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Hello!

Welcome to *Making the Principal TExES Exam Real: Competency-Based Case Studies With Practice Questions*. This book will be different from my *Passing the Principal TExES Exam: Keys to Certification and School Leadership* (2nd ed.) although it is built on the same competencies and theoretical framework.

Whereas the first book is designed strictly to teach you the theoretical framework of the test, this book will show you that framework in real life. Every competency from every domain has three case studies that directly address it. This will help you take the theory of the competency and see it in real life terms through the case studies—exactly like the 068 Principal TExES Exam does with the decision sets.

With three case studies for each of the nine competencies you have 27 case studies in this book. For each of them you will have reflective higher order thinking skills questions that can be used for individual study, but, even better, for use in class discussions so you can really wrap your mind around the case study and how it applies to that specific competency. There are five questions for each of the 27 case studies for a total of 135 higher order thinking skills questions.

Last, each chapter ends with five competency-based questions, for that specific competency, that are designed as practice questions for the actual TExES Exam. The answers are provided. Therefore, you will have 45 practice questions for the principal TExES Exam with five for each of the nine competencies.

All in all, *Making the Principal TExES Exam Real: Competency-Based Case Studies With Practice Questions* may be the best investment you make as you prepare for the Principal TExES Exam, outside of *Passing the Principal TExES Exam: Keys to Certification and School Leadership* (2nd ed.). My personal recommendation is that you read and study *Passing the Principal TExES Exam* first. Understand the theoretical framework. You need to comprehend the concepts around which the test is built in order to understand what the test developers are seeking from you in the questions.

Then purchase and thoroughly read and discuss this book. These two books, coupled with my brand new *Passing the Principal TExES Exam*:

Practice Tests for Success, should put you completely over the top of the TExES Exam. That is what we want. We want you to score so high they want to audit your test to see how you made such a high score in every domain.

So they are three different books with three different purposes. You want all of them. You want to read, study, and use all of them. They will do you no good sitting on a shelf.

Then when the day comes for you to test, you will knock the top out of it, one question at a time. Go for it!

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What About All Those Domains and Competencies? They Scare Me

*Overview of the TExES Learner-Centered
Domains and Competencies*

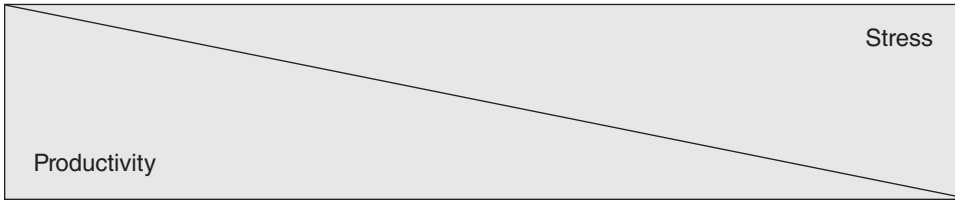
When preparing for this test, it is normal to be nervous. Being nervous equals being stressed. Remember that when you are stressed, your productivity goes down. In this instance, the productivity we are looking at is you passing the Principal TExES Exam. Therefore, as shown in Figure 2.1, our goal is to reduce your stress so your productivity will go up, not the other way around.

This test is built around 3 domains:

- School community leadership
- Instructional leadership
- Administrative leadership

Inside these three domains are nine competencies. They are not divided equally. There are three competencies in Domain I, four competencies in Domain II, and only two competencies in Domain III. The questions on the test are divided proportionately according to how many competencies per domain that there are. Because of that you can expect to see more questions

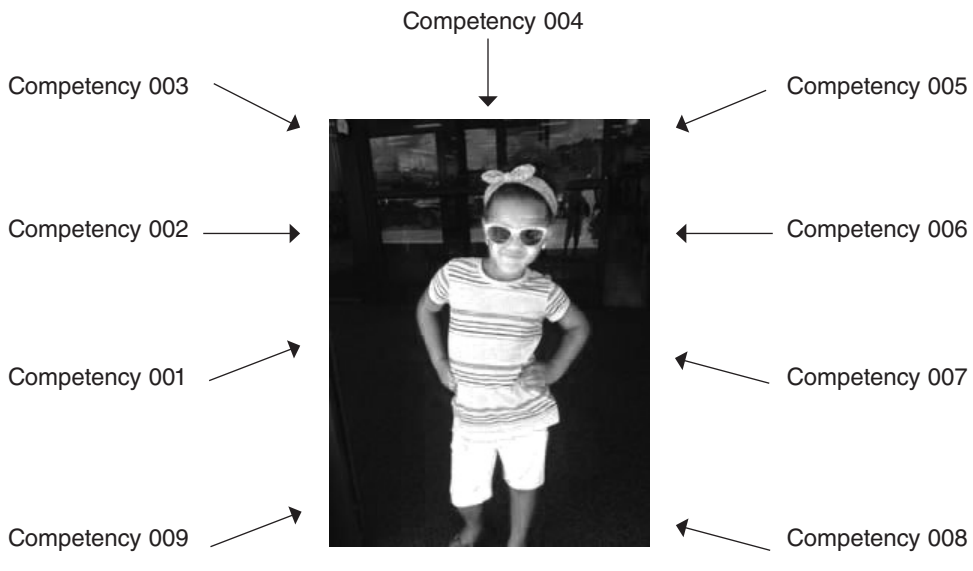
Figure 2.1 When Stress Goes Up, Productivity Goes Down



from Domain II, with four competencies, than you will see in Domain III with only two competencies. However, remember that all nine of the competencies are important, and all nine are covered on the test.

Regardless of which competency or domain we are addressing during our chat sessions, it is critically important to remember one thing. Figure 2.2 shows how all of the domains and competencies focus on the student and helping the student to be successful. Whatever modifications or adaptations

Figure 2.2 The Nine Domain Competencies Focus on Student Success



to Responses to Interventions (RtI) that are necessary for each student to be successful, must be done.

