**Field 107: School Building Leader Part 1  
Sample Selected-Response Items**

**Competency 0001  
Instructional Leadership for Student Success**

**Use the information below to answer the five questions that follow**

Ms. L has served as the school building leader at Central Avenue High School for several years. The school is located in an urban district and enrolls approximately 1,870 students. Many of the teachers at Central Avenue have taught at the school for ten years or more. A majority is consistently rated effective or highly effective, but close to 20 percent has been rated ineffective or developing at some point over the last five years.

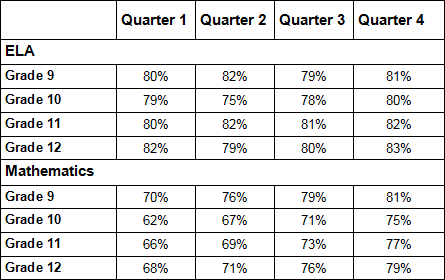
Student performance at Central Avenue has generally lagged behind state and district performance. Three years ago, the district undertook an initiative to implement Data-Driven Instruction and Inquiry (DDI) in all district schools. Recognizing DDI as a powerful tool for improving student performance, Ms. L led a building-wide effort to implement fully the district’s DDI system at Central Avenue. The school began administering district-adopted inventory and quarterly assessments, with data analysis conducted at department-wide meetings. Since then, the school’s performance on standardized assessments has improved overall, with mathematics showing particularly significant gains. A strong commitment to the use of DDI by mathematics faculty has been credited for a good deal of this improvement. Improvement in English Language Arts (ELA) has been minimal, however, and student performance in this area continues to lag behind district and state averages.

As the new school year begins, Ms. L focuses attention on analyzing and improving student performance in ELA. She reviews formative assessment data in ELA and mathematics, as well as Regents examinations results for Central Avenue students over the last three years. In addition, she directs an assistant principal to gather information about and report on DDI activities occurring among the school’s ELA staff.

***Document 1***

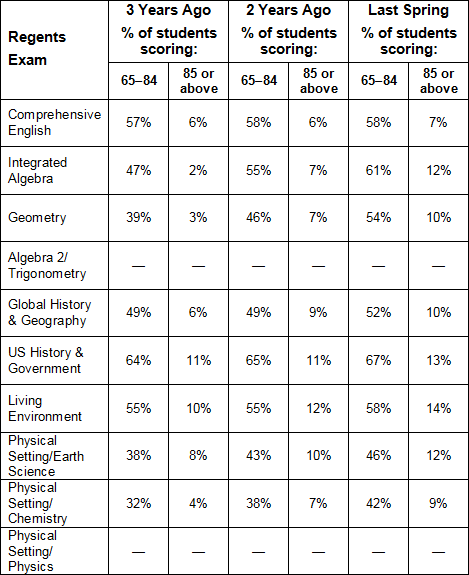
**Formative Assessment Results (last year)**

(percentage of students answering more than 65% of formative assessment items correctly)



***Document 2***

**Student Performance on Regents Exams—All Students,  
Central Avenue High School  
Three-Year Comparison**



**NOTE:** The "—" symbol indicates that data for a group of fewer than five students have been suppressed to protect the privacy of individual students.

***Document 3***

**Assistant Principal's Report on DDI Activities in the English Department (last year)**

To: Principal L  
From: Assistant Principal R  
RE: Update on Data-Driven Instruction and Inquiry (DDI) Activities in the English  
       Language Arts (ELA) Department

I observed an ELA department meeting held recently to review first-quarter formative assessment results for all grade levels. All ELA faculty members were supposed to attend, but a number were absent. The discussion was serious and well-intended, but the data analysis that occurred was superficial and the meeting lacked focus. Eleventh and twelfth grade teachers, in particular, seemed to emphasize *how much* students got wrong instead of deepening the discussion to discover exactly *what* students got wrong and *why* students answered questions incorrectly. The department chair ended the meeting by urging teachers to make time in their own schedules to review the data more extensively.

In a separate discussion, I found the ELA department chair to have good intentions regarding DDI. However, the department action plans that we reviewed focused on surface-level concerns, despite the use of appropriate templates. Also, he has yet to see that ensuring teacher participation in this work is essential to improve teaching and learning. It was clear from our conversation that he views his administrative duties and demands on his time from teachers and students as leaving little time for regular DDI meetings.

