



Welcome To Our World!

Many of you have read and used my *Passing the Principal TExES Exam: Keys to Certification and School Leadership*. Since its initial publication, people have so graciously said how much they liked it, how it made the competencies seem so real, and how it helped them pass the Principal (68) TExES exam. Some people said that they had been unsuccessful in passing the test until they read my book.

All of this has warmed my heart. I like it when my books or classes help people. I like hearing from them afterwards and knowing I have made a difference in their lives in a small way. We desperately need more principals whose hearts are committed to helping teachers teach and students learn, to improving society through their relationships with students, families, and the community, and who have heeded my call to make the world a better place, “one student and school at a time” (Wilmore, 2003).

Soon after *Passing the Principal TExES Exam: Keys to Certification and School Leadership* was released, students, universities, and Regional Education Service Centers began to ask when I was going to write a superintendent’s TExES preparation manual. Surely, with the dramatic shortage of superintendents as well as principals, a book to expand and explain the superintendent domains and competencies was also needed. In response to that demand, today you are beginning to read *Passing the Superintendent TExES Exam: Keys to Certification and District Leadership*. To those of you who are familiar with the first book, this one will read and

feel like a homecoming. It will use the same format, and of course, it will still utilize the same “voice” of teaching by using real-life examples as the first book. Although there are ten superintendent competencies, whereas there were only nine for the principal exam, you will still see a lot of similarities in concepts. All of the same knowledge and skills that you have successfully applied for campus leadership are also essential in district leadership. Just as you have previously transitioned from “thinking” like a classroom teacher to a principal, again, you will now learn to think more globally. What is best for the entire district rather than just one campus? How can you lead for improvement of the entire district, to establish a true learning community, and to make strong data-driven decisions rather than what is politically expedient? How can you enhance your moral core to stand tall ethically and withstand the external pressures that fall on all superintendents? These are the things we will be discussing in *Passing the Superintendent TExES Exam: Keys to Certification and District Leadership*.

To those of you who are not familiar with my principal TExES preparation book or who are from out of state, let me explain what the test and its background are all about. In the state of Texas, as in many other states, there is a rigorous examination that potential educators must pass before becoming eligible for certification. In Texas, this test is called the TExES (Texas Examinations of Educator Standards) exam. We have a TExES exam for everything from initial teacher certification to the superintendency. There is tremendous pressure on candidates to pass this test. Without it, no one can become certified. There is also tremendous pressure on preparation programs for their students to do well. Potential test takers from both inside and outside the state are looking for tools to help them achieve their goals of getting certified and becoming a world-changing Texas superintendent.

Universities and alternative preparation programs are working hard to address both the knowledge and philosophical base upon which the TExES exams are formed. The superintendent (064) exam is built upon a framework of ten competencies within three domains. We are fortunate in Texas that our competencies are directly aligned with the national Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards. This alignment is shown in Figure 1.1.

It is assumed that test takers have received knowledge and research preparation through their educational providers. This book will supply needed supplemental resources for the knowledge base, but it is not intended to substitute for a master’s degree or advanced certification program. It will focus, however, on the philosophy necessary to *think* like a learner-centered superintendent. There is a deficit in candidates making the transition from *thinking* like a principal to *thinking, reflecting, reacting, and responding* like a superintendent. All of the knowledge in the world is useless if a test taker

Figure 1.1 Alignment of Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) Standards With TExEX Domains and Competencies

	ELCC Standard 1	ELCC Standard 2	ELCC Standard 3	ELCC Standard 4	ELCC Standard 5	ELCC Standard 6	ELCC Standard 7
TExES 001					√+		√
TExES 002	√+						√
TExES 003				√+			√
TExES 004						√+	√
TExES 005		√+					√
TExES 006		√+					√
TExES 007		√+					√
TExES 008			√			√	√
TExES 009			√+				√
TExES 010	√			√			√
√+ = Primary Focus of Standard √ = Addressed in Standard							

cannot *think* in the way the test was developed. *Passing the Superintendent TExES Examination: Keys to Certification and District Leadership* addresses the philosophy as well as the skills superintendents must have within each of the three domains and ten competencies. This book provides test-taking tips for before, during, and after the exam. Specific attention is given to in-state and out-of-state test takers. Each competency, 001 through 010, has its own chapter that explains the competency in detail with examples. The end of the book concludes with additional resources that will be helpful to candidates as they develop their knowledge and philosophical base necessary to pass the test and pursue careers as lifelong leaders of learners.

