

# SCHOOL CULTURE ASSESSMENT\*

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## Abstract

This is a detailed description of an assessment that can be used in a graduate level of study in the area of the school principalship. This has been approved by NCATE as meeting all of the stipulated ELCC standards for which it is designed (ELCC/NCATE 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1,6.2,6.3)

This course of study is appropriate for use in either a school leadership class or one specifically oriented to the study of being a school principal. This assessment is both skills and knowledge focused. The assessment measures the student's ability to think critically and requires students to synthesize prior learning from readings, class discussion and research on the principalship. Finally, the assessment provides students the opportunity to apply what the students have learned about leaders that enable them to develop a positive culture and climate, while applying this learning to a real world situation the student is familiar with.



NOTE: This module has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and sanctioned by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a scholarly contribution to the knowledge base in educational administration.

## Directions to Candidates:

This is an individual project. You have just completed the text *Shaping School Culture* by Deal and Peterson. Additionally, you have completed six weeks of lecture, discussion and study and analysis of various case studies about both positive and negative school cultures. As a principal, you must plan, organize, monitor and evaluate your school's culture and design improvements where needed based upon what you now know about the principles of school culture. This is a written assignment that includes a working definition of culture in schools, identification and discussion of the issues involved in developing a strong culture, and application to a familiar school situation. Each paper will clearly define culture and its impact on school performance, what we know works when a culture needs improving, and a discussion of these principles as they apply to a school setting that is particularly familiar to the student. (ELCC/NCATE 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3, 2.4,3.1,3.2,3.3,4.1,4.2,4.3,5.1,5.2,5.3,6.1,6.2,6.3) (25 points possible)

The following components should be addressed in your school culture paper:

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- The candidate's paper reflects discussions that are clearly connected to the process of creating a school vision. (1.1a)
- The paper is written professionally and provides culture discussion that is based on data and research from the text and/or other sources(1.2b).
- The detailed definition reflects ideas to motivate staff, students and families to embrace the components of a positive culture (1.3a).
- Candidates demonstrate through the definition discussion a significant understanding of the role a positive school culture plays and the need to involve all stakeholders in the process (1.4a) & (1.5a).
- The paper reflects that candidates considered the relevant school culture issues related to the demographics of the district (2.1a).
- The paper also discusses the impact of culture to improve or hinder the school community's efforts to support development of effective instructional practices and provide appropriate curricular materials (2.2a).
- The school culture paper is also clearly consistent with an understanding of appropriate research strategies that continue to promote an environment for improved student achievement (2.3c).
- The culture paper also reflects careful consideration by the candidate that principles of effective professional growth were considered and provided for in the culture application to the school studied (2.4c).
- The analysis leading to the discussion of strengths and weaknesses clearly highlights the candidate's attention to using data driven decision making for applying indicators of equity, effectiveness, and efficiency to support the identified strengths or weaknesses (3.1a).
- The analysis includes information that reflects the candidates used research based data and group process skills to identify and connect the culture with the organizational vision (3.2a).
- The analysis also reflects the candidate's use of problem-solving skills and understanding of the importance of strategic planning to addressing the weaknesses identified (3.3a).
- The discussion of leadership skills reflects a clear understanding of the methods needed to secure community support for fixing the toxic culture issues while maintaining those that are positive (4.1c).
- The paper definitely highlights how the candidate's propose preserving programs for students with both special and exceptional needs while addressing the leadership issues previously identified(4.2c).
- The paper also strongly discusses ways to provide new resources and funds that might appropriately and effectively encourage the community to provide new resources to address any emerging culture problems created by the identified reductions (4.3c).
- The paper appropriately avoids identifying individuals affected by the recommended leadership strategies to address toxic culture issues so as to protect their dignity and maintain confidentiality (5.1a).
- Leadership strategies are identified such that they reflect clear procedures that are to be implemented such that they are fair, arrived at impartially, and sensitive to the diversity of the district and community (5.2a).
- The recommended leadership strategies are designed such they are clearly consistent within the legal and ethical parameters expected of Illinois candidates (5.3a).
- The recommended leadership strategies are designed such that they are clearly consistent within the legal and ethical parameters expected of Illinois candidates (5.3a).
- Additionally, the strategies clearly account for the complex causes of poverty, their impact on families and the cultural diversity of the community (6.1c, 6.1d and 6.1f).
- Strategies also provide clear means for communicating the policies to the diverse community groups within the school such that they will advocate for policies that promote equitable learning opportunities (6.2a and 6.3c).

The written document will need to be a minimum of four to a maximum of 10 typed and/or word processed pages double spaced. The format of this paper will need to conform to the conventions of APA style.

Recent years have seen public school administrators more and more responsible for effectively providing for school improvement. If you become a school administrator in Illinois, you likely will be involved in

addressing the many areas related to school culture and their impact on the school improvement process through improving teaching and learning. This paper is designed to enable you to demonstrate the knowledge and skills you have acquired to successfully address the area of school culture and school improvement.

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS SCHOOL CULTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT RUBRIC<sup>1</sup>](#)

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<sup>1</sup>[http://cnx.org/content/m17183/latest/Assessment\\_rubric2.pdf](http://cnx.org/content/m17183/latest/Assessment_rubric2.pdf)