In conversations with individual ELA teachers, I found only two or three who fully understand the importance of data and regularly use classroom-level DDI to inform their instructional planning. Most of the faculty seem to be disconnected from the DDI process. They rarely use data for their classes, relying instead on their own experience and intuition to plan and modify instruction—especially at the upper grade levels. A few teachers expressed reluctance to increase the rigor of instruction in response to poor test results. They believe that raising the level of rigor "too sharply" while students are performing at low levels would frustrate students and have a negative effect on their engagement with academics.

I'd be happy to discuss any of these matters further with you as needed. Please advise.

Sincerely,  
Assistant Principal R

1. In comparing formative assessment data with student performance on the Regents Exam in Comprehensive English, which issue should concern Ms. L the most?

1. The content on the formative assessments does not appear to match the rigor of the standards assessed on the Regents Exam.
2. The results of the formative assessments are likely to have substantially lower reliability than the results of the Regents Exam.
3. The formative assessments are unlikely to be as comprehensive in their coverage of the school curriculum as is the Regents Exam.
4. The formative assessments differentiate content according to grade level and quarter, while the Regents Exam does not.

**Answer**

**Correct Response: A.**

2. To improve student learning at Central Avenue High School, Ms. L should prompt faculty in the ELA department to implement which strategy *first*?

1. Create classroom assessments that more closely reflect content addressed in district-adopted formative assessments and the Regents Exam.
2. Use available standardized assessment data to identify areas of their curriculum in which student performance is weakest as drivers for action planning.
3. Compare formative assessment and Regents Exam data for their school with data from demographically similar high schools within and outside of the district.
4. Identify additional sources of student performance data to determine the degree to which classroom instruction is aligned with curriculum standards.

**Answer**

**Correct Response: B.**

3. Which course of action taken by Ms. L would provide the most useful additional data for developing a plan to improve student performance in English?

1. Conduct a time study to quantify the amount of time currently spent by ELA faculty on DDI activities.
2. Identify professional resources on assessment and instruction in ELA currently available in the school.
3. Administer a survey to ELA faculty to gather information about professional development needs related to DDI.
4. Review the school's formative assessment results in ELA for a period covering at least the last three years.

**Answer**

**Correct Response: C.**

4. Based on the information provided, the ELA department chair is most likely to need administrative support to succeed in

1. recognizing how department issues affect the broader school community
2. establishing an atmosphere of collegiality and trust among department staff
3. marshaling additional resources to address new and emerging department needs
4. focusing on defined school and district priorities over competing department work

**Answer**

**Correct Response: D.**

5. In addition to continuing the implementation of DDI, Ms. L's highest priority as instructional leader should be to

1. establish academic expectations that are consistent with student performance in ELA
2. ensure that ELA teachers provide appropriately rigorous instruction for all students
3. promote buy-in among ELA faculty for a plan designed to promote instructional improvement
4. review faculty reports on student performance and progress in ELA classes on a regular basis

**Answer**

**Correct Response: B.**

**Competency 0002  
School Culture and Learning Environment to Promote Excellence and Equity**

**Use the information below to answer the four questions that follow**

Ms. J is the new school building leader of Millview Middle School, which includes grades 6–8 and is located in a suburban community. The school has an enrollment of approximately 580 students, about 50% of whom qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Staffing has remained stable over the past five years. The local community has experienced little change in recent years in terms of its demographic and economic profile.

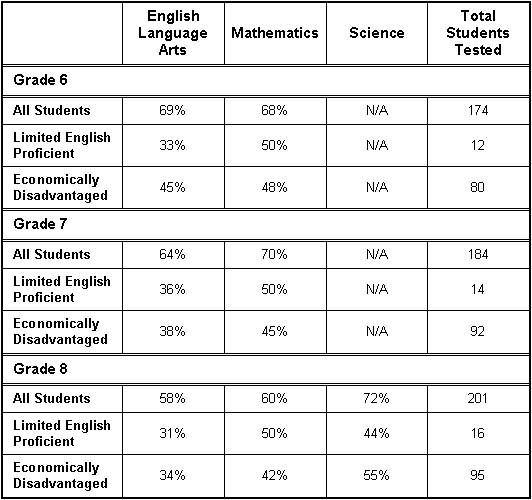
When she was hired, Ms. J met with the new superintendent to gain some background information about the school and to learn more about the superintendent's goals for the school. During this meeting, the superintendent noted that although academic performance for many students at Millview has been satisfactory, Ms. J will be expected to address the achievement gap between students who are economically disadvantaged and the rest of the student population.

