Performance Assessment for School Leaders (PASL)

Glossary

Analysis
Examination of the parts of a process or a product to determine their relationship.
A response that is grounded in evidence and deals with reasons, rationales, and interpretations of data and information.

Artifact
A document used or produced by a school leader candidate that will help raters better understand the activity featured in the task. Artifacts can include, but are not limited to, a spreadsheet, a plan, student work, a completed walk-through observation form, etc.

Assessment
A process of observing, monitoring, measuring, analyzing, evaluating, documenting, and reflecting for the purpose of adjusting teaching to enhance learning, resulting in improved student performance.

> **Formative assessment**
> A process for gathering evidence of student learning that can be used to adapt the teaching to meet the learning needs.
>
> **Summative assessment**
> A process for gathering evidence of student learning at the culmination of a specific body of learning or a given time to determine whether the intended learning goals have been met.
>
> **Formal assessment**
> A process for gathering evidence of student learning to make general instructional decisions using a standardized, published test or instrument that includes specific procedures for administration and interpretation.
>
> **Informal assessment**
> A process for gathering evidence of student learning to make general instructional decisions using casual, informal techniques that do not require specified procedures for administration and interpretation.

Assessment technique
A method of eliciting evidence of intended student learning.

Assessment tool
An instrument used to measure intended student learning formally or informally.

Collaborative team
A group of individuals who share common beliefs and work toward common goals. Collaborative team members spend time discussing what they hope to accomplish as a team and set team and individual goals for reaching that vision. A collaborative team is made up of people with varying areas of expertise who share tasks, resources, responsibilities, and leadership.

Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP)
A Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) outlines the vision, mission, values, and procedures that a school adopts to align instructional practice, student learning, professional development, curriculum development, and organizational structure to achieve the identified goals.

Contextual information
The information a candidate gathers about the learning environment to provide the rater who will be scoring the submission a better understanding of that environment. Contextual information appears at the beginning of each task and can be identical for all three tasks.

Cultural influences
The specific behaviors, characteristics, and beliefs of the individuals in a particular group that could influence instruction and student learning.

Data
Information, facts, or statistics used to inform and measure progress during the school improvement process. The type of data the candidate selects (e.g., longitudinal, snapshot, historical, demographic, qualitative, quantitative) should be relevant and useful for its educational purpose.

Data-collection tools
A variety of methods (e.g., checklists, interviews, observations, surveys) used to systematically collect specific information to gain a better understanding of an identified need. Also known as "data-gathering tools."

Differentiation
Different or altered learning activities employed by the educator to meet the needs of learners, allowing them to process constructs or make sense of concepts and ideas.

Diversity
The differences among groups of people and individuals based on age, gender, culture, language, race, ethnicity, religion, exceptionalities, and socioeconomic status.

Engage
To encourage active participation among colleagues. Engaged participants typically take action that demonstrates their willingness, interest, and involvement, and gain satisfaction from their accomplishments.

English-language learner (ELL)
A student who uses a primary language other than English, and who is developing proficiency in English.

Evidence
Any information produced and submitted by a school leader candidate, or a colleague who documents the school leader candidate's performance, that can be linked to the standards measured by the Task. Evidence can be found in the written commentary and artifacts, including the video.

Evidence of learning
The data gathered through formal and informal assessment strategies that demonstrate progress toward identified goals.

Facilitation
The guiding of the group process to ensure effective participation. Participants achieve a mutual understanding. Their contributions are considered and included in the ideas, solutions, or decisions that emerge. Participants take shared responsibility for the outcome. Feedback is provided to and by the group members.

Feedback
Information given to a colleague regarding progress toward a goal. Effective feedback is goal-referenced, tangible and transparent, actionable, user-friendly (specific and personalized), timely, ongoing, and consistent.

Feedback survey
Method of collecting evaluative comments from a specific group of colleagues. Used in Task 2 to elicit information regarding the professional development activities.

Follow-up activities
Additional activities used to reinforce and extend learning. Follow-up activities help foster continuous professional learning with colleagues.

Formative assessment
See Assessment.

Graphic representation of collected data
A means of displaying data that facilitates reader analysis (e.g., spreadsheet, graph, bar graph, pie chart, scattergram, color coding).

Guiding prompt
A question or statement provided in the Task requirements that elicits a school leader candidate's response.

