's vision.
4. A principal has just begun working with the district's director of special education to establish a self-contained classroom for students with severe disabilities. In the past, many of these students were bused to an off-site program at considerable expense to the district. An in-house program will involve the reassignment of various teachers and support staff. The principal can best elicit support for the change by:
 - A. making every effort to minimize the number of faculty and staff who are directly affected.
 - B. defining expected outcomes and a clear set of procedures for implementing the change.
 - C. announcing the anticipated change well in advance to allow those affected time to adjust.
 - D. involving the teachers and staff in planning for the change and its impact on the school.

5. The students in an elementary school have diverse cultural and language backgrounds, learning styles, and special needs. The principal wants to ensure that the assessment approaches teachers are using in their classrooms are responsive to this diversity. The best way for the principal to ascertain that this goal is being achieved is to make sure that each teacher is:
- A. using various types of formal and informal assessment to evaluate student learning.
 - B. involving students in peer review and feedback sessions before administering classroom assessments.
 - C. providing students with ample opportunity to learn and practice a variety of test-taking skills.
 - D. creating classroom assessments that mirror the types of test questions and approaches used in the state-mandated student testing program.
6. An elementary school principal has received complaints about several students who have been engaging in name-calling and verbal harassment at their school bus stops. No physical violence has been reported. Which of the following actions would be most appropriate for the principal to take *first* in response to these complaints?
- A. Assign the students to different buses and warn them and their parents/guardians that further complaints will result in being banned from riding the bus.
 - B. Refer the complaints to the school-based management team for immediate attention.
 - C. Meet with each of the students to state that their behaviors at the bus stop are unacceptable and inform their parents/guardians of the complaints.
 - D. Direct faculty members to visit the bus stops to observe the students and provide warnings as needed.

7. A principal is aware that teachers were unenthusiastic about the professional development activities in which they participated during the previous year. The principal has also seen little evidence that teachers used the training they received. Which of the following steps taken by the principal would best help ensure a more effective professional development program during the upcoming year?
- A. developing an accountability system to promote and monitor teachers' application of the training they receive during professional development activities
 - B. appointing a team of teacher leaders to create a resource library linked to the professional development program and designed to facilitate faculty implementation of new ideas and methods
 - C. inviting teachers to help design a coherent professional development program that emphasizes issues and problems they are facing in their own classrooms
 - D. scheduling time for teachers to receive individual coaching, as needed, aimed at promoting implementation of methods and strategies emphasized in the professional development program
8. A principal is preparing for the first meeting of the school's newly constituted accountability committee. The committee includes several individuals who have not previously served on this type of committee. The principal can best promote positive and effective committee functioning during the year by including in the initial meeting:
- A. a discussion of specific strengths and weaknesses in the functioning of the school's previous accountability committee.
 - B. an opportunity for each committee member to briefly describe a proposal for school change that he or she hopes to pursue during the year.
 - C. a discussion of the roles and responsibilities of the accountability committee as well as its limitations.
 - D. an opportunity for each committee member to identify a specific skill he or she possesses that is likely to be of most value to the committee.

9. District staff have asked a principal to submit a prioritized list of needed school building repairs. In creating the list, the principal should give highest priority, after safety needs, to those repairs that:
- A. are necessary to prevent more costly repairs in the future.
 - B. can be completed by the school's own custodial or maintenance staff.
 - C. will require the least disruption to classes and schedules.
 - D. will be most costly for the school district to complete.
10. Three students who were scheduled to enroll at a high school have opted to attend a different high school in another district under Colorado's school choice law. Which of the following accurately explains the financial effect of the students' decision on their original school district?
- A. Funding will decrease because a portion of the property taxes paid by the students' families will need to be sent to the new district.
 - B. Funding will stay the same because state and federal aid is given to the district and does not fluctuate with changes in enrollment.
 - C. Funding will decrease because state aid is partly based on enrollment and will follow the students to the new district.
 - D. Funding will stay the same because the state will compensate the district for any federal funds lost due to the change in enrollment.

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

A principal has been hired to lead a troubled high school. The school has a history of declining student achievement, low staff morale, and conflictual relations with the community. District leaders have informed the principal that strong leadership should be exercised in addressing current problems and in effecting significant improvements in the school's academic performance.

11. The principal's best strategy for meeting this challenge is to focus *first* on efforts to:
 - A. define a new school vision and goals to help restore a sense of hope and commitment among constituents.
 - B. revise problematic elements of the school curriculum and revitalize the school's instructional practices.
 - C. increase stakeholder awareness of the principal's power and authority to effect meaningful change.
 - D. promote community recognition of the reasons for the school's current problems and challenges.
12. Which of the following actions by the new principal at the beginning of the school year is likely to be most effective in promoting successful leadership and problem solving?
 - A. communicating to constituents past successes as a school leader and a strong desire to implement change at the new school
 - B. presenting district and community leaders and school staff with an initial set of priorities for school improvement
 - C. soliciting input from a broad range of stakeholders regarding their perceptions about issues affecting the school and potential solutions
 - D. formulating a preliminary set of goals and a plan of action that target the school's most serious problems and challenges

ANSWER KEY: PRINCIPAL



Question Number	Correct Response	Objective
1.	A	Understand principles and practices of effective communication and collaboration with all members of the school community.
2.	B	Understand legal and ethical guidelines related to the role of the principal.
3.	B	Understand how to lead the school community in creating and implementing a sustainable educational vision, setting goals, and ensuring accountability for achieving goals.
4.	D	Understand the process of change within the school environment and strategies for initiating, managing, and monitoring change.
5.	A	Understand principles of instruction and how to implement effective instruction and assessment to promote all students' achievement of learning standards.
6.	C	Understand how to create a safe, positive, and supportive school learning environment focused on student achievement and characterized by appropriate and acceptable standards of student conduct.
7.	C	Understand how to supervise and evaluate instructional staff and promote the professional development of self and staff.
8.	C	Understand organizational, operational, and human resource management.
9.	A	Understand procedures for ensuring a safe, secure learning environment and for managing the school's physical plant and auxiliary services.
10.	C	Understand fiscal and resource management in schools.
11.	A	Understand the leadership role of the principal within the school community.
12.	C	Understand principles and practices of comprehensive planning and the use of data-driven decision making and problem solving to promote achievement of defined goals.