Ms. J responded to the achievement gap concern by reviewing the school's recent state assessment results. The data strongly support the view that school staff must take steps to improve the academic performance of students who are economically disadvantaged. In addition, she reviewed the results of a student perception survey that was administered in classrooms by the school counselors the previous spring and a teacher survey administered at the end of the previous school year. She further noted that data gathered over the past few years have consistently shown a lower attendance rate among economically disadvantaged eighth-grade students than among the student population overall.

***Document 1***

**State Assessment Results, by Student Group (last year)**

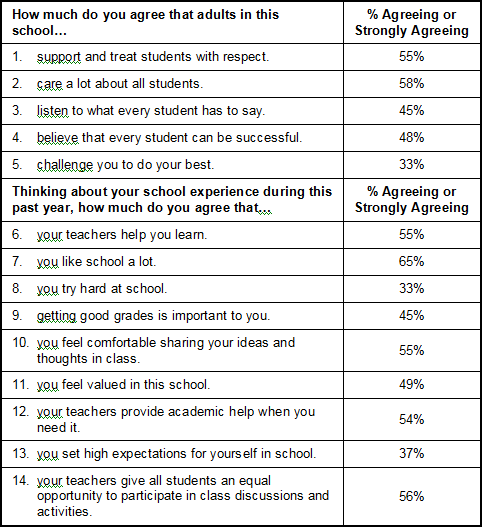
This table displays the percentage of students, by group, scoring at or above Level 3 ("meets proficiency standard").



***Document 2***

**Excerpt from Student Perception Survey (4th quarter last year)  
Results for All Students**

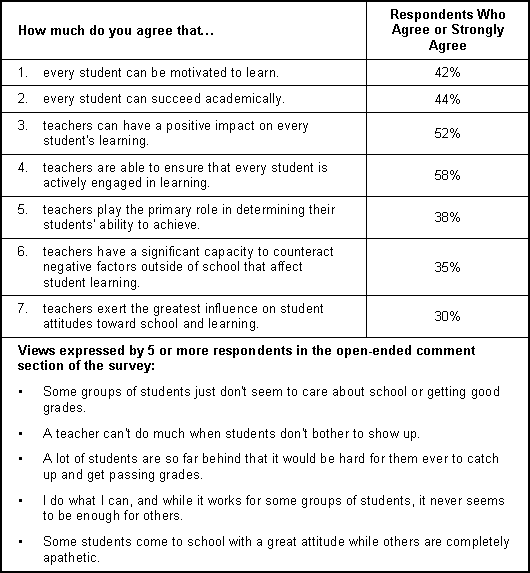
(approximately 90% of the student body completed the survey)



***Document 3***

**Excerpt from Summary of Anonymous Teacher Survey  
Results for All Teachers**

(approximately 80% of teachers completed the survey)



6. Based on the information provided, Ms. J's highest *initial* priority should be to explore which question?

1. Why are students learning more effectively in some subjects, such as science, than in others, such as mathematics and English Language Arts?
2. Do procedures need to be put in place to deal with attendance and other discipline issues?
3. Does the curriculum in any subject area need revision to increase alignment with state standards and to meet student needs?
4. What can be done to ensure that teachers employ equitable teaching strategies to engage and motivate all students to do their best?

**Answer**

**Correct Response: D.**

7. After completing an initial review of the student survey results and the state assessment results, which additional action by Ms. J would likely be most useful for providing further insight into the issues currently facing the school?

1. Compare the state assessment results with those of demographically similar middle schools across the state.
2. Correlate students' performance on the state assessment with classroom performance and report card grades.
3. Disaggregate responses to the student survey to determine the results for different student groups.
4. Conduct a series of in-depth interviews with a random sample of student survey respondents.

