



Candidate Assessment Handbook

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Introduction

School leaders have the ability to create a school with meaningful achievement goals and expectations, respectful and trusting relationships among the adults and the students, and effective programs and practices—a place where all students can learn and feel safe and supported. Leaders base their work on their leadership knowledge; skills and dispositions; evidence and research; and the commitment of staff, families, and the community. To help ensure that school leaders are effective, all candidates seeking principal/assistant principal licensure in Massachusetts now must meet state performance assessment requirements.

Toward that end, the Commonwealth has supported the development and implementation of the Massachusetts Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL). The PAL assessment system is designed to produce clear evidence of a candidate’s readiness for an initial school leadership position. It is aligned with other Commonwealth leadership development efforts to prepare, support, and evaluate principals and assistant principals.

The system is also aligned with the Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval regulations (603 CMR 7.00), which were amended and approved by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on June 26, 2012.

Further, PAL is aligned with the national performance assessment requirements of the [Educational Leadership Constituent Council \(ELCC\), as enumerated in its national accreditation program standards](#) and with the national educational leadership policy standards, the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) 2008.

More specifically, the four tasks that comprise the PAL system are aligned with the revised Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership, approved by the Board in December 2011.

PAL task instructions and rubrics will be reviewed annually and updated for clarity, as needed.

Requirements for Principal Licensure Candidates

Effective September 1, 2014, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has required all applicants for principal/assistant principal licensure to complete four Massachusetts Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL) assessment tasks. Applicants include individuals enrolled in leadership preparation programs and those pursuing licensure through the administrative apprenticeship/internship or panel review routes.

Candidates are required to register for and pay a fee to complete each PAL task.

Candidates are assessed according to the task instructions and rubrics in the Candidate Assessment Handbook **for the program year in which their work is submitted**. Annually, the PAL task instructions and rubrics will be reviewed for improvements, requiring changes or updates, most often to improve clarity and provide guidance. Candidates are responsible for aligning their work products to the task instructions and rubrics in the current Candidate Assessment Handbook when they submit their initial tasks and when they submit retakes.

Submission and Score Considerations

- Task submissions accepted must meet performance expectations.
- All work products for the four tasks must be completed.
- Scores must meet state standards for licensure decision.
- Score reports will be released.

Overview of PAL Assessment Tasks

The Massachusetts Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL) allows candidates to demonstrate their leadership knowledge and skills by setting the direction for improved student achievement, creating a professional learning culture among school staff, assessing and supporting individual teacher instructional practices, and engaging families and community in improving student learning. The work for each task is to be undertaken in a school setting with guidance and direction from a supervising practitioner or school leader. Tasks can be completed as part of the principal candidates' coursework or field work/internship experiences. Accomplishing the following four specific tasks allows candidates to exhibit their leadership competency:

Task 1: Leadership through a Vision for High Student Achievement

Task 2: Instructional Leadership for a Professional Learning Culture

Task 3: Leadership in Observing, Assessing, and Supporting Individual Teacher Effectiveness

Task 4: Leadership for Family Engagement and Community Involvement

These four tasks are intended to focus on student learning in a **priority academic area** for improvement in the school. *A **priority academic area** is an area in which improved student performance is desired based on input from staff at the school and district level, and with attention to federally designated priority student groups or other groups that are a priority in the school. Candidates are required to provide evidence that demonstrates the chosen subject or academic performance area and target student group are priorities. As an example, a candidate might designate 4th grade ELA close-reading skills for ELL students as a Task 1 priority academic area after carefully analyzing ELA MCAS data, as well as 4th grade first term common assessment data and school and district improvement plans, and consulting with the 4th grade PLC teachers. The following are not acceptable priority academic areas because they are not sufficiently focused on specific student learning performance and subject area: attendance, absenteeism, **discipline or behavioral issues**, graduation or **retention** rates, or AP enrollment. While these concerns may be a secondary issue related to a priority academic area, they cannot be the primary focus when developing a vision for high student achievement (Task 1), creating a professional learning culture (Task 2), supporting teacher effectiveness (Task 3), or promoting family engagement and community involvement (Task 4). As Figure 1 shows, the tasks are expected to overlap and be complementary, centered on a common **priority academic area**. Thus, optimally, a candidate will select one **priority academic area** as the basis for completing all four tasks.

*The Task 4 priority area can be either focused on an academic area or on health, emotional, and/or social needs that impact learning (see Task 4 p. 103).