As with all my books, this one is written in an informal voice. There are real-life stories and applications integrated into each competency to help you connect abstract concepts to today's reality. It is absolutely necessary that you learn how to integrate your knowledge and skills into application for success both on the test and as a world-changing superintendent. My goal is for *Passing the Superintendent TExES Examination: Keys to Certification and District Leadership* to be helpful and friendly. It was not designed to be stuffy or aloof, but to actually help you understand exactly what the competencies mean and how to apply them on the TExES exam and in real life.

THE DOMAINS

The superintendent TExES examination is divided into three domains with ten competencies. The domains are as follows:

- Leadership of the Educational Community
- Instructional Leadership
- Administrative Leadership

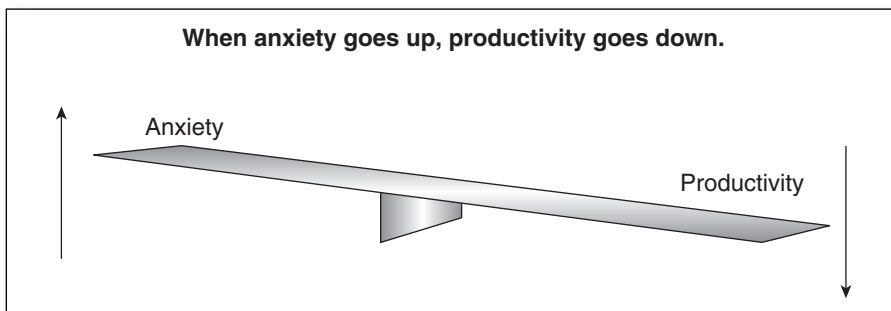
There are four competencies within Leadership of the Educational Community, three within Instructional Leadership, and three also in Administrative Leadership. Questions on the test are designed to address specific competencies. However, they are not evenly divided. Approximately 40% of the questions will address competencies within Leadership of the Educational Community. Approximately 30% will address different competencies from Instructional Leadership. The final 30% will focus on Administrative Leadership. There are no absolute numbers of questions per competency or domain. My goal is for *all* of you to get *all* answers to the questions correct regardless of which domain or competency they come from. However, a student does *not* have to score 100% to pass the test. For many students, just realizing they do not have to make a *perfect* score on the

test helps take the pressure off. This is a good thing because half the battle of passing this test is a mind game. In other words, psychologically you must know you *can and will succeed*. It is my intention for all of you to win the mind game. You should walk into the testing center *cool, calm, collected, confident, and almost downright cocky*. This mental attitude is necessary to keep your stress level down. When your stress level goes up, your productivity goes down. I don't want that to happen to you. As shown in Figure 1.2, I want your stress level down and your productivity way up. Therefore, you should be cool, calm, collected, confident, and almost downright cocky as you prepare for the test, so you will be prepared to conduct yourself likewise during the test. Practice now for what you are going to do then.

Many people put great emphasis into trying to figure out exactly which competency each question addresses. Although we will discuss this strategy, it will not receive undue attention. Remember, if our goal is to get *every* question correct, why do we care which competency the question came from? We do not. We want to get *all* the questions right. However, upon becoming thoroughly familiar with each of the competencies, as you will in Chapters 3 through 12, you will recognize key words and concepts that will guide your selection of the appropriate answers to get *all* the questions right . . . or at least enough to pass.

In addition, there is significant overlap of key themes within the competencies. Since the test is largely a timed mind game, why would you want to stress yourself out with the clock ticking, worrying if a question is addressing competency 001 or 003? Who cares? The important thing is to understand, integrate, and *live* the competencies. Make them your Superintendent's Bible. Beginning this minute, let your walk match your talk in modeling these competencies in your daily life. Then on the day of the test, walk in there and ace the TExES exam because you are already living the philosophy upon which it is built.

Figure 1.2 Anxiety and Productivity



If you think there was a lot going on as you serve or served as a principal, you haven't seen anything yet. Think of leading a school district as orchestrating a really good jazz band. As the musicians practice before a performance, they individually sound like a whole lot of *noise*. Everyone is doing his or her own thing, warming up, and getting ready for the concert or gig. But once it gets going, everything comes together. The musicians play as a team. They are great musicians who have worked hard, who have practiced together, and who have the common goal of producing really awesome music. Because they have done those things, the concert begins and their *practiced skills* turn into a true art form as they blend together, bending and flowing with the ebb, the crescendos and decrescendos, the tempo, and the dynamics of the music to produce something truly beautiful.