**Answer**

**Correct Response: C.**

8. After reflecting on the ideas and perceptions revealed in the anonymous teacher survey, Ms. J should be most concerned about following up on teachers'

1. failure to understand that great teaching can promote student performance
2. limited understanding of the role of motivation in student learning
3. excessive emphasis on grades as a yardstick for student success
4. tendency to focus on students' differences rather than on their similarities

**Answer**

**Correct Response: A.**

9. Ms. J determines that she will facilitate a series of faculty and department meetings on a regular basis, with the goal of addressing the learning needs of diverse student populations. Considering the information provided, these meetings are likely to be most effective in achieving this goal if Ms. J guides teachers to use the meetings to focus on

1. developing clear, comprehensive instructional outcomes suitable for diverse student populations
2. developing and refining instructional strategies that improve student learning for diverse populations
3. researching and discussing emerging theories regarding how students from diverse populations learn
4. evaluating each other's assumptions about factors that support or hinder the learning process for students from diverse populations

**Answer**

**Correct Response: B.**

## Field 107: School Building Leader Part 1 Sample Performance Tasks

### Sample Directions

For each of the assignments in this section, you are to prepare a written response and record it in the on-screen response box presented with each assignment. You should use your time to plan, write, review, and edit your response for each assignment. **You must write responses to all of the assignments in this section.**

Read each assignment carefully before you begin to work. Think about how you will organize each of your responses. You may use the erasable \*notebooklet to make notes, write an outline, or otherwise prepare your response. **However, your final response to each assignment must be typed in the on-screen response box presented with the assignment**. Each assignment contains directions for the suggested length for an appropriate response. You may use the word-count feature in the lower left corner of the response box to monitor the length of your response.

Your response to the written assignment will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

**COMPLETENESS:** The degree to which the response addresses all parts of the assignment

**ACCURACY:** The degree to which the response demonstrates the relevant knowledge and skills accurately and effectively

**DEPTH OF SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING:** The degree to which the response provides appropriate examples and details that demonstrate sound reasoning and reflects a strong understanding of the relevant knowledge and skills

Your responses will be evaluated on the criteria above, not on writing ability. However, your responses must be communicated clearly enough to permit valid judgment of your knowledge and skills. Your responses should conform to the conventions of edited American English. This should be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work.

Be sure to write about the assigned topics. You may not use any reference materials during the test. Remember to review your work and make any changes that you think will improve your responses. You may work on the assignments in any order you choose, but be sure to finish all three assignments before the end of the test session.

\*notebooklet: A small, hand-held erasable whiteboard

### Assignment 1: Instructional Leadership

**Use the information below and the six documents provided to complete the task that follows.**

You are the new school building leader of Branson Heights Middle School. The school is located on the outskirts of a relatively affluent suburb. Over the past three years, the school has maintained a steady enrollment of approximately 750 students in grades 6–8. Staffing has remained stable for the last two years. Approximately 25% of students at Branson Heights are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and the community has experienced a slight economic downturn with the closing of a few major employers. School faculty and staff strive to provide a positive environment for all students and families. Branson Heights enjoys strong community and family support.

The district's new superintendent has charged you with developing an instructional change plan for the middle school. Many of the district's professional development sessions have focused on reevaluating the mathematics curriculum to align it to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), looking at formative assessment data to measure student growth, and conducting cross-curricular planning sessions to embed more complex text in all lessons. Branson Heights has redesigned its mathematics curriculum to reflect the CCLS and to align with the focus topics identified by the CCLS as the major work of each grade. Your teachers have been very active in supporting the curriculum redesign and have asked for professional development to support its implementation.

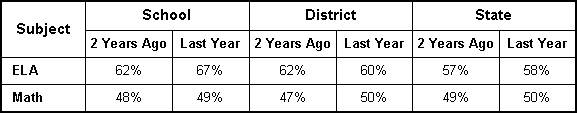
It is October and you have received the first round of formative assessment data.