■ THE IDEAL SCENARIO

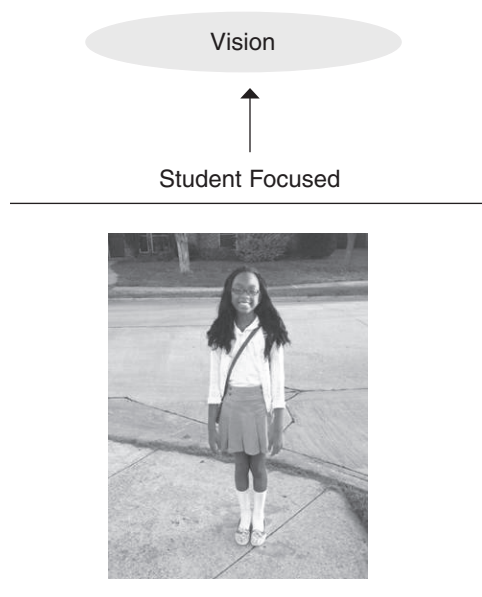
This test is built on what an ideal principal would do to create an ideal school. It is not based on what you see being done every day unless what you see being done is ideal. Therefore, if you pick an answer because it is something that seems would reasonably be done at your school, unless it is the *ideal* answer, you just picked the wrong answer. This test is not based on reality. It is based on what is ideal. How can we create ideal schools where all students are successful? How can you as principal create and lead these schools? That's the bottom line of this test.

Therefore, the ideal principal will always focus on the students and what is best for them rather than what is easiest or "the way we have always done it." Ideal principals use effective leadership strategies to lead their teachers to use the best research-based effective instructional strategies available for all students so that they can be successful. If a student is not successful, we modify what we are doing to help him or her. It is our job to teach all children, even if they are difficult to teach. It is our job to modify our teaching styles to meet their learning needs instead of the students' job to change their learning styles to meet our teaching styles. As principal, actions speak louder than words. We must model this as we deal with teachers, staff, and the entire school community.

■ THE CAMPUS VISION AND STRATEGIC GOAL SETTING

Figure 2.3 All Campus and Department Goals Should Be Student Focused

Mission = To move from reality to the vision.



I cannot emphasize enough the significance of the campus vision—first that one actually exists and thereafter, that strategic plans are in place to see to ensure that it is achieved. Figure 2.3 shows how this is done.

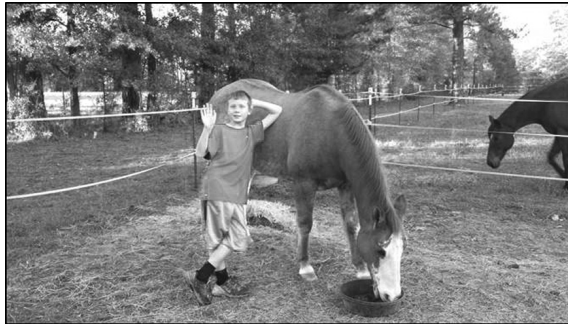
To achieve this, use collaborative planning and data-based goal setting. *Every goal must be measurable and have a deadline, and you must identify (or acquire) the resources needed to meet it.* Without each of these things, it is not a goal. It is a dream. We do not have time to dream about success for every child. We do not have the political gravitas to hope that all students will do well on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STARR) or other exams. Hoping is not a plan. Looking at multiple sources of data gives you the resources to set reasonable, measurable goals that can and should be reached. Continuous assessment should be taking place to guarantee progress is being made toward each goal. If not, why not? If something is not working, change it. If the horse is dead, get off. If we have a goal of improving attendance by X%, we know via continuous assessment whether we are on track to meet it. If we are not, it is time to modify and adjust

our strategies. In other words, we must do something different to make sure we do increase attendance by $X\%$.

In order to develop a vision, we must first know where we are. What is our school's reality? How do we know this? We know this by looking at our data, by looking at lots and lots of data. We do this by using the Elaine Wilmore 1–2–3–4 Plan, shown in Figure 2.4 and discussed in detail later.

Figure 2.4 The 1–2–3–4 Plan

1. Develop, Create
2. Articulate, Communicate
3. Implement, Just Do It
4. Steward, Evaluate



We do this by talking to teachers, staff, and other members of the school community to get their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the campus as well as how to improve them. Once we know where we are, our reality, together we collaboratively determine where we want to be. Where we want to be is our vision. The ministeps to get to the vision are our goals. The things we will do to get to our goals are our strategies. All are important in moving us from where we are, our reality, to where we want to be, our vision. This includes diagnosing organizational health and moral vision also as shown in Figure 2.5.

Let's do an example. Let's say we want to improve the attendance of Hispanic males (being specific) at our school. We can't just *say* we want to improve the attendance of Hispanic males. We have to take action.

First, we must set a measureable goal with a deadline. Remember, goals without deadlines are only dreams. So we could say, "We will increase the attendance rate of Hispanic male students by 3% during this academic year." In so doing, we are making the goal measureable (by 3%), and we are setting a deadline (this academic year).

But we are not finished. Thus far we are just talking. We are not taking action. We need action. Therefore, *exactly* how are we going to improve the attendance of Hispanic male students this year? Be specific. What exact strategies will your campus use to collaboratively improve attendance? These are the strategies we list under the goal of increasing attendance. They are specifically *aligned* to increasing attendance because that is their focus. If you cannot come up with any strategies,

Figure 2.5 Steps Must be Taken to Diagnose Organizational Health and Moral Vision



any activities, any plans for improving attendance, you do not have a goal. You have a dream. Dreams rarely come true without action.

And thus you build a campus improvement plan to take you from reality to the vision of the school

Do you get the picture? Each step feeds into the next to take us from where we are (reality) to ideal (our vision). During each step along the way, we keep our eyes on the students and what is best for them because, in the end, *it is all about the students*. After all, nothing else matters. We are a school. We are about students.

■ **COMPETENCY-BASED PRINCIPALS: THE ELAINE WILMORE 1–2–3–4 PLAN**

Competency-based principals are always visionaries, looking to the future. The Elaine Wilmore 1–2–3–4 Plan has already been referenced. Refer back to Figure 2.4 now. The plan addresses the future in four ways:

1. Developing (creating, planning) a campus vision
2. Articulating (telling, communicating) the campus vision so all stakeholders know, understand, and participate in it
3. Implementing (doing) the campus vision; putting it into action rather than just something on paper
4. Being good stewards (caregivers as well as evaluators) of the campus vision