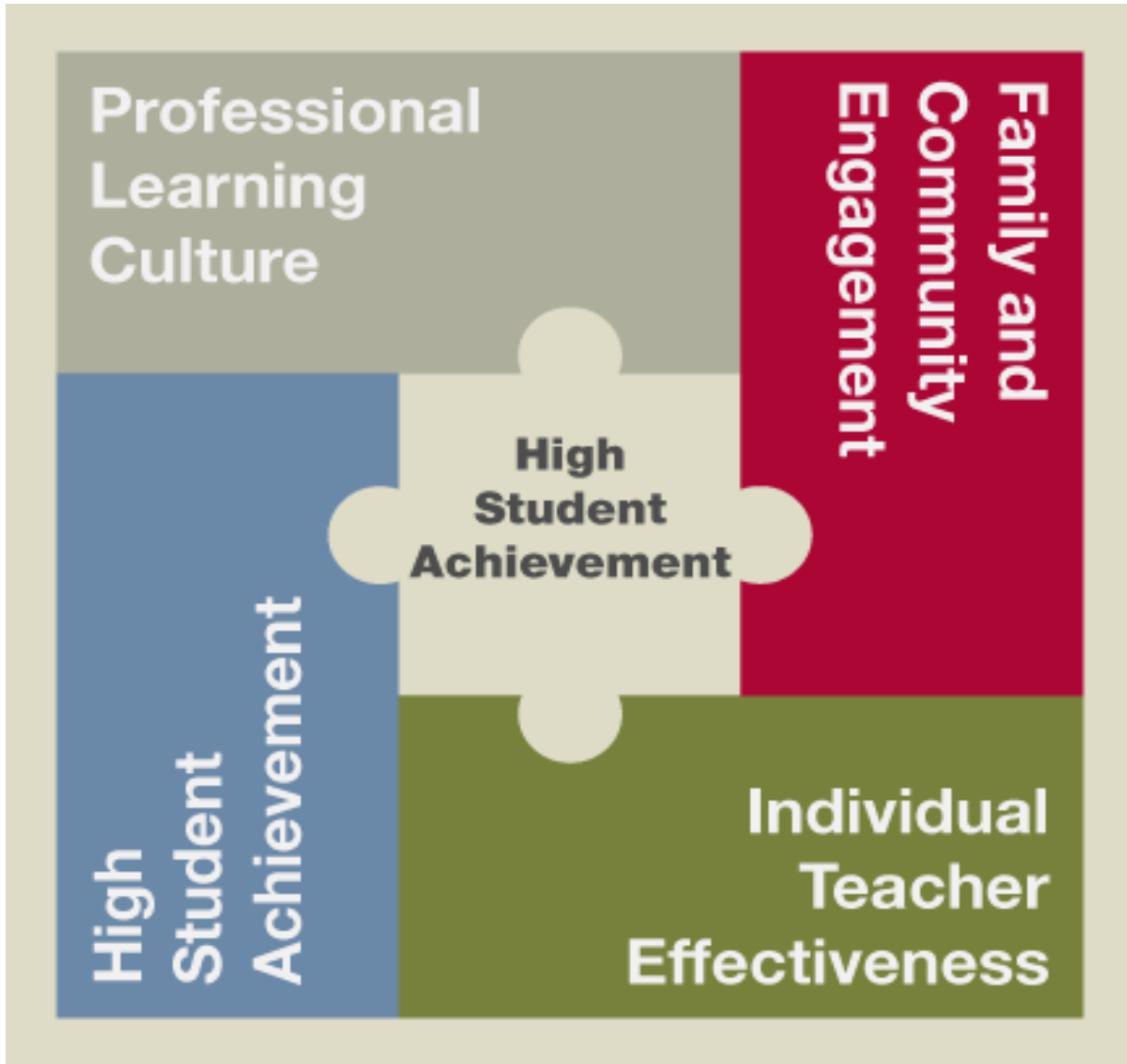


Figure 1. Relationship of the Four MA-PAL Tasks

Each task is designed to require leadership work whose goal is the creation of a school where all students, **particularly members of federally designated priority student groups**¹ or other groups that are a priority locally, can improve their academic performance and reach ambitious learning targets. While tasks can be completed independently, they are best undertaken as an integrated set of actions to improve student learning in a **priority academic area**. Candidates are required to provide evidence that demonstrates the chosen subject or performance area and target student group are priorities.

¹ Students with disabilities; English language learners; African American, Hispanic, and Native American students; economically disadvantaged students; and students performing below state proficiency levels.

As you select a priority area, consider the differences in student performance based on federally designated priority student groups (students with disabilities; English language learners; African American, Hispanic, and Native American students; low-income students; and students performing below state proficiency levels) or other groups that are a priority in your school.

As shown in Figure 2, we recommend that candidates begin with Task 1 to investigate a **priority academic area and a target group of students that needs special support to improve achievement**. Based on identification of gaps and opportunities to improve student learning within this group, candidates develop a plan for action strategies. This priority area and plan are ideally, but not necessarily, the basis for engaging a group of teachers to explore ways to improve student learning by working together as a professional learning group. The candidate’s work to facilitate this learning group is the basis for Task 2. Observing and providing feedback to an individual teacher as he or she works to effectively support student learning is the basis of candidates’ activities for Task 3. Finally, for Task 4, candidates form a work group with family and/or community members to plan how to improve family and community engagement in relation to the **priority academic area** or to address related student health, emotional, or social needs that impact student learning. This must be connected to the **priority academic area** but may be broader than the candidates’ focal area for professional learning and work.

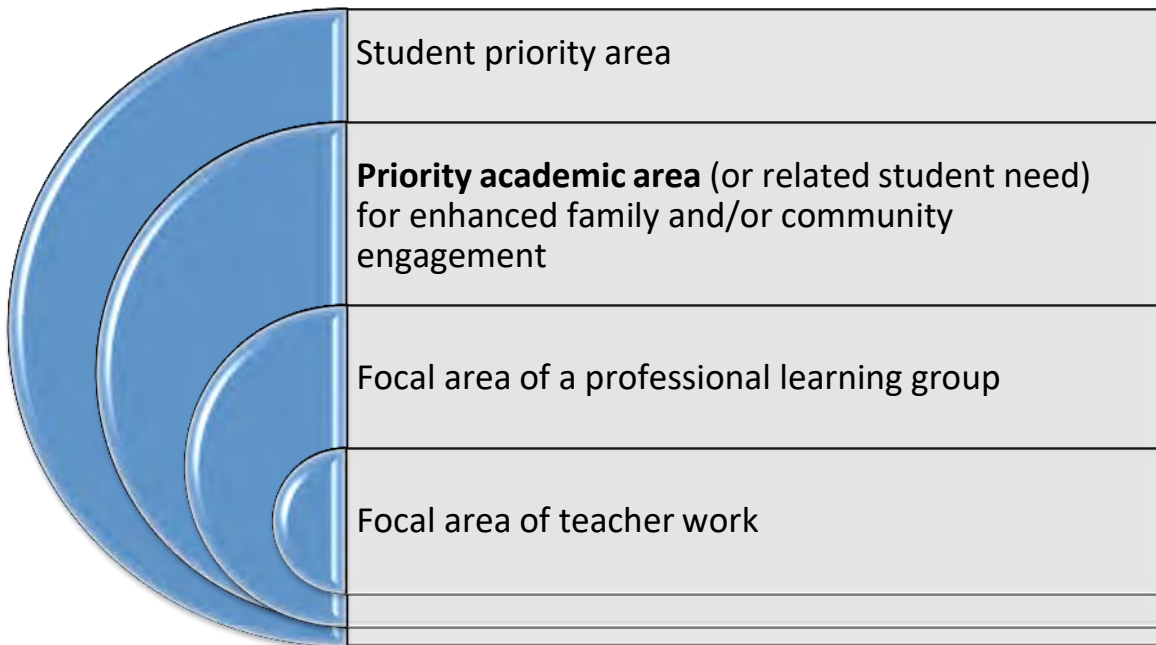


Figure 2. Nested Relationship of Priority Areas

Each task is divided into four components of leadership action that reflect the cycle of leadership inquiry and learning, as shown in Figure 3.

