**Assessment # 2: Comprehensive Exam**

**Part 1**

**a. Assessment**

All candidates for the Master of Education in Educational Leadership are required to complete a comprehensive examination in their final semester of study. The Comprehensive Examination was developed by program faculty using a constructed response format. The purpose of the exam is for candidates to apply knowledge and skills to a case study. The cases used for the exam represent diverse examples of some of the issues school administrators experience.

The exam derives its validity from alignment to the NELP standards and agreement by a panel of five experts in the field of educational leadership. To enhance inter-rater reliability, at least two Educational Leadership faculty evaluate each candidate’s answers. After all answers have been read and rated, the raters meet to consider the performance of each candidate. If there is an evenly split decision, a third party is consulted to evaluate the candidate’s response and break the tie. The decision of the team is made as a single decision, pass or fail, for each question.

The comprehensive exam is offered three times per year, toward the end of the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Candidates are notified of having successfully completed the exam via email within two weeks after the comprehensive exam has been completed. If a candidate is judged to have failed a question, written summary comments describing the major reasons the team judged the examination to be unsatisfactory are forwarded to the candidate when notification of a performance is given. The candidate is allowed to retake each section of the comprehensive exam once.

**b. Alignment to Standards**

CAEP Standards for Advanced Programs: A.1.1.a; A.1.1.c; A.1.1.d; and A.1.1.f.

NELP Standards: 1 through 7

We will begin using this assessment in Spring 2020.

**c. Analysis of data findings**

There is no data for the NELP-aligned comprehensive exam.

**d. Interpretation of Evidence for Meeting Standards**

In the past three years, only one candidate failed the ELCC-aligned iteration of the comprehensive exam on their first attempt. After receiving feedback, the candidate passed on the second attempt. The universal pass rate on the comprehensive examination suggests TCNJ’s program is preparing candidates with the content knowledge they need to be successful in leadership fields.

**Part 2**

**e. Assessment Tool**

**The College of New Jersey**

**Department of Educational Administration and Secondary Education**

**Master’s in Educational Leadership**

**Comprehensive Examination**

**Purpose**

The primary purpose of the exam is to provide an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate knowledge of core leadership practices and dispositions and apply such ideas to a case situation. The exam is aligned with the [National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Program Standards - Building Level.](http://3fl71l2qoj4l3y6ep2tqpwra.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NELP-Building-Standards.pdf) The exam evaluates:

1. skill in organizing and expressing ideas in a logical, coherent, literate, and convincing fashion.
2. ability to synthesize and apply knowledge of educational leadership
3. facility in cogently analyzing the issues presented and generating recommendations for addressing them.

Passage of this exam is a requirement for attaining the master’s degree.

Description: This exam requires you to analyze a case study of a school and prepare responses to four questions over the course of four hours. You will be assessed on your performance in 14 areas.

Directions:

While emphasis is placed on your understanding of the scholarly knowledge base, you are expected to demonstrate higher order thinking that goes beyond mechanically recalling or reporting facts, concepts, or leadership theory. You must also demonstrate an ability to make appropriate connections between theory and practice. Therefore, your responses should demonstrate deep understanding and **relate directly to the case presented**.

You should identify and elaborate on course content and major authors to support your explanations while being selective in what you choose to include in your response. The material you cite should explain and illuminate the actions, behaviors, and events described in the case.**After reading the assigned case, prepare responses to each of the following questions.**

1. Identify **three major areas of strength** and the **three most urgent issues of concern** at the school that represent key issues and problems. Cite evidence from the case and at least one expert source to justify why these issues are likely to have a significant impact on students (NELP 2.2)

Your overall response must address each of the following areas:

1. The extent the school in the case provides a **quality instructional program** (e.g. curriculum, effective instructional practices and technologies, student supports). (NELP 4.2; CAEP A.1.1.e)
2. The extent the case provides evidence of a **positive school culture**. (NELP 3.1)
3. The extent that all students were offered **equitable access** to resources, quality instruction, and/or educational opportunities. (NELP 3.2; CAEP A.1.1.c)
4. Analyze how **theories of leadership** employed by school or district leaders (past or present) influenced the situation in the case. As part of this analysis you must apply at least **one** of the following theories, as appropriate to the case.

* Transformational leadership
* Transactional leadership
* Situational and Contingency leadership
* Theory X and Theory Y
* Motivation Hygiene Theory
* Management Theory
* Classical, Incremental, and Mixed Scanning Decision Making
* Four-Frame model
* Systems Thinking
* Organizational Culture model

a) Explain the extent school leaders cultivated **positive behaviors** in others. (NELP 2.3)

b) Explain how conditions in the school facilitated or undermined professional/prosocial **norms or ethical practices** among teachers and/or students. (NELP 2.1; CAEP A.1.1.f)

c) Explain how school personnel facilitated or undermined **collaborative engagement with families and community members**. (NELP 5.1; CAEP A.1.1.d)

1. Describe how the effective or ineffective use of **organizational structures and resources** have influenced the situation positively or negatively.