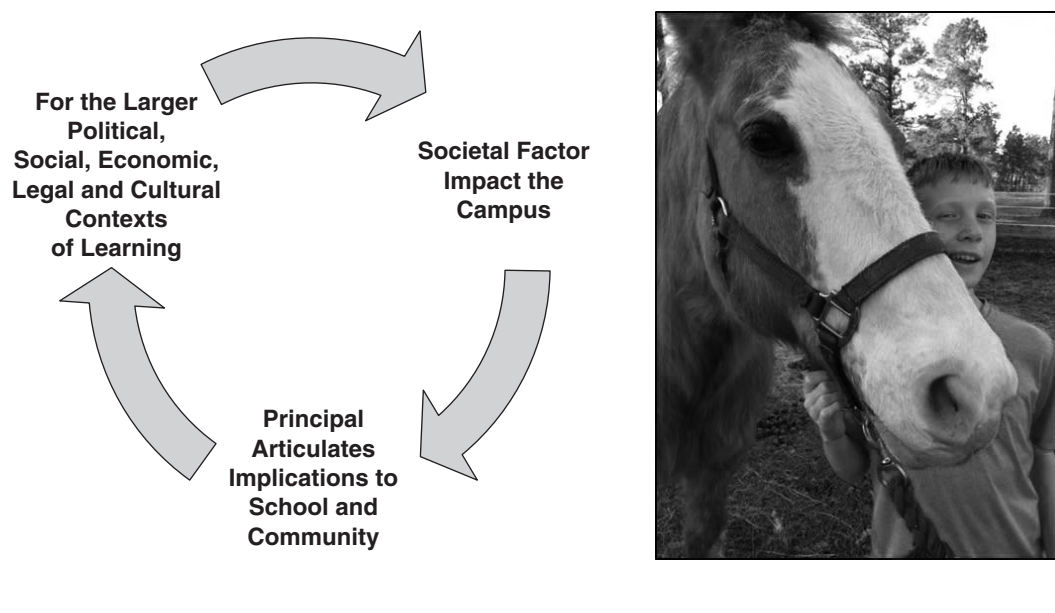
This constitutes the Elaine Wilmore 1234 Plan which will help you with the questions that ask you what comes *first* or *initially*. It is based on these four steps. This plan is very important to your success as a principal and in your life. Remember the order: 1234. Think about how you could apply these same concepts in your daily life.

Everyone is necessary to achieve a student-focused campus vision. The competencies refer to the school community as including everyone short of the whole world. In truth, it includes the students themselves, their families or caregivers, all educators, including *you*, community members, churches, and civic resources. I emphasize the *you*, because people tend to think of so many things as other people's responsibilities or tasks, when in truth, these responsibilities belong to all of us. All of us together work to do everything necessary to promote a healthy and attainable/measureable campus vision that is focused on success for *all* students, not just the ones that are easy to teach.

The competencies talk about "diverse sociological, linguistic, cultural, and other factors" that could impact student learning as shown in Figure 2.6. In essence, this means everything. Everything that happens each day can impact the campus vision, thus, it impacts student learning. The same is true in reverse. Everything that impacts student learning has an obvious impact on the campus vision. The two are directly aligned.

Thus, societal factors do impact the campus, student learning, and the vision. Take 9/11 as an example. None of us got up that morning and

Figure 2.6 Diverse Sociological, Linguistic, and Cultural Factors Impact Learning



thought, “Oh, today is the day terrorists are going to attack America.” Yet, they did. What they did had an impact on every school, town, and citizen in America. You never know what is going to happen, so you must always be prepared. Always be on full red alert, because, believe me, anything that can happen, will.

These societal factors mean principals must articulate their implications to the entire school community, which we have already learned means everyone. Why must this be done? It is done for the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural concepts of learning. If you do not think all of those are important, think back to 9/11.

Steps must be taken to diagnose the campus organizational health as well as the ethical and moral vision within the campus to maximize learning. We cannot simply assume that all is well. Frankly, we cannot even assume that everyone on the campus even gives a flip about the vision of the school. So, what are you, as the ideal principal, going to do about it?

ALIGNMENT ■

Much can be learned by simply talking to people and asking them their opinions on various topics. Open, collaborative faculty meetings where differences of opinions are respected, not challenged, will lead to a more open and inclusive vision. Also, there are many surveys and inventories to help identify areas of interest or need in a nonthreatening manner. In addition, the Region Service Centers are happy to help. Competency 003, which we will discuss shortly, focuses exclusively on the topic of a fair and ethical campus environment. As the leader, you must model the epitome of ethical leadership. You cannot just talk about it. Your words must match

your actions. In the simplest of terms, your walk must match your talk. Your walk and talk must be aligned. Keep in mind that the developers of this test love all things being aligned, that is, matching up, going together; so always make sure you model each of the good things that you are saying. Once your organizational health has been diagnosed, if it is found lacking in any area, you must jump on it like a firefighter on a fire. Together with your campus community members, create a plan to address and improve it. Then implement the plan and, given time, evaluate it for improvement. Above all, remember to look for and respect the common ground amongst differences of opinions and all forms of diversity as shown in Figure 2.7.

The things we do every day should be aligned with at least one goal, and every goal should lead directly to, or be *aligned* with, the vision. This is shown in Figure 2.8. If we are daily doing things that are not aligned with the campus vision, something is wrong and needs to be corrected. I do not know how to make this clearer. Everything we do should be aligned with a goal that will lead us toward our campus vision. Period. Anything else is a waste of time.