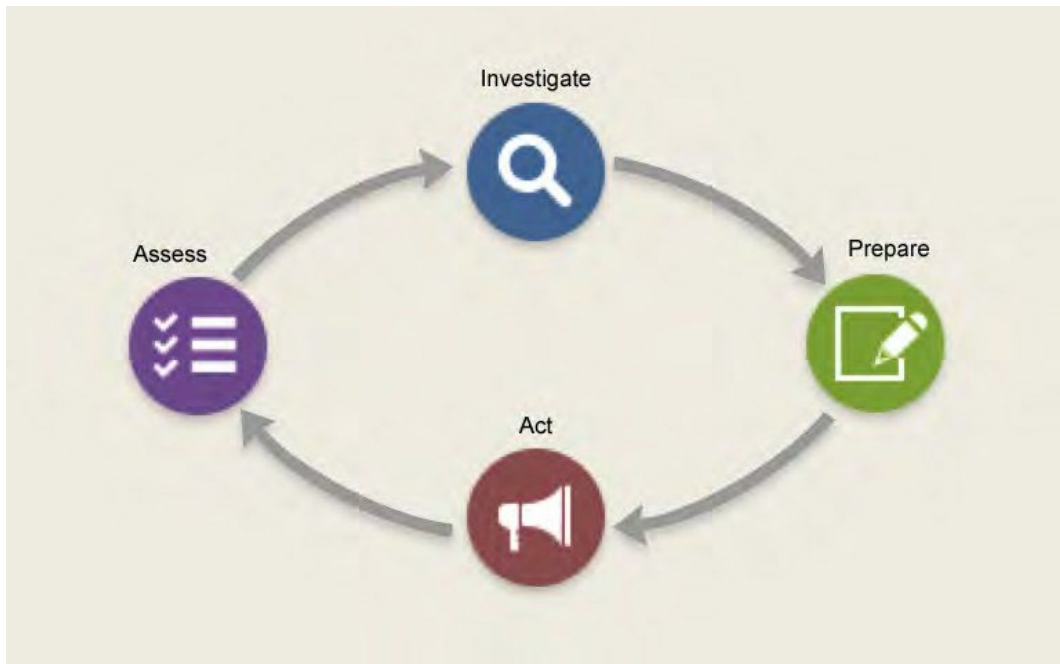


Figure 3. The Components of Leadership Action

PAL Work Product Submissions

All submitted work must be original and in the candidate’s own words. If candidates collaborate on the implementation of the Tasks, the corresponding submitted work **MUST** still be entirely in their own words. Each submitted Task is screened for originality and will be flagged for administrative review if any overlapping content within submissions is found. See *Clarifying the Candidate’s Role in the Performance Assessment* section below for more information.

For each task, candidates submit artifacts, supporting documents (by category), and a commentary as evidence of planning, implementing, and analyzing leadership practices and engagement of others in improving student learning. Considered part of the assessment for school leader licensure, all the work product submissions will be assessed by trained scorers who have educational leadership expertise.

At least three written artifacts and one commentary are to be submitted for each task. The instructions in each task section provide required word and page lengths. The word count guidelines reflect the fact that school leaders must be adept at preparing focused arguments, plans, and reports; their communications must be concise but well detailed. Scorers are not required to read artifacts and commentary or view video submissions

that exceed the requirements. Submissions that fall far short of the required word length (or minute length) are likely to lack sufficient information and detail, which would adversely affect how the scorers evaluate the work products and thus the candidate's potential score.

- Refer to [the PAL Evidence Charts](#) in each task section of this handbook for details regarding file formats, expected page lengths, video requirements, and other upload specifications.
- Review the [PAL Submission Requirements and Condition Codes](#) located at the end of this handbook. If your submission does not meet the Submission Requirements, a condition code may be applied during the scoring process instead of a numerical score. If a condition code is applied to any indicator or rubric, the entire task will be unscorable.
- Refer to the Condition Codes section in this Handbook for a list of condition codes and reasons why they may be applied.

Clarifying the Candidate's Role in the Performance Assessment

The purpose of these tasks is to enable candidates to demonstrate **their** leadership skills and practices as evidence of their readiness for an initial school leader position. In preparing their submission, candidates must clearly explain their role and responsibilities. In the absence of any explanation, scorers will assume that the work was completed by others and the submission will not be scored. It is **critical to explain your role** in completing the tasks to ensure authenticity of work being submitted. In the event of any collaboration with other individual(s), be sure to identify any and all points of collaboration; include the rationale or purpose of the collaboration; clearly explain roles in the collaboration; and attest that your submissions, including written artifacts and commentary, are entirely your own original product in your own words and not the product of others.

Please refer to the Rules of Assessment Participation 2.B.1. The Rules are found on the [Candidates/Policies page of the program website](#).

Collaboration and Required Disclosure

Candidates can collaborate with others; however, each candidate must submit original work products, including written artifacts and commentary. **That means your**

submissions must be written by you in your own words. Each work product should clearly demonstrate individual thought and reflection and should not be identical to another candidate's submission, even when the work was done collaboratively. As required in the Rules of Assessment Participation 2.B.1, be sure to identify any and all points of collaboration with any other individual(s), include the rationale or purpose of the collaboration, and clearly state your role in the collaboration and the role(s) of your collaborators. Provide appropriate attribution(s), so that scorers are able to differentiate your original work from the work of others. Failure to disclose collaboration as required in this section may result in disqualification of your submissions, and the imposition of sanctions on your educator license(s).

Accessing the PAL Assessment System

To access the PAL assessment system, candidates and preparation program faculty and staff can use www.ma-pal.nesinc.com. Within this website are instructions for candidates to create an account and register to submit task work products. The website also contains an Administrative Field Guide for Leadership Programs and additional resources for preparation programs and pathways.

Once registered in the Pearson system, candidates will have access to ePortfolio to upload and manage their tasks.

The website also contains information on viewing scores.

Confidentiality

Candidates will have access to their own scores. Candidates will have access to their work products up until the time of submission.

Scorers will be screened and assigned to candidates who are not in their own districts or preparation programs to ensure candidate anonymity and confidentiality.

Preparation programs and pathways will receive summary information on candidate task performance and ratings and total scores for individual candidates. They will not have access to candidates' submissions as evaluated by scorers.

Model consent forms for districts, teachers, students, and their parents (necessary for Task 3) are available on the PAL website.

A sample Confidentiality and Anonymity Form is available on the PAL website. An editable version is provided within the ePortfolio system. Candidates are required to complete and upload this form for each task.

Performance Standards

The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, based on the recommendations of the PAL Technical Advisory and Standards Setting committees, has established the performance standards for PAL as follows:

- 1) All completed work must yield a minimum threshold score of 2.1 (on a 4.0 scale) for each task. A threshold score is a minimum performance expectation for inclusion for determining the total score.
- 2) The performance standard for the four tasks is a candidate’s total average score of all four tasks. Candidates must meet or exceed a passing score of 2.75 (on a 4.0 scale). The total PAL score is based on an average of the overall scores for each of four tasks and requires that at least some task-specific scores are higher than the threshold score. Candidates’ work that only meets the threshold scores (2.1) for each of the four tasks will not obtain a passing score of 2.75 or above for the PAL assessment.

Task	Threshold score per task	Total passing score
Task 1	2.1	
Task 2	2.1	
Task 3	2.1	
Task 4	2.1	
TOTAL		2.75

Evaluation Criteria

The evidence submitted will be judged according to five primary components of leadership practice for each candidate:

- 1) Setting direction for high student achievement
- 2) Creating a professional learning culture among staff

- 3) Supporting individual teacher development
- 4) Engaging families and community in improving student learning
- 5) Analyzing leadership practices

Candidates provide evidence for the first four components of leadership practice when they complete the corresponding tasks and through the artifacts they produce and other relevant documents. Candidates provide evidence for analyzing leadership practices, the last component, in their commentaries.