#### Document 1

**Student Performance Indicators for Branson Heights Middle School**

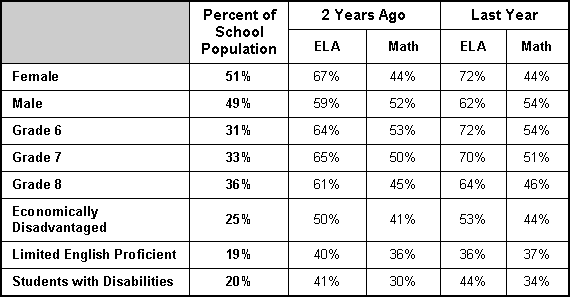
**State Assessment Results for All Students  
Two-Year Comparison**

This table displays the percentage of students in all groups scoring at or above Level 3 ("meets proficiency standard").



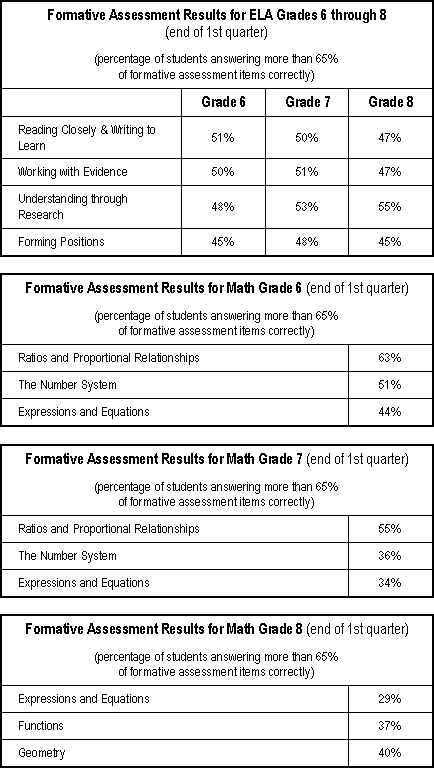
**State Assessment Results, by Student Group  
Two-Year Comparison**

This table displays the percentage of students, by group, scoring at or above Level 3 ("meets proficiency standard").