Figure 2.7 Identifying and Respecting the Common Ground

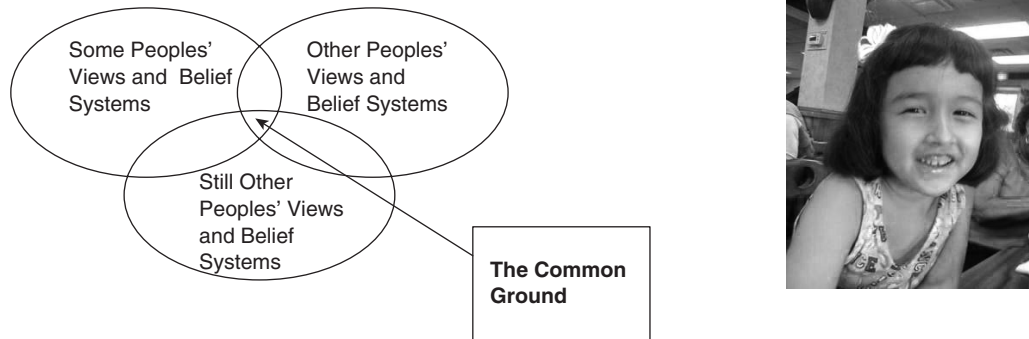
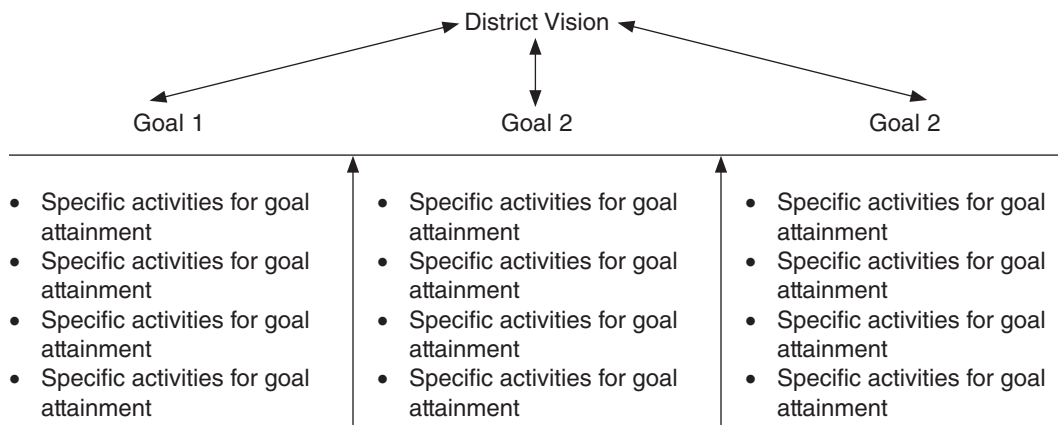


Figure 2.8 Campus Activities Should be Clearly Articulated to the District Vision



GOAL SETTING IN MORE DETAIL ■

Just as the campus goals should be aligned with the campus vision, in an ideal situation, the campus vision should be aligned with the district vision. This generally is not a problem because there is always at least one goal that has to do with targeted academics.

Take heed. For a campus to maximize its' effectiveness, *everything* must be perfectly aligned. This includes curriculum, instruction, staff development, assessment of every kind, and the budget. All of it should be based on the needs of the students, which are aligned directly to the vision. There is no way I can stress enough how important the vision is!

So what does it mean for *everything* to be perfectly aligned? Well, let's talk about what everything includes. It includes

- campus and individual student needs;
- goals and strategies to address them;
- curriculum, which is *what* we teach;
- instruction, which is *how* we teach it (differentiated, please);
- assessment of both how students are learning (think various forms of testing) and how we are teaching;
- appropriate staff development to appropriately address the needs of the students; and
- a budget that addresses all of the above to maximize the effectiveness of our campus.

If all of these things are aligned, that is, tied to each other and working together, we will enhance the opportunities for all students, regardless of their circumstances, to learn to the best of their ability.

Again, daily school activities should be aligned with at least one goal, and all goals should be aligned with the vision. Say you have a goal that happens to be increasing campus attendance by $X\%$ in the fall semester. First, let's look at the components of that goal:

- Increasing attendance is the focus.
- By $X\%$ makes it a measureable goal. We either reach $X\%$, or we don't. We can measure that.
- "In the fall semester" is the deadline.

Remember, goals without deadlines are only dreams. We are not dreaming. We are taking action. When are we taking action? This fall. We either make our specific, measureable goal, or we don't. If we don't, we modify and adjust, but we do not give up on improving attendance!

Next, look at the specific activities we will do on a regular basis to ensure we meet each goal. Using the same attendance example, see how it aligns with the district and campus vision.

For each goal, list the specific actions the campus is going to do to reach this goal. What does this mean? It means what are the specific activities we as a campus community are going to do to ensure we have an improvement in attendance of at least $X\%$ this fall semester. Now more than one campus could have this or a similar goal, yet its activities for attainment could vary. That's fine. The activities are the things that your campus community members have

defined together that they will do to ensure this goal is met. The same is true for however many goals your campus community members have chosen to undertake at this time. There is no magic number. However, collaboration and communication on the strategies for their attainment are the keys.

You must define specific activities that are going to get you from the reality of today to the vision of tomorrow. In our example, these would be specific examples of things your campus members are going to do to improve attendance by $X\%$ this fall semester.

Then make sure they get done, assessed, and modified, if necessary.

Remember the integration of technology in all of the above. Integrating technology is no longer a luxury. It is essential in differentiating instruction across the curriculum. Therefore, all forms of technology, telecommunications, and information systems should be embedded in the curriculum and instruction, and, thus in the vision–goals–strategies alignment. Consider all of this a flowchart that takes us from the student to the campus goals and, ultimately, to the vision. This is shown in Figure 2.9.

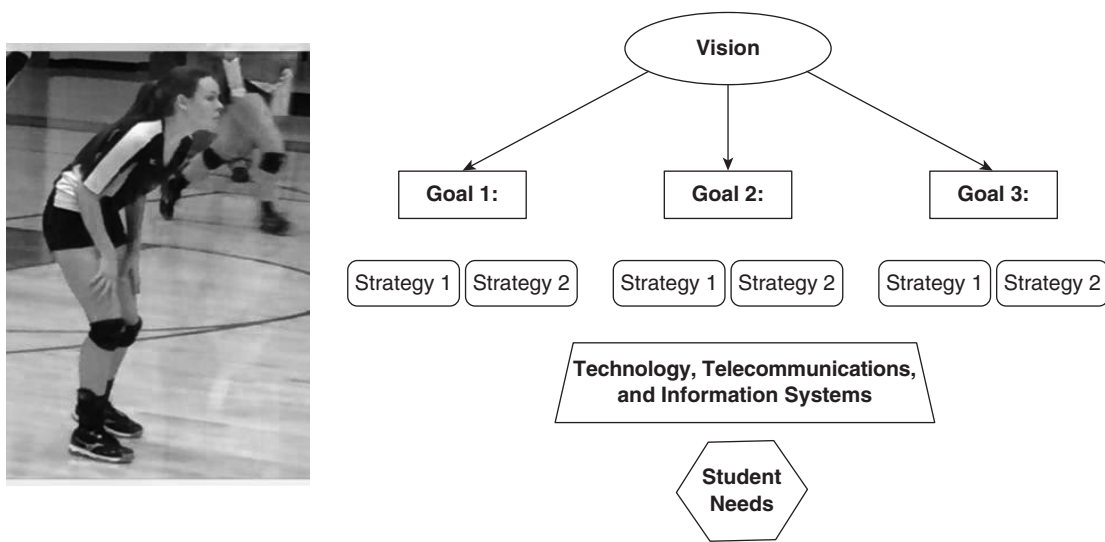
Now let's add another piece to the pie. That piece of the pie is staff development. Staff development is not just something to mark off a checklist each year. Again, it should be *aligned* with teacher needs. How do we know the teachers' needs? We look at the students' needs. How do we know the students' needs?