Candidates' submitted work products are maintained confidentially and scored online by trained scorers, using the rubrics that are presented at the end of each task section in this Handbook. Candidates' scores are submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) for principal licensure decisions.

Rubrics

The rubrics will be used to score candidates' work. In preparing materials for submission, candidates are strongly encouraged to review the rubric expectations. Before submitting, candidates are strongly encouraged to evaluate their work using the rubrics.

Administrative Review

As stated in both the Performance Assessment for Leaders [Rules of Participation](#) as well as in [Score Reporting Policies](#), it is imperative that candidates submit original work that does not mirror previously submitted work by other candidates. Submissions are identified for Administrative Review if screening indicates a match of identical or similar language with other sources. Failure to submit original work will result in, at a minimum, voiding of your submission but may also include a waiting period before being able to submit additional tasks, or a letter of reprimand in your ELAR file and other potential licensure consequences.

Candidates are able to collaborate with peers on completing any or all tasks. Please see the Collaboration and Required Disclosure section above to review how to frame your work when submitting for scoring.

Task 1

Leadership through a Vision for High Student Achievement

What Do School Leaders Need to Think about When Realizing a Vision for Student Achievement?

School leaders have the ability to create a school where all students, particularly federally designated priority student group members,² can improve their academic performance and reach ambitious learning targets. Central to the realization of a universally shared vision of high student achievement is the establishment of meaningful achievement goals and expectations; respectful and trusting relationships among and between the adults and the students; and effective programs and practices based on both evidence and research and on the commitment of staff, families, and the community. Leaders can act to ensure that this vision is reflected in both the school's instructional program (curriculum, instruction, and assessment) and its culture.

School culture has three components: (1) the professional learning culture (teacher-teacher relationships), (2) the student culture (teacher-student and student-student relationships), and (3) the culture of family and community engagement (school staff, family, and community relationships). For a positive school culture that promotes learning, all three components must be actively promoted and maintained, and are to be addressed in this Task.

Task 1 assesses the capacity of school leadership candidates to develop a vision of high quality student achievement and a plan for improving student learning in a **priority academic area**. A **priority academic area** is an area in which improved student performance is desired based on input from staff at the school and district level, and with attention to federally designated priority student groups or other groups that are a priority in the school. Candidates are required to provide evidence that demonstrates the chosen subject or academic performance area and target student group are priorities. As an example, a candidate might designate 4th grade ELA close-reading skills for ELL students as a Task 1 priority academic area after carefully analyzing ELA MCAS data, as well as 4th grade first term common assessment data and school and district improvement plans, and consulting with the 4th grade PLC teachers. The following are not acceptable priority academic areas because they are not sufficiently focused on

² Students with disabilities; English language learners; African American, Hispanic, and Native American students; low-income students; and students performing below state proficiency levels.

specific student learning performance and subject area: attendance, absenteeism, **discipline or behavioral issues**, graduation or **retention** rates, or AP enrollment. While these concerns may be a secondary issue related to a priority academic area, they cannot be the primary focus when developing a vision for high student achievement.

To begin this task, you must analyze relevant school-level student performance and school context and culture data to identify (1) a **priority academic area** where student learning needs to improve and (2) **an underperforming student group** to target. Then you will solicit additional information from students, teachers, staff, families, and other stakeholders in order to acquire explicit information and knowledge about factors contributing to the student group's low performance in the **priority academic area**. Consider the following: The ways that performance and school experiences may differ among students within and across grade levels and, in particular, for federally designated priority student group(s).

- The school's context and culture.
- Existing school practices and programs for improving the performance of all students and evidence of fidelity in their implementation and effectiveness.

You should also review the [Massachusetts Professional Standards and Indicators for Administrative Leadership](#).

You will be asked to **gather and evaluate input/feedback from stakeholders at two separate and distinct times during Task 1**. First, input/feedback should be gathered to help identify and justify the selected priority academic area and target student group. This aspect of the data gathering process should be completed prior to the development of the plan vision, strategies, or implementation details. **After** you have developed a plan, you will be asked to solicit additional feedback from school leaders and other stakeholders regarding the plan's relevance, quality, and feasibility, as well as any suggestions for plan revisions.

What Do You Need to Do to Complete This Task?

- Access, collect, and analyze three to five years of quantitative student performance data, qualitative data on school culture and student learning, and overall school context information.
- Identify a **priority academic area** where improved student performance is desired, with attention to federally designated priority student groups, based on the information collected and analyzed.
- Collect additional quantitative and qualitative information about the student group's

performance in the **priority academic area** that clarifies factors contributing to the performance problem, including findings from observations and staff and student interviews, focus groups, and/or surveys pertaining to student and teacher cultures and to the school culture overall.

- Document existing school programs, services, and practices that are relevant to the student group's performance in the priority area and identify the gaps in effectiveness and opportunities for improvement.
- Solicit input from school leaders, teachers, and other relevant stakeholders throughout the inquiry and planning process about the student learning needs, priorities, gaps, and opportunities for improvement. Also solicit proposed improvement strategies.
- Develop a vision, a set of action strategies, and a proposed detailed plan to improve the student group's learning in the **priority academic area**, based on the data and input you collected and analyzed.
- Solicit feedback about the need for addressing the student group's performance in the proposed priority area and the relevance and feasibility of the proposed plan from school leaders and key stakeholder groups in the school and its community.
- Evaluate the feedback and make appropriate revisions to the plan to reflect the feedback.
- Summarize and constructively critique the leadership skills and practices that you used or developed in completing this task.

What Questions Do You Need to Consider to Complete This Task?

- What school and district data exist about student performance, school context, and school culture?
- Which individuals at the school and district level are best informed to advise you on the selection of a **priority academic area**?
- What clarifying information, relevant to the selection and improvement of the **priority academic area**, can be obtained from observations and interviews with stakeholders?
- What sources of evidence make an argument compelling when advocating for educational changes on behalf of the targeted student group(s)?

Each school has a unique set of attributes that defines its context, including grade span, size, staffing composition, resources, attrition rates, and the demographic characteristics of students and staff. Consider the elements of the school context that are relevant to the **priority academic area** and targeted student group you select and the school vision and plan you develop.