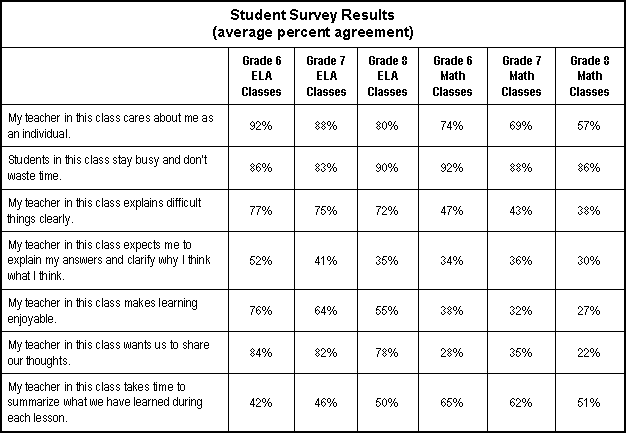
#### Document 2

**Formative Assessment Results, ELA and Mathematics**



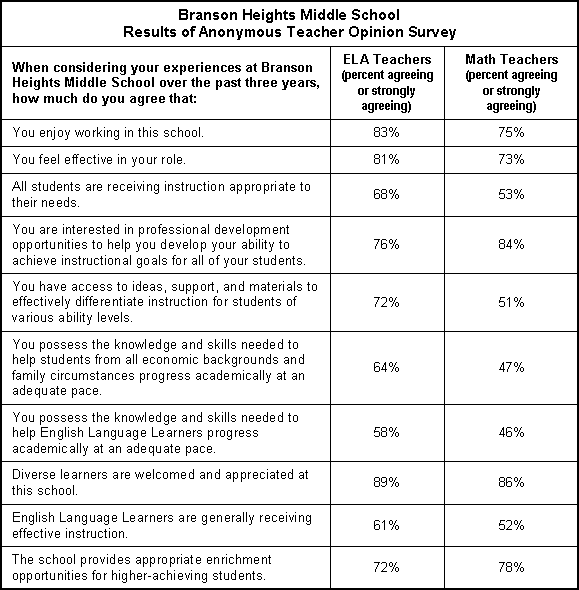
#### Document 3

**Student Survey Results for Branson Heights Middle School (last year)  
  
ELA and Mathematics Classes, Grades 6, 7, 8**



#### Document 4

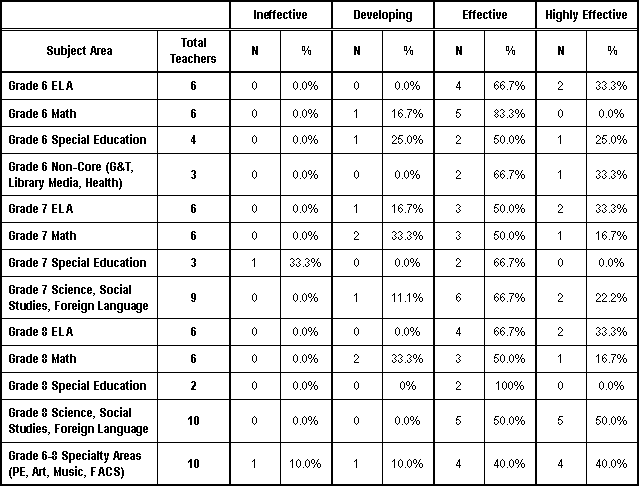
**Excerpt from Teacher Survey Results (last year)**



#### Document 5

**Teacher Evaluation Data  
  
Composite Evaluation Scores: All Teachers (last year)**

**(as assessed through multiple measures, including a state-provided growth score or other comparable measure and locally selected measure of student achievement and other measures of teacher effectiveness)**



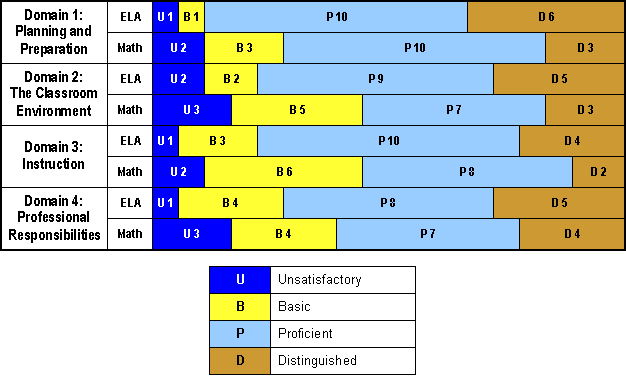
Key:

G&T – Gifted and Talented  
PE – Physical Education  
FACS – Family and Consumer Science

#### Document 6

**Teacher Observation Summary Data (last year)**

(number of teachers scoring at each level of performance on the teacher practice rubric)



Read the six exhibits provided. Based on the information provided, respond to each of the following prompts. Be very specific in your answers, citing evidence from the scenario and exhibits as appropriate.

1. Identify one strength of this school, citing evidence to support your response.
2. Identify three areas of need in the instructional program, citing evidence to support each need.
3. Which area of need would be your highest priority? Explain why.
4. What are two important questions you must answer to address your highest priority area of need? Explain why each question is important to address.
5. How will you go about getting answers to EACH question?
6. What actions would you take to address the school's priority need? Explain why.
7. How would you leverage the identified strength of the school (see Part A) to address the priority need?
8. What possible challenges might your actions create and what are some ways that you could manage these challenges?

Your response should be approximately 600–800 words and may be in a format of your choice (e.g., paragraphs, bulleted list).

### Assignment 2: Educational Equity

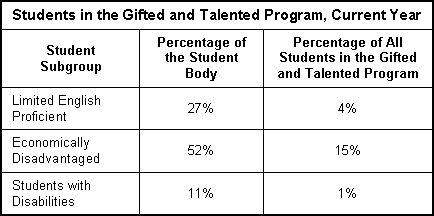
**Use the information below to complete the task that follows.**

You are the new school building leader of an urban middle school with an enrollment of approximately 1,200 students in grades 6–8. The school has a gifted and talented program in which eligible students are pulled out for enrichment classes in English Language Arts and mathematics once a week. Most of the students in the program participated in a gifted and talented program at one of several district elementary schools.

Before the school year begins, a group of parents and guardians comes to see you with concerns about the gifted and talented program's admission criteria. In your first meeting with staff, you met with various faculty members and teams within the building, including Ms. S, the gifted and talented teacher. You learned that Ms. S has overseen the gifted and talented program for the past five years. During that time, the program has grown from 50 participants to approximately 125 participants. Ms. S told you that students are selected for the program based on a combination of scores on diagnostic screening assessments and teacher nominations.