We look at student data.

■ DATA ANALYSIS ► STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Everything comes back to the students and their needs, thus, we must be constantly looking at all forms of data. This goes beyond the STARR test or any other form of testing. Yes, that is a big part of it, but it is not the only part. We should look at student daily work, their environment, their

Figure 2.9 Integrated Technology and Vision Alignment



mobility, their cultural, their socio-economic levels and needs, and all other factors. We should be observing students in class. Think of everything involving each student as some form of data. Look at and analyze everything as a whole before making decisions regarding any student.

Once you know the needs of the students, by default you know the needs of the teachers. *The teachers need professional development in the areas in which their students perform the lowest.* Why? Because if these teachers could teach these concepts any better, they would be doing it. Let's take a medical example. Say someone is sick, goes to the doctor, and has blood work done. The doctor is going to focus on the areas that the blood work *shows need*, not the areas where the patient appears healthy.

Folks, we need to look at the needs, not where we are healthy. We must have a data-based needs assessment as shown in Figure 2.10 to show us where our staff development needs are. If a combination of our data, including test scores, show our students' strongest needs are in estimation and reading comprehension, then guess what our areas of targeted upcoming staff development should be? *Estimation and reading comprehension across the curriculum!*

Therefore, we move from the identified needs of the student to knowing where we should conduct meaningful staff development. The staff development should include components where the teachers are trained in individualized/differentiated/culturally sensitive instruction with actual examples of how they can do these methods in their classrooms across the curriculum. Together, all of this will maximize our efforts toward goal and vision attainment.

Figure 2.10 Use Data From Multiple Sources in Decision Making

<i>DATA-BASED NEEDS ASSESSMENT</i>	
Source 1:	Source 2:
Source 3:	Source 4:
Staff Development Needed	Staff Development Needed



■ DATA ANALYSIS ► BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

The same model is used to determine how to build a budget. There are certain things that are always necessary in any campus or district budget. However, there is also some leeway, particularly in the area of curricular materials. How do we know what should be budgeted for?

Together with the teachers, we look at the same data that determined our staff development and identified the greatest needs of our students. From there we build the budget built on these same needs of the students. The teachers should be the ones to prioritize the items they determine most necessary in meeting those needs. Other stakeholders such as the site-based team are also involved. But the most important thing to remember about building a budget is that it is always built around the needs of the students. Therefore, the budget and the vision must support each other. The second most important thing to remember about a budget is that once you have it, you stay in it. You don't want the central office to be replacing you with someone who can add and subtract!

As a part of the budget being created, teachers determine and prioritize the resources they will need to accomplish the specified goals to meet students' needs. Please notice how *everything* comes back to the students' needs. But buying things alone does not meet the students' needs nor does it solve problems. You must lead the teachers to develop and implement effective teaching strategies to best use the resources to actually improve learning. *Teaching is not about test scores*. It is about improving learning.

The improved-teaching produced and procured strategies should lead to the campus goals that must be aligned with the vision. Thus, everything fits together like a fine-fitting puzzle where lots of pieces come together to create magnificent student success.

■ OBSTACLES TO SUCCESS

Whereas everything we have discussed may sound easy or hard, depending on your perspective and your own personal leadership philosophy, in truth, regardless, you will face obstacles. For example, no matter who is president of the United States or which party is in office, the president is always faced with obstacles. Accept the fact that obstacles exist, and life isn't always easy. The real question is how can we turn obstacles into student-focused learning opportunities? This is the question we must *continuously* be asking ourselves as well as asking our teachers also to reflect upon. Until we can answer that question, each time an obstacle arises, we will not have genuine school reform. We will not create ideal schools, and we will not be ideal principals.

I know I am a Pollyanna. You may have decided you have never heard from such a Pollyanna toward school leadership in your entire life. But at least I am a sincere Pollyanna. I mean every word I have said. What's more, I invite you to believe it with me. Together we can make a difference. Together we are not alone. As Margaret Mead said, and I paraphrase, it just takes one person to start a change movement.

Will you come along with me?

DOMAIN I ■

Now we will go into detail regarding Domain I, School Community Leadership. The three main concepts for you to remember in Domain I are the school vision, which we have discussed, the school climate, and the school culture.

What is the school community? The competencies define it as including students, staff, parents/caregivers, and community members.

For our purposes we can say the school community involves *everyone* or *all* people. Always look for answers that address the needs of everyone or all students, not just some of the students. They will throw in responses that sound good but do not address the needs of all students. Therefore, those are not good answers—even if they sound good.

Competency 001: *The principal knows how to shape campus culture by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.*

There is a huge amount of information in there. I often tell students, if they can nail this competency and can apply the same concepts throughout the test, they will pass the test.

Positive Versus Negative Verbs

First, let's look at the initial verb. It is *shape*. *Shape* is a *positive* verb. It implies the principal worked with the school community to develop the vision. The principal *collaborated* with the school community. Because everyone worked together to *develop* or *create* the vision, they will support it. Why? People support what they help create.

Always look for positive verbs in answer choices. If a verb is negative, it is a wrong answer. This is shown in Figure 2.11.

How can you tell if a verb is positive or negative? Let's look at these examples:

1. Justify vs. clarify
2. Encourage vs. scold
3. Mentor vs. discipline

Make note! If an answer has a negative verb in it at all, it is a wrong answer. Remember how much time we focused on the ideal principal last time? Well, here it is in action. The ideal principal is never negative. The ideal principal is always positive.

Therefore, as we go through all the competencies, you will notice that they always use positive verbs like the principal “shapes” the campus culture rather than the principal “tells” the campus what the culture will be. Autocratic or top-down principal actions are never correct.

Figure 2.11 Watch Your Verbs!

- Positive Verbs = Right Answers
- Negative Verbs = Wrong Answers
- The Ideal Principal never does anything negative!



The nine competencies define the ideal principal. The ideal principal may not/will not be realistic. Why? The test developers know you know what reality looks like. You live in it every day. They want to know if you know what ideal looks like.

The next important word is *facilitating*, which comes from the root word *facilitate*. To facilitate something means that you are not necessarily doing everything, but you are seeing to it, or facilitating, that everything does, indeed, get done. *Facilitate* is one of the test developers' favorite verbs, so watch for it. When you see the word *facilitate*, or any of its derivatives, in an answer, PAY ATTENTION! If they do not use the word, but they use the meaning, it is just as good. Mark it. It is one of their favorites.