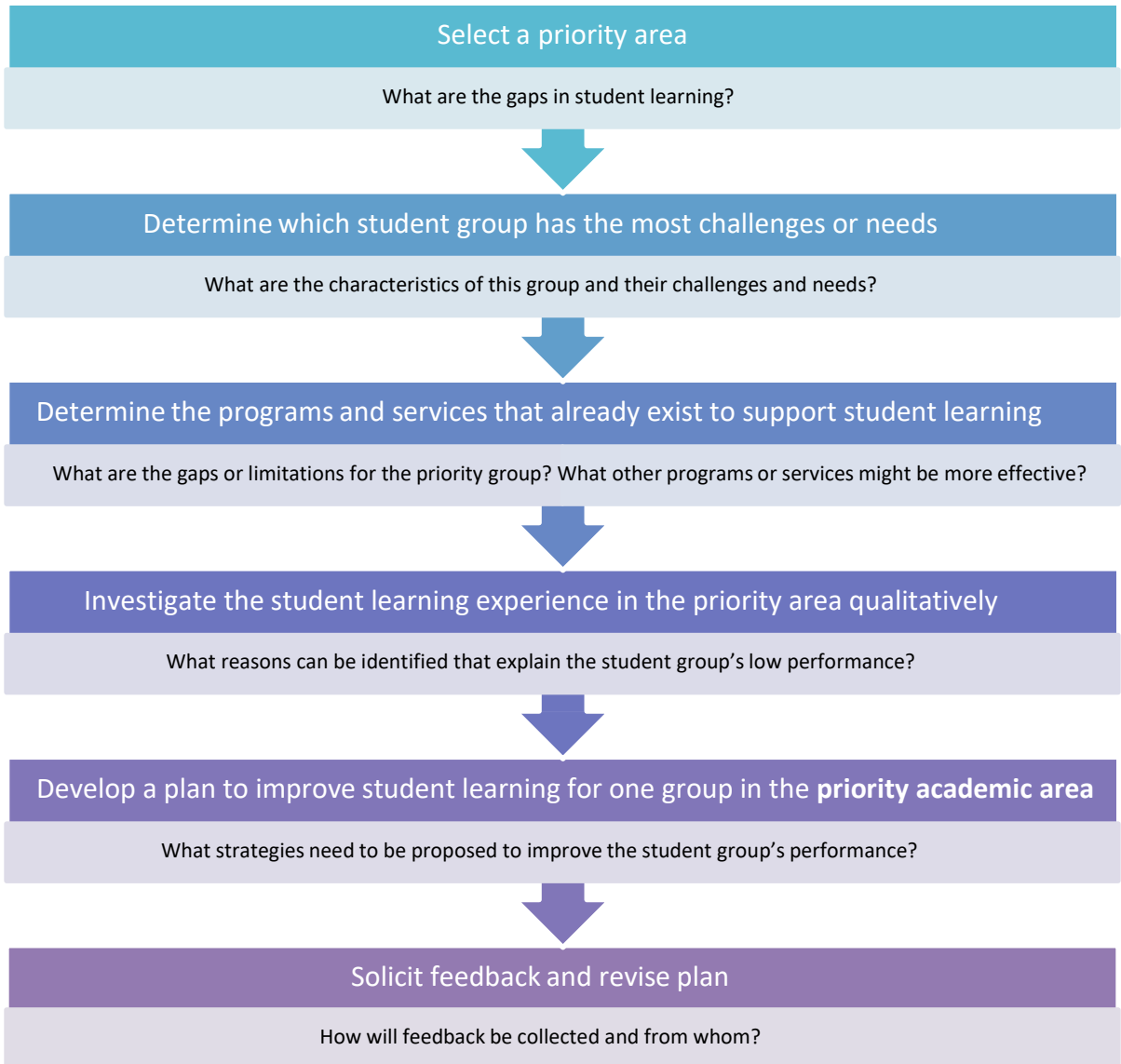
The Components of the Task

Component 1: Investigate

Task 1 begins with an investigation of a **priority academic area** for a group of students where the school’s approach—through programs, services, and policies—needs to be improved. First, **review available data** to identify a **priority academic area** and targeted student group. A group may be all the students in a grade or content area; a subgroup would be a subset of this group based on demographic attributes or educational needs. For purposes of this task, you are encouraged to focus on different educational needs within a group of students, particularly giving attention to those who are part of federally designated priority student categories. For purposes of this task, the whole group (such as grade or subject area) and the priority subgroup selected for this task will be identified as group(s). The subgroup selected as a focus for this task is termed the target student group.

Next, **collect** additional data and information that justify why the academic area and student group(s) are being selected as priorities, and explain potential causes of or contributing factors to low performance. Your investigation should progress through the inquiry and planning process illustrated in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Task 1 Inquiry and planning process



Consider using the inquiry tools and data use strategies outlined in the [Massachusetts District Data Team Toolkit](#). They provide suggestions on types of data and their use, engaging with others in data inquiry and planning, and using data for vision building and planning.

The following question should guide you in beginning your data collection and analysis:

What area of student learning should be a priority for improvement, and for which group of students?

Begin by reviewing three to five years of available or newly collected student (whole group and subgroup) performance data (from the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System [MCAS], Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers [PARCC], or other standardized measures; grade promotion rates; end-of-course assessments; course completion rates; dropout rates; interim or periodic assessments; AP scores; graduation rates; and college-going rates). In the review process, identify trends and patterns where student progress may be insufficient or in need of targeted improvement. Disaggregate the data to investigate patterns of differences between student subgroups in these trends, with special attention to the federally designated priority student groups (see The PAL Assessment Tasks section). Which subgroup of students needs targeted improvement support or attention and why?

As you **collect and analyze additional data** related to the student learning problem, consider the questions below and types of evidence suggested to guide you through identifying and deepening your understanding about performance in a **priority academic area** for a target student group.

- 1) *What is the relationship between the student group's performance for the **priority academic area** and other student, teacher, and school data, particularly for the target student group?*

To investigate this question, review available student engagement data (e.g., attendance and program participation rates), teacher quality and engagement data (e.g., years of teaching, qualification(s), degrees earned, attendance record, length of time at the school), and school culture data (culture and climate surveys). How does this information help to explain student performance for the **priority academic area**, particularly for the target student group? How does their relationship refine your understanding of the learning problem for the target student group?

- 2) *What is the learning experience for the target student group in the **priority academic area**?*

Through observations in and around the school; classroom visits; informal interviews; and focus groups or surveys with students, teachers, and other stakeholders, you can elicit rich, qualitative information about the target student group’s learning experiences. What can you learn about their experiences that deepens your understanding of their challenges and lack of progress in the priority area?

3) *How do the **priority academic area** and target student group align with school and district priorities?*

Review the district’s and school’s vision and mission statements and existing improvement plans. As you refine your understanding of the **priority academic area**, consider how it relates to the school and district priorities for school improvement.

At the end of this phase, you should have a clearly defined, well-justified **priority academic area** and target student group around which to develop an improvement plan.

[Access Massachusetts school district data collection and analysis tools](#) to assist in examining available qualitative and quantitative information.

As part of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation system, [the Commonwealth requires the use of student and staff feedback surveys](#), which may provide information that is relevant for this task.