There has been no greater time than now that our school districts need great leadership. We need you to lead the jazz band, to bring all the different parts of the system together into one melodious whole. We do not want or need noise such as when we were practicing to get where we are. We need *jazz*. We need to knock the world dead through the integration of the ten competencies and skills we will be studying together here. Today's society needs and deserves superintendents who can direct districts like smooth jazz bands. As long as people in the district are doing their own things, independent of each other, all we will get is noise. I would think we could all agree that we have had enough noise coming out of our schools. Now it is time for jazz, and you are the one leading the band. We want, we need, and we will have beautiful music. You will be a great superintendent. You will be a learner-centered leader with passion, vision, and purpose who will lead the district to win a Grammy, or at least be at the top of the list of successful districts regarding No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Every district deserves to be a part of a learning team. All children deserve to be a part of a district that is focused on success for every facet of their lives. Every child, every teacher, every support staff member, every administrator deserves to be a winner.

For too many students today, there is little hope for the future. I want *you* to be the best leader any district (jazz band) ever had. *You* will be the leader that does what is right instead of what is easy or bureaucratic. *You* will be the superintendent that facilitates your district and community in developing a common vision and a solid purpose built on identified common shared goals and values. *You* will be the one to change the world . . . or at least your district. *You* will become an *awesome superintendent*, or I will come back and haunt you.

But, first you must pass this test. Are you ready to get started?

GETTING STARTED

Section II of this book includes Chapters 3–12. Chapter 2, *It's All Good*, will give you the global view of how you will achieve your goal of passing the test. This test is merely a gatekeeper designed to see that you have a specific learner-centered philosophy of district leadership as portrayed in the domains and competencies. It portrays *entry-level* administrative skills and expectations. It is a passable test. You *will* pass this test. There is absolutely no reason for you not to, because, after all, you are studying from *my* book. I teach leadership and research at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin. I also teach TExES preparation classes all over the state. It brings me great joy when students from any of them contact me to let me know they passed the test. I get really excited! After all, that means there is one more human out there ready to join my journey, my quest, my passion toward improving the world. In the rare instance someone is unsuccessful in a testing attempt, it grieves my heart. It makes me sad and that is *not* a pretty sight. I feel sure that you would much rather make me, and yourself, very, very happy. So follow the directions I provide for you in this book. Even if they don't make sense to you, do them. They have worked for zillions of people before you, and they will work for you. To borrow from the fine folks at Nike, *Just do it!*

In *Passing the Principal TExES Exam: Keys to Certification and School Leadership*, I encouraged people to let me know when they passed the test. I also told them that I have a strong preference for *pink* roses and chocolate. My favorites are Blue Bell ice cream, of course, and Hershey bars, plain with no nuts. There are already enough nuts in education. We do not need any more. They seem to propagate just fine on their own without our help.

Through the years, you would be amazed how many Hershey bars and roses I have received. Sometimes a student will send one Hershey. Others have sent nine, one for each of the nine competencies they passed on the Principal TExES exam. And, believe it or not, I do get roses. I love me some pink roses! In fact, roses have followed me across the state. This spring, after a wonderful five years at Dallas Baptist University, I moved to the University of Texas of the Permian Basin. When I got back from spring break, I had a dozen roses waiting for me in the certification office. All of the staff was waiting for me to get there to see whom the roses were from. They had thought I had a secret admirer. I did! It was another wonderful person who I did not even know but who has read my book and passed the Principal TExES exam.

Now, folks, I am not telling you that you must send me Hershey bars or roses when (not if) you pass this test. You truly do not have to. But it can't hurt. . . .



10 The Knowledge and Theoretical Base

Chapters 3–12 provide detailed attention to each of the ten learner-centered competencies. If you have never even *heard* of them up to this point, that is all right. By the time I get through with you, you will be *living and breathing* them. You are going to know those competencies inside out. You will be reciting them to your families and friends. If you do not have a family or friends, I strongly suggest finding some. They will be a great support system for you to celebrate with *when you pass the test!*

The next component, Section III, addresses the integration and application of all you have learned in Section II. You will become skilled at how to analyze data, learn specific test-taking strategies, and create your very own personal success plan as you prepare for the test and afterwards. Last, in Section IV, we will discuss the final logistical tasks you need to do to actually become certified as a superintendent in the Great State of Texas. We will then tie it all together in Chapter 16, *That’s What I’m Talking About*. By the time you walk in to take your TExES exam, you will be so prepared that all you will want to do is go in there and pass it so you can go forward to improve the world and eat more chocolate. This test is just a headache to get in your way. So let’s get rid of this headache by *passing the test the first time!* Why bother having to take it again? Are you ready? Let’s go!