Higher-order thinking
Critical, reasonable, reflective thinking that focuses on deciding what to believe or do by questioning assumptions and using a process of skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information.

Implementation
The process of executing a plan.

Implications for instruction
The concepts or strategies teachers will apply in response to a clear understanding of the current instructional situation.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)
A plan created in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to guarantee that a child who has a disability receives specialized instruction and related services.

Instructional challenges
Identified difficulties during instruction that need to be addressed to best meet the needs of all learners.

Instructional practice
The approaches and pedagogy used by classroom teachers to meet the learning goal(s) and needs of the students.

Instructional strategies
The approaches used by school leaders working with colleagues or by classroom teachers to best meet the learning goal(s) and needs of the students.

Learning goals
The intended learning based on standards and curriculum that students should master as a result of instruction.

Learning outcomes
Statements that describe the learning that students have accomplished and can reliably demonstrate. Learning outcomes may include knowledge, skills, and dispositions and are more specific than goals.

Longitudinal data
Data in which the same type of information on the same subject is observed over multiple points in time.

Monitor
The process of tracking or recording progress toward a goal over time.

Performance level
The ability of students (groups or individuals) to demonstrate evidence of learning.

Performance task
An authentic assessment that allows a school leader candidate to apply knowledge and skills by completing a task. The school leader candidate is able to show a wide range of knowledge and skills through this type of assessment.

Problem/Challenge
In the context of Task 1, a problem refers to a situation that needs prompt attention and influences instructional practice and student learning; e.g., poor performance in a content area by students at a grade level over multiple years; declining student attendance; insufficient technology implementation by teachers; weak performance by advanced students on a performance measure. A challenge refers to conditions that would take extended time to remediate, such as instructional practice, student grouping, scheduling issues, or staff morale.

Professional development
A comprehensive, sustained, intensive approach to supporting teachers' and school leaders' effectiveness in improving instructional practice and raising student achievement.

Rationale
The underlying principle or justification for a decision. A rationale should relate to the school context as described by the school leader candidate.

Reflection
The capacity to reflect on or review specific incidents of practice as a way of engaging in continuous learning to increase overall instructional effectiveness and student learning. It includes an analysis of actions by the school leader candidate that notes which colleagues successfully absorbed the content and which colleagues did not, what the impact on practice is, and how colleagues might change instructional practice to attend to future student needs. Reflection also includes thinking about pedagogy, student characteristics, and outcomes, and involves using data to review instructional decisions and improve teaching strategies and learning outcomes.

Research
The systematic investigation into and study of educational materials and sources to establish facts, verify and broaden understanding, and reach new conclusions. In Task 1, research allows the candidate to examine best practice compared to current practice in the area identified by the problem/challenge and best inform next steps in the planning process.

Research-based instructional practice
A particular program or collection of instructional practices that have a record of success; i.e., there is reliable, valid evidence that when a program is used with a particular group of students, the students can be expected to make adequate gains in achievement.

Resources
The tools used to provide additional support for professional development to meet the learning goal(s) and needs of the students.

Rubric
Written criteria for evaluating a performance that indicates the qualities by which levels of performance can be differentiated and that anchor judgments about the degree of success of a school leader candidate's assessment.

School culture
The set of norms, values, beliefs, perceptions, and written and unwritten rules that influence every aspect of how a school functions.

Standards
A list of statements that articulate expectations of performance for professional educators. Professional leaders are expected to exercise good judgment and use the standards to inform and improve their own practices.

Student learning
The desired outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, and abilities that students should attain as a result of a particular set of educational experiences.

Summative assessment
See Assessment.

Supportive interactions
The ways a school leader candidate provides emotional and/or academic support to help colleagues develop and feel comfortable in a building's environment. This could include principal sensitivity, building-wide behavior, and cognitive/instructional development through concept development, feedback, and modeling.

Targeted audience
Colleagues who have been identified as the recipients of professional development activities in Task 3. This is the group the collaborative team involves to improve research-based instructional practice.

Walk-through observation
A brief, non-evaluative classroom observation that focuses on specific, targeted, instructional outcomes. Walk-throughs can be done by an administrator, a supervisor, or a peer either individually or in teams.

Written commentary

A written response by the school leader candidate to the guiding prompts within the task requirements documents for the assessment.