Component 2: Prepare

To prepare a plan for improving the target student group's performance in the priority area, **evaluate gaps and opportunities for improvement** by auditing existing school programs, processes, and practices; seeking input from others; and investigating possible improvement strategies. Consider using strategies and resources of the [Massachusetts guide for focused planning for school improvement](#), which include tools for school or district self-assessment of strengths and areas for improvement; steps to explore root causes of learning issues; and means of establishing goals, objectives, and strategic plans.

Below are the recommended preparation steps that you should take for this task:

- 1) Audit school programs, processes, and practices that relate to the **priority academic area** (e.g., scheduling, teaching practices, academic intervention, team time, family participation, professional development opportunities) to identify gaps in effectiveness and opportunities for improvement.
- 2) Solicit further input using surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations from school leaders, teachers, students, family members, and community members to determine the strengths, interests, and needs of all students, and in particular for the targeted student subgroup relative to improving performance for the **priority academic area**.
- 3) Identify what is working well and where improvement is most needed in the components of the school program, such as in one or more of the following:
 - a. **Curriculum** (see [the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks or the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan](#)).
 - b. **Instruction** (see indicators of proficient and exemplary teaching in the [Massachusetts Model System Educator Evaluation: Teacher Rubric](#)).
 - c. **Assessments** (formative and/or summative).
 - d. **School culture** (e.g., student engagement, attendance, grade completion, course taking, and extracurricular activities; discipline practices; use of time, such as scheduling, grouping, and tiered instruction; other school culture and student engagement improvement efforts; and family engagement).
- 4) Explore possible improvement strategies through research and best practices sources and input from stakeholders that may be relevant for the **priority academic**

area and target student group.

Consider the nature of the school improvement planning process that currently exists in the school and what formal reporting is required. Determine how this task might build on, contribute to, or be part of this planning.

Consider school level and community conditions that contribute to the school's existing school improvement or strategic plan.

Component 3: Act

Using the results from Component 2, **design and present a plan** containing an integrated set of strategies that can be implemented to improve student learning in the **priority academic area** for the target student group. The plan should be built around a set of goals and measurable student objectives and a coherent theory of action that explains how implementing the set of strategies will lead to improved student performance. It should reflect the school context and culture as well as the scope and nature of the improvement desired.

A theory of action is an explanatory map of how specific strategies (practices, programs, and/or policies) will improve specific outcomes (in this case, student learning) and why.

The plan should contain the core elements described in the [Massachusetts focused planning guide](#), which provides tools and resources for a planning process and examples of district plans.

Further, it should include avenues to improve student engagement and learning by strengthening one or more of the following:

- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment
- School culture

As you develop your plan, **solicit input and guidance** from the leadership team and other key stakeholders (such as students, teachers, other staff, family members, and community representatives, as appropriate), and document the information they provide, their ideas, and recommendations. Their input should be formative to the planning process and address the scope and nature of the **priority academic area** and

the needs of the target group, the strengths and challenges of existing programs and practices, and the potential for new strategies to improve performance.

The plan itself should be written as a compelling, evidence-based argument about how the proposed strategies will improve learning for the targeted students in the priority area. It should include sufficient detail about the following in order to garner support from the leadership team and key stakeholders:

- A list of goals and measurable student outcome objectives, including the scope and nature of the improvement desired
- A set of action strategies to improve learning in the priority area that change, build on, or add to already existing programs and strategies
- A theory of action about how these strategies will lead to improved student performance and foster student engagement and learning
- Identification of existing resources and new resources required
- Changes in school organization or structure (e.g., common planning time, block scheduling, afterschool and tutorial programs) for the proposed actions
- Roles and lines of responsibility for implementing the strategies
- Steps to engage staff and garner support for the proposed strategies
- A timeline for the development and implementation of the new strategies
- Proposed evaluation and feedback approaches to determine whether these strategies yield the intended outcomes

The school principal or superintendent and the school leadership team should critically review the draft plan and provide feedback to you. Unlike the input previously obtained from them and other stakeholders, this feedback is more summative and should address the plan's relevance, quality, comprehensiveness, and feasibility. Evaluate this feedback and use it to guide your revisions to improve the plan. The final version should be revised based upon the feedback with an explanation of how the feedback was used.

Each school has one or more leaders (principal, assistant principal, and teacher leaders) and may also have a leadership team that represents the school's primary stakeholders. Any plan developed for improvement in the school would need their input and support or approval. These leaders in turn can provide critical feedback to strengthen a proposal for improvement strategies.

Component 4: Assess

As a final step, evaluate the leadership skills and practices you used in this task. Describe the nature of your support from school and district leadership in undertaking this task and how the support contributed to the process and successful completion of the task. Your analysis should include specific examples of those leadership skills and practices and specific examples of what worked well and what could be improved to develop further as an instructional leader.

The leadership evaluation is not a recap of the steps you took to complete this task. It should specifically **address your leadership skills and practices** related to the following aspects of this task:

- Your collection and analysis of data to determine the **priority academic area** and student group(s).
- Your engagement of others in the planning process, including soliciting input during planning.
- Your development of a proposed vision, theory of action, and set of strategies.
- Your planning and construction of a compelling argument to gain support for the proposed action.
- Your presentation of the plan and solicitation of feedback.
- Your use of the feedback to make revisions to improve the plan.

Artifacts, Documents, and Commentary

This section provides instructions about the materials the school leadership candidate needs to submit for the review process:

- Confidentiality and Anonymity Form. An editable version is available within the ePortfolio system. You are required to complete and upload this form for each task.
- Three artifacts.
- Documents that support your artifacts.
- Your commentary in narrative form, in response to a series of prompts, about the development of your leadership skills while completing this task.

Remember: Your artifacts must not include personally identifying information about you, the school staff, or the students. Your submissions must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Be sure to protect the anonymity of the participants in your study by using generic labels (e.g., Principal A, School B, Teacher C)—not aliases, pseudonyms, or first names—for the district, the school, students, staff, and other individuals.

Artifacts

The artifacts that you submit for scoring, each in a separate file, are described below.

The artifacts submitted must represent authentic work completed by candidates and members of the working groups formed for three of the tasks. Listed below are descriptions of the artifacts required for Task 1.

Artifact #1: Priority Area and Its Context

In a **memo** of up to three single-spaced pages (up to 1,500 words) to be written by you to the principal or superintendent, provide the following information:

- A description of a **priority academic area** where improved student performance is desired, with attention to one or more federally designated priority student groups (students with disabilities; English language learners; African American, Hispanic, and Native American students; low-income students; and high-risk students performing below state proficiency levels) or other underperforming groups that have been identified as a priority in your school.

