



Sample Authentic Tasks²⁸

Writing Sample Task

Communication is critical to a school leader's success, especially with parent/guardians. School leaders will occasionally find the need to inform the school community about something that happened (or is happening) at the school and will need to respond immediately. In this task, the candidate will draft a short email to parents/guardians regarding a bullying incident that has gathered much attention in a short amount of time.

Candidates are provided with laptop in a quiet room to complete this task.

Directions: Using the provided laptop, draft an email response to this scenario in Word. Your message will be assessed by the search committee.

Scenario: During lunch, a group of students were bullying another student. The scene was viewed by many students before the lunch supervising teachers stepped in to stop the incident. Students will definitely be talking about the incident and probably sharing what happened with their parents/guardians. To get ahead of this, you'd like to send a short email to parents/guardians about what happened and how it was handled before the end of the school day.

Assessing the task — key things to look for: Email is well written, no grammatical errors. No names used. Bullying students involved were appropriately disciplined [or still under investigation] and parents/guardians notified in accordance with district policy. Bullied student is receiving support from school. Reminder included about district bullying policy and zero tolerance policy. If parents have questions, feel free to contact...

Budget Task

Allocating and managing both fiscal and non-fiscal resources to support school and district goals and priorities is an essential responsibility of a school leader. In this task, candidates are asked to respond to a significant cut to their school's budget.

Candidates are provided with a laptop in a quiet room to complete this task.

Directions: Using the provided laptop, draft your response to this scenario in Word. Your response will be assessed by the search committee.

Scenario: The district has just informed school leaders that school budgets will be cut by 10% for the upcoming school year. Outline how you would share this information with faculty and staff and how you would go about accomplishing the cuts.

Assessing the task — key things to look for in response: Collaboration with faculty and staff to address the issue; ideas for generating new resources/supports.

Classroom Observation Task

The school leader, as the learning leader, is responsible for creating and sustaining a culture of ongoing reflective, culturally responsive, and inclusive learning for students, adults, and the entire learning organization as a whole. One of the major tasks of school leaders is to observe and provide feedback to teachers to help them grow their professional practice — leading learning. In this task, candidates are asked to complete a classroom observation exercise to help the search committee get a sense of how they will respond in providing feedback to an actual teacher. Using a teaching video clip (ensures consistency) for the appropriate building level, candidates review the video and respond to the questions. Districts may also wish to use their own classroom observation tools for this task.

Candidates are provided with a laptop in a quiet room to complete this task.

Directions: Complete a classroom observation using the video clip uploaded on the laptop. Provide a response to the following questions using the Word document provided:

- What do you know about student learning in this classroom?
- What do you know about teaching practices in this classroom?
- What feedback would you give to this teacher to improve his/her instructional practice and how would you present it?
- How do your observations of this teacher inform how you might better develop this individual's talent?

Your responses will be assessed by the search committee.

Assessing the task: The search committee identifies task evaluation criteria based on the selected video.

Data Analysis Task — Student Data

Another responsibility of school leaders is to promote and cultivate an environment in which high, data-driven expectations of results for student learning are embraced and drive organizational and personal growth. In these authentic tasks, candidates review data sets and respond to the short-answer questions. To make the task more authentic, districts should utilize their own data.

Directions: This Data Analysis Task is intended to gather information about how you interpret and use data to inform school-level leadership decisions. To complete this activity, carefully review each data set and then respond to the short-answer questions. Your responses will be assessed by the search committee.

Use the 7th grade ELA and Mathematics data to answer the following questions:

1. What percentage of 7th grade students have demonstrated readiness for the next grade level/course in the following areas:
☐ ELA
☐ Mathematics
2. As you review the data, what are some positive highlights you would like to share with your staff/faculty?
3. What does the chart tell you about aggregated seventh graders' ELA achievement compared to the district? Math achievement? Explain your answer.
4. Your 7th grade PLC team is interested in examining their students' ELA performance. What do the data indicate about how the subgroups performed differently?
5. To help you understand the seventh graders' performance on the state tests, the district's computer-based data system can provide you with student data from every grade in your district. What data queries would you ask of the system to help you understand the scope and nature of problems and determine courses of action to improve the seventh graders' ELA performance? Be specific about the types of student information that you want to see and explain your choices.
6. What additional information would you like to gather to identify problems with Grade 7 student learning in Math? Be specific about the types of information that you want to gather and explain your choices.

Assessing the task:

- Candidate identifies at least 3 highlights from the data.
- Candidate is able to accurately compare school with district ELA and Math achievement data.
- Candidate is able to accurately compare subgroup ELA achievement data.
- Candidate is able to identify at least 3 data queries and provide an accurate justification for each query.
- Candidate is able to identify at least 3 sources of information and provide an accurate justification for each.

Student Achievement Data Chart

The following chart shows the percentage of students scoring at each of the Performance Levels for the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) — aggregated and disaggregated by subgroups. Each Performance Level is a broad, categorical level defined by a student's overall scale score and used to report overall student performance by describing how well students met the expectations for their grade level/course. Each Performance Level is defined by a range of overall scale scores for the assessment. There are five Performance Levels for IAR Assessments:

- Level 1: Did not yet meet expectations
- Level 2: Partially met expectations
- Level 3: Approached expectations
- Level 4: Met expectations
- Level 5: Exceeded expectations