Remember the Elaine Wilmore 1–2–3–4 Plan. Review Figure 2.4. If you can count to four, you can get every question on the test that asks you the “initial” or “first” thing the principal would do. You start by looking at the answers for a #1. If you find it, mark it. NOTHING COMES BEFORE #1. We are not dealing in negative numbers here!

If you do not see a #1, look for a #2, and so on. The thing to remember is to never skip numbers, that is, never skip steps!

So what exactly is the 1–2–3–4 that I am so big on?

1. Develop, create, or plan whatever you are doing.
2. Articulate, or communicate and explain, or clarify what is to be done.
3. Implement, or actually put your plan into action.
4. Steward is to be a good caretaker of people and all resources of the resources, including programs that we have. In the rest of the

competencies the concept of evaluation or assessment or measurement is often used. Remember, what gets measured gets done, so all goals should be measurable.

After the 1–2–3–4 Plan, the competency puts the focus on the vision of learning, which we discussed extensively, that is shared and supported by the school community. These are also concepts we have discussed. Communicate and collaborate with all stakeholders—which means virtually everyone.

After the competency itself comes the “bullets” or “A, B, Cs” of examples of things the principal does that are a part of Competency 001. It will be that way through all nine competencies. My *Passing the Principal TExES Exam (2nd ed.)* goes into detail regarding not just every competency but every subcompetency. That is not the purpose of this book. Read that book, and make it your own. Make sure you thoroughly understand each competency before moving forward with this book.

Competency 002: *The principal knows how to communicate and collaborate with all members of the school community, respond to diverse interests and needs, and mobilize resources to promote student success.*

Competency 002 moves the focus to communication and collaboration. In short, everything is about student success. If we are doing anything at school that is not about student success, why? In order to do this we must be good communicators. We must be able to ensure others understand what we are trying to say—and I do not mean this exclusive to language barriers. There are people that speak English all day long, but they have difficulty with people understanding them. I had a statistics professor when I was working on my doctorate. He spoke English. We still didn’t understand a word he said. Thank goodness for a good text because he simply was not a good teacher. Good teachers and leaders must be good communicators.

Collaboration is a big deal on this test and for success as a principal. It means you do not make decisions in your office with the door closed. It means you involve as many people as possible in decision making. Site-based management, at its purest, was designed to be a perfect model of collaboration. Sometimes it is. Sometimes it isn’t. But, the fact remains, get the opinions of others. Involve all people. Make decisions together. Collaborate!

Next, we respond, not ignore, to diverse, or different, interests and needs of our stakeholders. The two keys are *respond* and *diverse*. We must be paying attention, constantly looking for improvement, and making data-driven decisions in order to even know the interests and needs of our students. Also, *diverse* means different. This is not exclusive to race. It includes gender, learning styles, faiths—everything. We must be responsive to everything that makes our students unique individuals; no two are ever exactly alike.

Last, in Competency 002, we mobilize resources to promote student success. I love the verb *mobilize*. It is such a strong positive verb. It always makes me think the Marines are coming! What it really means is, if we do not have

the resources to do something that needs to be done to promote student success, we find them elsewhere. We “mobilize” by working together with the district and the school community to come up with everything that is needed to promote student success. You are thinking, “That’s not reasonable!”

So what? It’s ideal.

Competency 003: *The principal knows how to act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical and legal manner.*

This is the *ethics* competency. We wish we didn’t need it, but we do. We wish everyone would act right all of the time, but they don’t. We wish every educator was an advocate for all children, but not all are.

Are you?

Remember when we were little and were invited to a birthday party, how our mothers would always say, “Be nice. Say thank you. Mind your manners”?

Being a principal is like being at a big party. Always be nice, say thank you, and mind your manners. But it is more than that. Be aware of and follow the *Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators*. Be an advocate for every child. Speak up for those who can’t speak up for themselves. As shown in Figure 2.12, treat all students with respect regardless of how old they are. That’s what being a true educational leader is all about.

■ DOMAIN II

Now we are going to look at Domain II, Instructional Leadership. Domain II is the largest domain within the test framework, which means it has the

Figure 2.12 Respect

- Always treat everyone with respect regardless of age or other factors.



most questions on the test. It is also where you should excel because, after all, you are already a wonderful teacher that individualizes for every student, right?

Competency 004: *The principal knows how to facilitate the design and implementation of curricula and strategic plans that enhance teaching and learning; ensure alignment of curriculum, instruction, resources, and assessment; and promote the use of varied assessments to measure student performance.*

There is a lot said in this, so we are going to take it piece by piece and break it down into small pieces of a very large pie.

Remember that *facilitate* is one of the test developers' very favorite verbs, so when you see *facilitate* in a test answer, look at it very carefully. With "*facilitate*," they are acknowledging that you are not responsible for doing and knowing everything, but you ARE responsible for seeing to it that everything gets done.

Therefore, as principal you are responsible for facilitating (not doing it yourself) the design (#1 from the 1–2–3–4 Plan), implementation (#3 from the 1–2–3–4 Plan) of curricula (what we teach), and strategic plans (long-term lesson planning, vertical and horizontal alignment, etc.) that enhance (make something better) teaching (what we do) and learning (what the students do). There is a lot in there so read it again, over and over, very carefully to make sure you understand it. It is also spelled out word for word in *Passing the Principal TExES Exam: Keys to Certification and School Leadership (2nd ed.)*.

Next, it says to *ensure* (guarantee; we are serious about this!) alignment (making sure everything goes together and matches; e.g., the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills [TEKS] with what we are actually teaching) of curriculum (what we teach) and instruction (how we teach it). The goal is to individualize or differentiate to meet the individual needs of every student.

Resources are the things we need to teach and do our jobs, whereas assessment is measuring what we are teaching and how students are learning. Remember, if our students are not doing well on our assessments, it means we are not doing well on how we are teaching. Think about that for a while. It is never the child's fault for not learning. It is our fault for not differentiating to meet his or her needs.

The last piece of the competency says we promote (encourage) the use of varied (diverse or different kinds of) assessments to measure student performance. This is shown in Figure 2.13. For example, Johnny may not be able to pass a test on engines. But if you ask him to take one apart, fix it, and put it back together, he can easily do it. So, does Johnny know anything about engines or not?