- A compelling rationale, based on the data you collected and analyzed, for selecting the **priority academic area** and the target student group(s). The rationale for selecting the priority area and target student group(s) should draw on quantitative and qualitative data you present in this artifact and be aligned with school and district priorities. Your specific role in the collection and analysis of selected data should be discussed as well as the contributions of any other individuals involved in this process. Draw clear connections between the data analyzed and the selection of a **priority academic area** and target student group(s).
- An analysis of multiple sources of relevant quantitative and qualitative data (with appropriate references for each source) on student performance; student, teacher and school culture; and student engagement evidence that includes:
 - An analysis of three to five years of quantitative academic performance data.
 - An analysis of relevant student engagement data (e.g., attendance and program participation rates) and teacher quality and engagement data (e.g., years of teaching, years in the school, annual turnover, attendance, qualification, degrees earned).
 - An analysis of measures of student and school culture (student, teacher, and other stakeholder culture and climate surveys; focus groups; and interviews).
 - An analysis of additional, relevant quantitative or qualitative data that clarifies possible reasons for the learning problems within the **priority academic area** for the selected student group(s).
- A description of the school and community context and culture factors that influence student performance and engagement, which must be taken into consideration in developing your plan.
- A summary of gaps, utilization problems, and human and other resource limitations of existing school programs, services, and practices in relation to the priority area.
- How input was solicited throughout the planning process:
 - Identification (by role) of which individuals from the leadership team, staff, and other stakeholders provided input during the planning process.
 - A description of how they provided input and the nature of the input in terms of identifying the priority area and target student group, assessing gaps and opportunities for improvement, and recommending improvement strategies.
 - A description of your role in soliciting, analyzing, and utilizing input from a variety of stakeholders.

Note: Synthesize the data used to define your priority academic area and the targeted student group(s). Do not present tables of information without interpreting the data and drawing conclusions about your selection of the priority area and target student group(s) for this task. Use tables of data judiciously to guide and inform readers. Tables may be displayed in the Category 1 or Category 4 documents (as defined below) and referenced in this Artifact. It is acceptable to link to school and district information, but the expectation is that this is your own work, not work already done by the school.

Artifact #2: The Plan for Action Strategies

In a **memo** of up to four single-spaced pages (up to 2,000 words) to be written by you to the superintendent or principal, present a plan (the components of which are detailed below) that outlines a set of goals, objectives, and action strategies to improve learning in the **priority academic area** for the targeted student group(s) and a theory of action describing how these strategies will lead to improved student performance. Provide the following rationales for the plan:

- A vision statement describing how the plan will support and sustain improvement in the **priority academic area** for the student group(s).
- A compelling, evidence-based justification explaining how the plan responds to the school context and student culture, and addresses the needs of the student group(s) to improve student learning.

In addition, include the following components of the plan:

- Goals and measurable student outcome objectives specifying the magnitude and nature of the improvement in student performance that is desired.
- A set of action strategies to improve learning in the priority area, with details about how the strategies will be implemented.
- A theory of action of how these strategies collectively will lead to improved student performance and foster student engagement.
- Existing resources used and new resources required.
- Changes in the school organization or structure (common planning time, block scheduling, afterschool programs, etc.) needed to support the proposed strategies.
- Roles and lines of responsibility for implementing the proposed strategies.
- Steps to engage staff and garner support for the proposed strategies.
- A timeline specifying when the components of the proposed strategies will take

place. Proposed evaluation and feedback processes that will be used to determine whether these strategies yield the intended outcomes.

- Differentiation between your specific contributions to the development of this plan and the contributions of other individuals, group members, and/or relevant stakeholders.

Artifact #3: Findings, Feedback, and Recommendations

In a **report** of up to three single-spaced pages (up to 1,500 words), describe how you **collected feedback** from the school leaders, the leadership team, and other stakeholders about the proposed plan, and **synthesized and interpreted the feedback**. It is critical to collect and describe the feedback beyond a surface level, and to include focused feedback collected in the planning phase as well as after the plan was developed. The report should include the following information:

- Identification (by role) of which individuals from the leadership team, staff, and other stakeholders provided feedback on the proposed plan.
- A synthesis and interpretation of their feedback that includes the following information:
 - How comprehensive the plan is in its focus, theory of action, and proposed strategies for improving the performance of the target student group(s) in the priority area.
 - How relevant the proposed strategies are for the following:
 - The school’s priorities.
 - The **priority academic area**.
 - The identified needs of the specific student group(s).
 - The school culture, climate, and context.
 - Alignment to the district plan.
 - The quality and comprehensiveness of the proposed strategies.
 - The feasibility of the proposed plan for implementation in the school.
 - Suggested revisions based on the feedback.
- An **explanation of how the final plan was revised** to incorporate their feedback.

NOTE: All supporting documents, reports, and tables of data that are referenced in these artifacts must be included in the appropriate Category of documents below and be appropriately cited.

Documents by Category

Documents that must be submitted are supporting materials used by you and the working groups to complete the task. These documents provide supporting evidence pertaining to the task work and are necessary to inform scoring.

In addition to the artifact files described above, you must submit the following documents used in the task, using a separate file for each of these five file categories:

- Category #1: Student demographic and other relevant school context and student performance information.
- Category #2: The school’s existing vision, mission, and school improvement plan.
- Category #3: School and district priorities.
- Category #4: Data collection forms (e.g., surveys, interview guides) used to gather additional information.
- Category #5: Forms (surveys or interview questions) used to collect feedback from the leadership team and other stakeholders about relevance, quality, comprehensiveness, and feasibility of the proposed plan and a summary of the feedback data collected.

Commentary

You must submit a clearly presented and well-focused written commentary that explains how you accomplished the task.

Write a personal commentary of up to two single-spaced pages (up to 1,000 words) on your own learning and leadership development throughout this experience. Avoid simply recapping the steps you took to complete the task and focus on the analysis of your leadership for developing a vision of high quality student achievement and a plan for improving student learning in a **priority academic area**. Base your analysis on the leadership skills you used in developing the plan for Task 1 and in soliciting and using feedback to revise it to improve the performance of the targeted student group(s) in the **priority academic area**. It is critical to include your own learning about your leadership skills and practices. Identify what worked well, what could be improved in your leadership skills and practices, and what adjustments you made to your leadership practices as you worked to complete this task.

The commentary should not be a description of all of the actions you took to complete the task or a reiteration of the work accomplished, which has been covered in other artifacts and documents. Rather, identify and describe the leadership skills you used

over the course of the Task 1 project. Where applicable, provide examples of these leadership skills in action. Be sure to reflect upon the leadership skills you used and describe how your leadership skills developed or changed over the course of the Task 1 project.

Specifically address your leadership skills and practices in response to the following questions about aspects of this task.