Address **each** of the following areas in your response:

1. How the school’s use of resources **financial**, physical, and/or temporal resources (e.g. budgets, schedules) contributed to school effectiveness. (NELP 6.2).
2. How the school’s approach to **policy** (federal, state, OR district) has contributed to or undermined the efficient and effective functioning of the school. (e.g., loose implementation, lack of policy guidance) (NELP 6.3; CAEP A.1.1.f)
3. How **communication** processes or patterns facilitated or impeded information flow and positive relationships among stakeholders (internal and/or external). (NELP 6.1)
4. How **personnel** processes contributed positively or negatively to student learning (e.g. hiring, staffing, work assignments, supervision, professional development, and/OR teacher evaluation). (NELP 7.2)
5. Assume that you are the school principal identified in this case. Based on your analysis of the situation as presented in questions 1 through 3, generate **a short-term** **plan** (1 to 2 semesters)to further investigate or address what you perceive to be the most urgent problem.

Include the following

* 1. A purpose and **rationale** for your plan. Ensure you have a clear vision for improvement that is connected to one of the most urgent issues of concern from question 1. (NELP 1.1)
  2. The leadership actions and behaviors that will be necessary to enact this plan. Be sure to describe the leadership actions and behaviors that are aligned with **change theory** and are likely to engender the support of the school community for your proposal. (NELP 5.3; CAEP A.1.1.b)
  3. How you will go about gathering further information to better understand the problem OR how you will you know that your planned changes resulted in improvement. You plan should collect **sufficient unbiased data** to further investigate the problem or to determine whether the planned actions produce the intended effects. (NELP 1.2)

**f. Scoring Rubric**

**Master’s in Educational Leadership Core Comprehensive Examination**

**Scoring Rubric**

Student Number ­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Reader/Rater ­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| **Question 1** | | | |
|  | **Unacceptable 1** | **Acceptable 2** | **Target 3** |
| a. **Areas of strength and concern.**  (NELP 2.2) | Areas of strength and areas of concern that represent the key issues and problems from the case are weak or missing. | Three areas of strength and three areas of concern that represent the key issues and problems from the case are present and reasonable developed. | Three areas of strength and three areas of concern that represent the key issues and problems from the case are present and well developed. Cites research or expert sources to justify why the chosen areas are likely to have a significant impact on students. |
| b. **Quality instructional program**  (NELP 4.2) | The extent the case provides evidence of a quality instructional program (e.g. coherent curriculum, effective instructional practices and technologies, adequate supports) is weak or missing. | The extent the case provides evidence of a quality instructional program (e.g. coherent curriculum, effective instructional practices and technologies, adequate supports) is present and reasonably developed. | The extent the case provides evidence of a quality instructional program (e.g. coherent curriculum, effective instructional practices and technologies, adequate supports) is present and well developed. |
| c. **School culture**    (NELP 3.1) | The extent the case provides evidence of a positive, supportive, and inclusive school culture is weak or missing. | The extent the case provides evidence of a positive, supportive, and inclusive school culture is present and reasonably developed. | The extent the case provides evidence of a positive, supportive, and inclusive school culture is present and well developed. |
| d. **Equity**  (NELP 3.2) | The extent that all students are offered equitable access to resources, quality instruction, and/or educational opportunities is weak or missing. | The extent that all students are offered equitable access to resources, quality instruction, and/or educational opportunities is present and reasonably developed. All student subgroup disparities are noted. | The extent that all students are offered equitable access to resources, quality instruction, and/or educational opportunities is present and well developed. All student subgroup disparities are noted. |

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| **Question 2** | | | |
|  | **Unacceptable 1** | **Acceptable 2** | **Target 3** |
| a. **Leadership theory**  (NELP 2.3) | Understanding of leadership theory is weak or missing. | Understanding of leadership theory as demonstrated by reflection on the efficacy of leaders in the case and assessment of their ability to cultivate positive behaviors in others is present and reasonably developed. | Understanding of leadership theory as demonstrated by reflection on the efficacy of leaders in the case and assessment of their ability to cultivate positive behaviors in others is present and well developed. |
| b. **Norms and ethics**  (NELP 2.1) | Explanation of how conditions in the school facilitated or undermined professional/prosocial norms or ethical practices among teachers and/or students is weak or missing. | Explanation of how conditions in the school facilitated or undermined professional/prosocial norms or ethical practices among teachers and/or students is present and reasonably developed. | Explanation of how conditions in the school facilitated or undermined professional/prosocial norms or ethical practices among teachers and/or students is present and well developed. |
| c. **Collaboration with families and communities**  (NELP 5.1) | Explanation of how school personnel facilitated or undermined collaborative engagement with families and community members is weak or missing. | Explanation of how school personnel facilitated or undermined collaborative engagement with families and community members is present and reasonably developed. | Explanation of how school personnel facilitated or undermined collaborative engagement with families and community members is present and well developed. |