Grade 7	ELA					Mathematics				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
ALL										
School	26.3%	39.9%	16.1%	14.0%	3.7%	37.9%	24.3%	17.1%	15.8%	4.9%
District	23.3%	32.6%	21.8%	17.6%	4.7%	31.9%	21.5%	18.2%	21.0%	7.4%
State	18.5%	19.0%	24.6%	28.5%	9.4%	14.2%	29.1%	29.8%	23.2%	3.7%
Non-Low Income										
School	14.2%	29.1%	21.2%	26.9%	8.6%	24.9%	17.4%	20.5%	27.4%	9.8%
District	12.1%	19.9%	25.9%	33.7%	8.4%	18.4%	13.2%	20.8%	34.8%	12.8%
State	6.6%	20.2%	32.0%	34.6%	6.6%	9.6%	13.7%	23.8%	37.7%	16.2%
Low Income										
School	34.0%	43.3%	13.0%	9.0%	0.7%	46.4%	28.5%	16.3%	6.8%	2.0%
District	32.7%	42.9%	15.5%	7.1%	1.8%	42.8%	27.6%	16.1%	10.5%	3.0%
State	26.8%	33.0%	27.6%	11.8%	0.8%	26.4%	24.2%	26.4%	19.4%	3.6%
Male										
School	23.0%	36.0%	24.8%	12.7%	3.5%	43.4%	25.6%	16.8%	11.5%	2.7%
District	23.0%	31.7%	23.1%	17.2%	5.0%	37.1%	21.1%	18.0%	18.6%	5.3%
State	14.3%	28.0%	29.5%	24.1%	4.1%	22.0%	20.8%	24.7%	25.5%	7.1%
Female										
School	28.0%	39.2%	12.3%	15.4%	5.1%	33.1%	23.1%	17.5%	19.2%	7.1%
District	22.4%	33.7%	21.6%	17.8%	4.5%	26.6%	22.1%	18.4%	23.4%	9.5%
State	14.0%	30.4%	30.1%	22.3%	3.2%	14.9%	17.1%	24.5%	31.7%	11.8%
White										
School	8.8%	29.4%	23.5%	30.4%	8.8%	20.6%	20.6%	23.5%	25.0%	10.3%
District	9.4%	21.1%	30.0%	32.9%	6.6%	15.1%	16.5%	25.0%	33.5%	9.9%
State	11.4%	14.2%	25.0%	36.7%	12.7%	7.7%	22.2%	33.3%	32.2%	4.6%
Black										
School	34.1%	45.8%	14.0%	6.1%	0.0%	47.2%	31.6%	10.5%	10.6%	0.1%
District	38.5%	44.7%	13.1%	3.3%	0.4%	48.5%	29.2%	13.9%	7.7%	0.7%
State	28.0%	41.6%	22.7%	7.3%	0.4%	31.4%	25.7%	23.8%	16.5%	2.6%
Hispanic										
School	40.5%	36.6%	16.6%	6.3%	0.0%	47.2%	16.8%	20.5%	6.1%	9.4%
District	22.4%	36.8%	23.1%	16.0%	1.7%	36.9%	23.1%	23.1%	16.4%	0.5%
State	19.7%	36.9%	28.6%	13.8%	1.0%	23.2%	25.3%	25.8%	21.4%	4.3%
Asian: Non-reported data or suppressed data due to privacy concerns. Student counts reported are counts out of groups with 10 or greater.										
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: Non-reported data or suppressed data due to privacy concerns. Student counts reported are counts out of groups with 10 or greater.										
American Indian: Non-reported data or suppressed data due to privacy concerns. Student counts reported are counts out of groups with 10 or greater.										
Two or More Races: Non-reported data or suppressed data due to privacy concerns. Student counts reported are counts out of groups with 10 or greater.										
School	25.8%	26.6%	27.6%	9.5%	10.5%	33.3%	13.6%	15.0%	33.3%	4.8%
District	20.0%	30.7%	25.2%	15.6%	8.5%	32.7%	24.5%	25.0%	10.6%	7.2.0%
State	13.2%	28.4%	29.5%	24.1%	4.8%	18.7%	16.7%	23.6%	29.7%	11.3%

Teacher Data

Directions: The following table represents the kind of data produced by some teacher evaluation systems at the middle or high school level. The table below displays five math teachers' data by name, teacher certification area, student annual test data, and teacher evaluation ratings.

Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR Level Ratings):

1. Did not meet expectations
2. Partially met expectations
3. Approached expectations
4. Met expectations
5. Exceeded expectations

Teacher Evaluation Ratings:

E = Excellent

P = Proficient

NI = Needs improvement

U = Unsatisfactory

Teacher Name	Certification Area	IAR – Mathematics Levels					Teacher Evaluation Rating			
		1	2	3	4	5	U	NI	P	E
Teacher A	Math	12%	10%	37%	24%	17%			X	
Teacher B	Math	8%	22%	34%	28%	8%		X		
Teacher C	Math	1%	7%	11%	55%	26%				X
Teacher D	Provisional Math	5%	10%	21%	48%	16%			X	
Teacher E	Math	15%	29%	22%	30%	4%		X		

Use the information from the table to answer the following questions. Your responses will be assessed by the search committee.

1. What insights can be drawn regarding student test data and teacher evaluation ratings? Explain your answer.
2. Recent student test data have trended lower in the past few years for Teacher E, a veteran teacher of 15 years. What action can be planned or taken by you?
3. School professional development monies have been cut from your budget. What would be your plan of action to address teaching deficiencies?

Assessing the task:

- Candidate identifies at least 3 insights from the data (e.g., Teacher C appears to be the stronger teacher with 81% of student meeting/exceeding expectations and an excellent evaluation rating; Teachers B and E appear to be the weaker teachers; Teacher is rated as "Proficient but only has 41% of her students meeting/exceeding expectations.)
- Candidate lists at least 3 support structures for Teacher E and these explanations represent best practice research-based strategies (e.g., improvement plan, instructional specialist, mentor.)
- Assessing the task: Candidate lists at least 3 best practice research-based strategies (e.g., PLC, further examination of disaggregated test data to identify areas of strength and improvement followed by development of individual growth plans, teachers observing excellent teachers.)