So, in summary, Competency 004 is about aligning and individualizing everything we do to enhance and ensure student learning. Competency 004 takes teaching and learning as serious business, not status quo. So should we.

Figure 2.13 Alternative Forms of Assessment

- Create alternative forms of assessment.



Competency 005: *The principal knows how to advocate, nurture, and sustain an instructional program and a campus culture that are conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.*

Competency 005, in some ways, reminds me of the “stewardship” in Competency 001 because it says the principal knows how to *advocate, nurture, and sustain*—stop right there. Can you think of a better definition of *stewardship* than to advocate, nurture, and sustain something?

So Competency 005 is all about being a good steward of an instructional program (see Competency 004) and a campus culture (see Competency 001) that are conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

See, you just thought you were going to get off easy on Competency 005 with references to prior competencies. Then it hits you with staff professional growth.

Staff professional growth includes *all* of us, even you and me. We should constantly be seeking to be lifelong learners. On the test, questions will be designed to determine if you know that professional development is aligned with the needs of the students as determined by looking at the data (data-based decision making). This is shown in Figure 2.14.

As previously shown in Figure 2.10, the data include test scores and other materials. The test will also be looking to see that you know that staff development (which is the same thing as professional development) is designed to create lifelong learners out of all of us.

So, while you may think that you are finished learning when you graduate and pass this test, you are allowed to relax and celebrate for at least 15 minutes. After that, continue reading, researching, and learning. Model being a lifelong learner for your staff. Let your walk match your talk. Never just tell them to do something without modeling it yourself. March on, learners!

Figure 2.14 Professional Development

- Is for everyone.
- Should meet the needs of students by meeting the needs of staff.



Competency 006: *The principal knows how to implement a staff evaluation and development system to improve the performance of all staff members, select and implement appropriate models for supervision and staff development, and apply the legal requirements for personnel management.*

Notice that when it says a “staff evaluation and development system,” it does not say the Professional Development and Assessment System (PDAS) because PDAS is not required by law in Texas. What is required is either PDAS or another instrument that measures the same things. Therefore, you will not see the term PDAS on the test. Even that is changing, but it is not on the test yet.

You are also not required to have had Instructional Leadership Development (ILD) or PDAS training before you take the test. If you have had it, bravo! You have been exposed to more knowledge, which will make you more knowledgeable for the test. But you are not required to have had either, nor will there be any questions that require you to have been through ILD or PDAS.

So, what is the purpose of a “staff evaluation and *development* system?” The goal is to help everyone improve, even your good teachers. ALL of us have room to grow. We should never be satisfied with the status quo. We should always be seeking to improve because when we improve, the greater the chances of our students’ learning improving also!

“Select and implement appropriate models for supervision and staff development,” which means use appropriate walk-throughs, and so on, for all staff, not just some of the staff and “apply the legal requirements for personnel management.” Keep everything legal, obviously.

No matter what happens, every teacher gets due process. Secondly, in the end, only the board hires and only the board fires. You can *recommend*.

But the board makes the final decision every time, and that is AFTER due process has occurred.

Competency 007: *The principal knows how to apply organizational, decision-making, and problem-solving skills to ensure an effective learning environment.*

While it may seem short, *do not overlook it!* This one is all about how you think, make decisions, use data, and solve problems. In essence, it is about your core values because they will show when you have to make difficult decisions particularly involving data.

You think I am exaggerating, but I am not. Sometimes you will have to solve a problem or make a decision that is not going to be popular with the teachers, but it is the right thing to do for the students. Therefore, it is what you have to do. Be strong!

Don't let the bureaucrats or the everyday whiners get to you! Be strong! Always, always, always think of what is RIGHT for the students, NOT what is easy or popular.

Let me paraphrase a story, *The Animal School*, by George H. Reavis. It is about a monkey, a fish, a duck, a lion, and some other animals. All of them had to take a test. There was only one question on the test: "How do you climb a tree?"

The monkey, having been raised in a treed environment, knew the answer and scored well on the test.

But, neither the fish, the duck, the lion, nor the other animals had any idea how to climb a tree because their cultural environment had absolutely nothing to do with climbing trees. Their teacher did not differentiate instruction or assessment for them; so what do you think happened?

They flunked the test.

You say, "Elaine, that's a funny story."

Well, it would be if it wasn't so true and so sad. We teach monkeys, fish, ducks, and lions every day, but do we make our teaching relevant for all of them?

And with that, I leave you to think about it. Teach everyone: monkeys, fish, ducks, and lions alike. Teach them as if your life depended upon it!

■ DOMAIN III

Now we address our last domain, Domain III, Administrative Leadership. It is the shortest of the three domains and only has two competencies in it.

Whereas Domains I and II were about *leading* the school, Domain III is still about leading, but it is also about *managing* the school.

Prior to now, we have not discussed basic things like the commodes going out in the little boys' restrooms (or worse, in the teachers' restrooms!), the roof blowing off the school, any type of crisis management that is becoming more and more prevalent in society today—or just the everyday things you do as CEO managing the campus.

These everyday things, or actually running the school, constitute Domain III. The three main themes of Domain III are finance, facilities, and student safety.

Competency 008: *The principal knows how to apply principles of effective leadership and management in relation to campus budgeting, personnel, resource utilization, financial management, and technology use.*

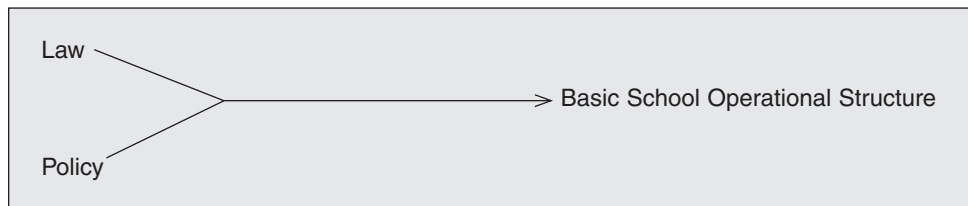
As with all the other competencies, it is important to note this one starts with “The principal knows how to . . .” do something. In Competency 008 and Competency 009 each say “to apply principles of effective leadership and management . . .”

Notice these are the only two times we see that phrase or the word *management* included. As David Erlandson of Texas A&M once said, “It is hard to keep your eyes on the vision of the school (Domain I) when the walls are falling down around you.”

Naturally, we don’t want any walls falling down anywhere, thus we have Domain III.