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| **Question 3** | | | |
|  | **Unacceptable 1** | **Acceptable 2** | **Target 3** |
| a. **Use of resources**  (NELP 6.2) | Explanation how the school’s use of resources (e.g. time, finances) has contributed to school effectiveness is weak or missing. | Explanation how the school’s use of resources (e.g. time, finances) has contributed to school effectiveness is present and reasonably developed. | Explanation how the school’s use of resources (e.g. time, finances) has contributed to school effectiveness is present and well developed. |
| b. **Policies**  (NELP 6.3) | Explanation of how the content, implementation, or lack of policies have contributed to or undermined the functioning of the school is weak or missing. | Explanation of how the content, implementation, or lack of policies have contributed to or undermined the functioning of the school is present and reasonably developed. | Explanation of how the content, implementation, or lack of policies have contributed to or undermined the functioning of the school is present and well developed. |
| c. **Communication patterns**  (NELP 6.1) | Description of how communication patterns facilitated or impeded information flow and positive relationships among stakeholders is weak or missing. | Description of how communication patterns facilitated or impeded information flow and positive relationships among stakeholders is present and reasonably developed. | Description of how communication patterns facilitated or impeded information flow and positive relationships among stakeholders is present and well developed. |
| d. **Personnel**  (NELP 7.2) | Explanation of how personnel processes have contributed positively or negatively to student learning is weak or missing. | Explanation of how personnel processes have contributed positively or negatively to student learning is present and reasonably developed. | Explanation of how personnel processes have contributed positively or negatively to student learning (e.g. hiring, staffing, work assignments, supervision, professional development, and/or evaluation) is present and well developed. |

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| **Question 4** | | | |
|  | **Unacceptable 1** | **Acceptable 2** | **Target 3** |
| a. **Vision**  (NELP 1.1) | A clear vision for improvement that is connected to one of the most urgent issues of concern from Q1 is weak or missing. | A clear vision for improvement that is connected to one of the most urgent issues of concern from Q1 is present and reasonably developed. | A clear vision for improvement that is connected to one of the most urgent issues of concern from Q1 is present and well developed. |
| b. **Change theory**  (NELP 5.3) | Leadership actions and behaviors that demonstrate an understanding of change theory and are likely to engender the support of the school community are weak or missing. | Leadership actions and behaviors that demonstrate an understanding of change theory and are likely to engender the support of the school community are present and reasonably developed. | Leadership actions and behaviors that demonstrate an understanding of change theory and are likely to engender the support of the school community are present and well developed. |
| c. **Data collection**  (NELP 1.2) | Collection of sufficient unbiased data to further investigate the problem or to determine whether the planned actions are producing the intended effects is weak or missing. | Collection of sufficient unbiased data to further investigate the problem or to determine whether the planned actions are producing the intended effects is present and reasonably developed. | Collection of sufficient unbiased data to further investigate the problem or to determine whether the planned actions are producing the intended effects is present and well developed. |

**Rating of Comprehensive Individual Exam Questions**

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| **3** | Strong pass | Majority of responses are 3s. |
| **2** | Moderate pass | Majority of responses are 2s or above. |
| **1** | Fail | 2 or more elements in 1, indicating insufficient knowledge and skill |

**Students must obtain a strong or moderate pass on each question to obtain a passing score on the exam.**

**Rubric Validity**

Lawshe’s Content Validity Ratio (rating by 5 panelists)

1.a 1.0

1.b 0.6

1.c 0.6

1.d 0.6

2.a 0.6

2.b 0.2

2.c 0.6

2.d 0.6

3.a 0.6

3.b 0.6

3.c 0.6

3.d 0.6

4.a 0.6

4.b 1.0

4.c 0.6

**Inter-Rater Reliability:**

At least two Educational Leadership faculty evaluate each candidate’s answers. After all answers have been read and rated, the raters meet to consider the performance of each candidate. If there is an evenly split decision, a third party is consulted to evaluate the candidate’s response and break the tie. The decision of the team is made as a single decision, pass or fail, for each question.

**g. Data Table**

No data has been collected on the revised exam.