During the first few weeks of school, you walked through the school building throughout the day visiting classrooms and getting to know students, faculty, and staff. You noticed that the school as a whole reflects substantial economic, cultural, and language diversity; however, in your visits to the gifted enrichment classes, you realized that very few students who participate in the gifted and talented program reflect this diversity. After checking available information on students who currently participate in the gifted and talented program, you created the table below.

You visited a number of general education classrooms and noted several students who appeared to have advanced knowledge and understanding, with outstanding verbal abilities. They made particularly articulate responses that reflected deep understanding of the topics at hand, and their questioning of the teacher exceeded typical classroom exchanges. It is apparent in your observations that these students would benefit from more challenging instruction. You learned from Ms. S that some of these students are not eligible for the program, due to low scores on the screening assessments used for selection.



Based on the information provided, respond to each of the following prompts. Be very specific in your answers, citing evidence from the scenario as appropriate.

1. What is the primary issue presented in this scenario, and why do you believe this to be so?
2. What are two important questions you must address in order to explore this issue? Explain why each is important to address.
3. How will you go about getting answers to EACH question? What challenges might you face in getting answers to your questions?
4. Describe one possible finding of your inquiry process and the potential action that finding would imply.

Your response should be approximately 300–400 words and may be in a format of your choice (e.g., paragraphs, bulleted list).

### Assignment 3: School Culture and Learning Environment

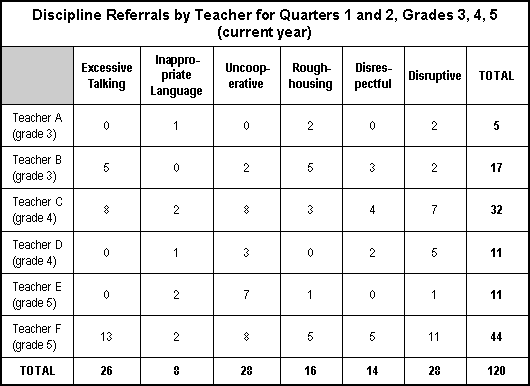
**Use the information below to complete the task that follows.**

You are the new school building leader in a rural school with an enrollment of approximately 500 students in grades K–12. The school has experienced very little staff turnover over the past five years and, on average, the teachers have 5–8 years of teaching experience. Your review of student performance on the state and formative assessments shows that student performance in mathematics and English Language Arts has remained flat for the past two years.

A few months into the school year, you noticed that there seems to be a relatively large number of referrals for minor student discipline problems in grades 3–5, such as excessive talking, inappropriate language, roughhousing, and uncooperative behavior. A summary of the referral data is shown below. The school has a code of conduct in place that outlines behavior guidelines and consequences for inappropriate behavior. In the past, teachers have used these guidelines to develop their own classroom rules and expectations.

For the next teacher professional development day, you asked members of your leadership team to plan a series of conversations about classroom management based on the teacher practice rubric the district adopted for evaluation purposes. After allowing teachers time to reflect on the conversations and their own practice, you decided to make a brief visit to each third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade classroom to observe student behavior and interactions and gain insight into teachers' approaches to maximizing opportunities for learning in the classroom. During these visits, you observe that most teachers seem to have caring relationships with their students. However, some of the teachers interacted with students in an almost overly casual manner.

During the classroom visits, you also had an opportunity to see some of the classroom discipline issues. Some teachers ignored behavioral problems and moved on with instruction. In a couple of the classes, a significant portion of the students in the class were either off task or so distracted by their off-task peers that they were not effectively participating in the instruction. Other teachers stopped instruction and administered immediate consequences for each misbehavior, consuming significant class time. In general, teachers exhibited a range of responses to problem behaviors within and across classes.



Based on the information provided, respond to each of the following prompts. Be very specific in your answers, citing evidence from the scenario as appropriate.

1. What is an important school culture and learning environment issue presented in this scenario? Explain why the issue you chose is important.
2. What are two important questions you must address in order to explore this issue? Explain why each is important to address.
3. How will you go about getting answers to EACH question? What challenges might you face in getting answers to your questions?
4. Describe one possible finding of your inquiry process and the potential action that finding would imply.

Your response should be approximately 300–400 words and may be in a format of your choice (e.g., paragraphs, bulleted list).