As shown in Figure 2.15, laws and policies are the basic operational structures of all schools and districts.

Figure 2.15 Law and Policy Provide a School’s Basic Operating Structure



In Competency 008 we focus on these in five ways.

1. *Campus Budgeting*: There are two very important things to remember about the campus budget.
 - a. *Stay in it*. If you are repeatedly overdrawn on an account, the superintendent may decide to replace you with someone that can add and subtract.
 - b. Build it collaboratively *BASED ON THE NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS*.

Whether you are building the budget or developing curriculum or professional development, it must ALWAYS be based on the NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS and nothing else. Period. This flowchart is shown in Figure 2.16.

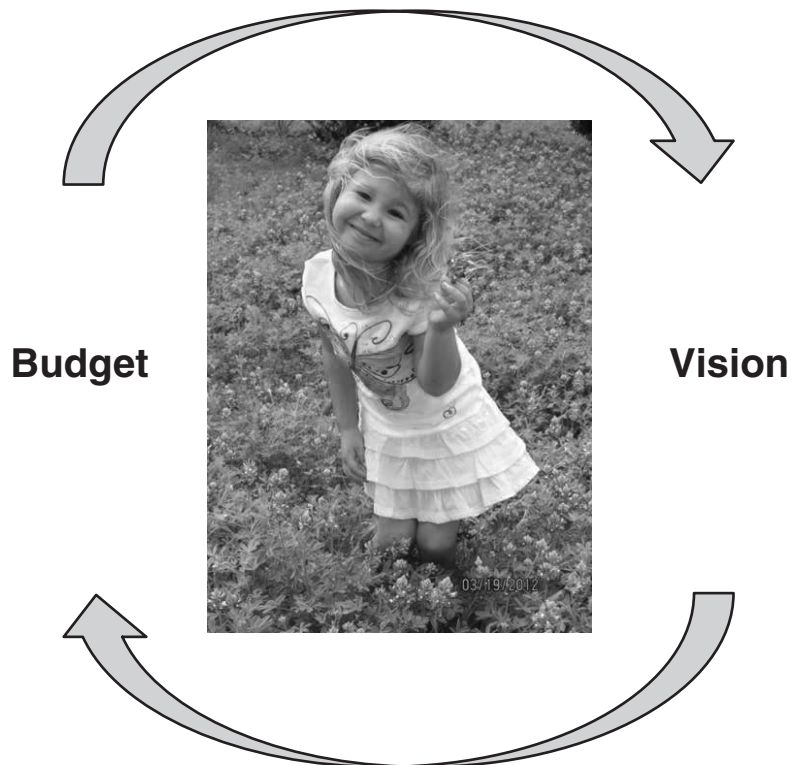
Remember, *everything* we do in school, every single little thing, **must** be based on the *needs of the students* as determined by data analysis and watching the ways each student learns. If we do not do this, we are wasting valuable time. The budget must support the vision. The vision must support the budget. It is a cyclical process as shown in Figure 2.17.

2. *Personnel*: We covered professional development in Domain II. Here we are basically referring to hiring and firing. In relation to both, an important thing to remember is that although it may commonly be said, "I hired so and so . . ." the truth is, you only *recommended* the hiring of anyone. In the end, only the board can hire, and only the board can fire. Sometimes hiring can be unofficially delegated to the superintendent in large districts for high-need areas (math, science, ESL, SPED, etc.), but the truth is nothing is official until the board takes action.

Figure 2.16 Budget Vision Alignment



Figure 2.17 The Budget and the Vision Must Support Each Other



The same is true for firing. No matter how ridiculous someone may have acted, they still get *due process*. Remember that for questions on the test and for life! Then, again, only the board can actually separate someone from the district. It is even the board who accepts resignations.

3. *Resource Utilization*: Remember the word *steward* way back in Competency 001? Think of it again here in reference to resource utilization. Tax dollars are not growing on trees. Few districts have as much money as they need or wish they had. Therefore, it is prudent for all educators, particularly principals, to be good stewards of the resources, or things, we have. Don't waste things. Use things sparingly. Treat your school budget as you would your home budget and use it carefully. Remember, if you spend everything in the fall, it is going to be a very long spring semester.

4. *Fiscal Management*: Fiscal management is tied directly to resource utilization. Plan ahead for what your needs will be and when they will occur. Save budgeted funds for projects that occur once a year. Don't hoard money, but do not spend it excessively either. Again, exercise good fiscal management at school just as you would at home.

5. *Technology Use*: Any school that is not appropriately using technology is living in the wrong century. Have a campus technology committee to help plan for the needs and utilization of the campus in relation to technology. Remember *licensing laws*. An appropriate use of technology is not more "drill and kill" work-type sheets that just happen to be done on a

computer. Last, and I hate to say this, but it must be said! No porn on school computers! That is a very good way to get yourself or someone on your staff fired.

Competency 009: *The principal knows how to apply principles of effective leadership and management to the campus physical plant and support systems to ensure a safe and effective learning environment.*

You will notice that the first 11 words of Competency 009 are identical to Competency 008. Then they differ. The issue is to apply principles of leadership and management to the *campus physical plant and support systems*.

What are the “campus physical plant and support systems?” The campus physical plant is the total buildings and land that the school is sitting on. If there is a football stadium or a baseball field on your campus, they are a part of your physical plant. A band hall? Physical plant. What about a cafeteria? An agriculture arena? An industrial arts area/whatever? All of those are a part of the campus physical plant. So the physical plant is more than just the classrooms. It is *all* of the campus that supports and serves the students.

That means if the roof blows off, while it may not be your job to get up there and fix it, it is your job to *facilitate* that it gets done. You follow district policy, whatever the policy may be. The same holds true for any other problem that relates to the buildings, and so on. Follow district policy, and you can never go wrong.

The last portion is the *why* of the *issue*. Why do we need an efficient and effectively running physical plant? *To ensure a safe and effective learning environment*. Sound familiar?

What does a safe and effective learning environment mean? It means we have a campus *climate* that is *conducive to teachers teaching and students learning*. Period. If the climate in a school is not supportive and nurturing, learning will not be maximized. I hope you take that last sentence serious because it can make or break you.

And that, folks, pretty much sums up Domain III.

That’s the big overview of what the domains and competencies include. Now let us move on to the case study chapters where we will have actual case studies that are aligned with each of the competencies themselves. They will make the words of the competencies become real to you in daily scenarios. Enjoy and learn!