- What leadership skills did you use to determine what data to collect and analyze to identify the **priority academic area** and targeted student group(s)? What particular lessons did you learn that shaped your leadership approach?
- What leadership skills did you use to engage others in the process to identify the priority area and student group, develop a theory of action, determine action strategies, and create the plan? Describe any adjustments you made to your leadership practices throughout the task. How did your leadership skills change over time?
- What leadership skills did you use to construct a compelling argument to gain support for the proposed plan and solicit feedback to improve the plan? What problems did you face and what successes did you achieve?
- What leadership skills did you use to gain input and guidance throughout the process and feedback on the draft plan? What would you do differently to increase engagement in the process? Include specific examples of what worked well and how you would improve your leadership skills for the future in developing a vision of high quality student achievement and a plan for improving student learning.
- What feedback did you receive from school leaders and other stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, and/or parents and community members) regarding your leadership during Task 1, and how can you use this feedback to improve your leadership practices moving forward?

Task 1 PAL Evidence Chart

This chart provides a list of all required work products for **PAL Task 1**, as well as a description of supported file types for submission. Your PAL work products must conform to the artifact, document, category, and commentary specifications for each task. Candidates are required to submit all artifacts, commentary, and relevant documents **without any information** that would identify them (e.g., candidate name), their school or district, individual students, staff, and others who were part of task completion.

Note that your evidence cannot contain hyperlinks to required uploads. Any web content you wish to include as part of your evidence must be submitted as a document file, which must conform to the file type requirements listed below.

Please refer directly to the Artifacts, Documents, and Commentary section of Task 1 in this handbook for detailed requirements pertaining to the intent and content requirements of each file.

PAL Task 1 Evidence Chart				
Leadership through a Vision for High Student Achievement				
Part	Work Product / Evidence	Specifications (if identified)	# of Files	Acceptable File Types
Part A	Confidentiality and Anonymity	Template provided	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part B	Artifact #1 - Priority Area and Its Context	Max 3 single-spaced pages (no more than 1,500 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part C	Artifact #2 - The Plan for Action Strategies	Max 4 single-spaced pages (no more than 2,000 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf

PAL Task 1 Evidence Chart				
Leadership through a Vision for High Student Achievement				
Part D	Artifact #3 - Findings, Feedback, and Recommendations	Max 3 single-spaced pages (no more than 1,500 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part E	Category Documents 1) School Context and Demographics 2) School Mission and Improvement Plan 3) School and District Priorities 4) Data Collection Forms 5) Feedback	Separate file(s) for each of these 5 file categories	5	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part F	Commentary	2 single-spaced pages (no more than 1,000 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
The maximum size for any individual file is 500 megabytes (MB). There is no limit on the number of MB uploaded for an entire task. The success of an upload through any application depends heavily on the type of network, the file size, and the network capacity at upload time.				

Note:

Scorers are not required to read artifacts and commentary that either exceed or do not meet the requirements. Submissions that fall far short of the required word length are likely to lack sufficient information and detail, which would adversely affect how the scorers evaluate the work products and thus the candidate’s potential score.

If any submitted materials do not meet the [Submission Requirements](#), a condition code may be applied during the scoring process instead of a numerical score. If a condition code is applied to **any indicator**, the entire task will be unscorable. If your complete submission, or portions thereof, cannot be scored due to failure to meet Submission Requirements, no refund will be issued and no portion of your assessment fee can be

applied to the cost of any future PAL registration or associated services.

Please consult the PAL website at www.ma-pal.nesinc.com to review submission requirements, passing standards, and other policies related to submitting and scoring of PAL Tasks.

Submission Readiness

Scorers will be reviewing your submission to determine if you have complied with the PAL Submission Requirements located at the end of this handbook and [on the Candidates/Policies page](#) of the program website. If your submission does not meet the Submission Requirements, a condition code may be applied during the scoring process instead of a numerical score. If a condition code is applied to any indicator or rubric, the entire task will be unscorable.

Review the [Task 1 Evidence Chart](#) in the Task 1 section of this handbook and on the Candidates/Resources page of the program website to confirm your completion of all required work products and specifications.

Before submitting, have you:

- Appropriately **blinded your submission with all candidate, school, district, staff, and student identifying information removed?**

Candidates are required to submit all artifacts, commentary, and relevant documents without any information that would identify them (e.g., candidate name), their school or district, individual students, staff, and others who were part of task completion. This includes screenshots, identifiable school logos and emblems, web addresses, URLs, and website graphics. Candidates must use generic labels (e.g., Principal A, School B, Teacher C, Teacher D), and **not** aliases, pseudonyms, or first names (e.g., Ms. Smith, Mr. Jones, Sally, Tom).

- Completed and uploaded the Confidentiality and Anonymity Form for this task?

To confirm that the work has been appropriately blinded, candidates must submit a completed Confidentiality and Anonymity Form with each task submission, in which they confirm that they have **removed all personally identifying information (e.g., candidate name) and the names of their school, district, staff, and others.**

The editable Confidentiality and Anonymity Form is provided within the ePortfolio system. Candidates are required to **check the boxes** and upload this

form for each task.

- Addressed a **priority academic area** for the school?

A **priority academic area** is an area in which improved student performance is desired, with input from staff at the school and district level, and with attention to federally designated priority student groups or other groups that are a priority in the school.

- Cited supporting documents?

Candidates are to cite supporting documents, submitted for each task, in the relevant artifacts for the same task.

Is the submission complete in that it contains all supporting documents in each category? Hyperlinks provided in lieu of required uploads are not permissible.

- Clarified your role?

Candidates must **explain their role** in completing the tasks to ensure authenticity of work being submitted.

In addition, you must describe any and all points of collaboration with any other individual(s), include the rationale or purpose of the collaboration, and clearly state your role in the collaboration and the role(s) of your collaborators. Have you provided appropriate attribution(s), so that scorers are able to differentiate your original work from the work of others?

- Demonstrated feedback collection and use of feedback evidence?

Throughout the four tasks, candidates are asked to collect, analyze, and use feedback on plans, strategies, and collaborative work. In written submissions and supporting documents, candidates must demonstrate that feedback was collected; report on the number and roles of people interviewed, surveyed, or consulted; present analyses; and draw conclusions about the feedback. It is insufficient to present only the candidate's conclusions about feedback received.

- Proofread all documents?

Candidates are to proofread all documents before uploading to:

- Remove all names of the **candidate, school, district, staff, and student identifying information.**

- Correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Candidates are strongly encouraged to compare each artifact against the instructions and rubrics before submission to ensure relevance and completeness.

After uploading into the ePortfolio system and before submitting, candidates are required to check their work to ensure that they do not upload duplicate artifacts and documents or blank files, and that every file can be opened without error.

- Prepared all documents by category?

Submitted documents should be specific to the task and discussed and referenced in the relevant artifact(s). Complete school report cards, school improvement plans, and school handbooks should not be uploaded as documents. Only relevant tables of information or plan and handbook excerpts should be uploaded as category documents and discussed and referenced in the appropriate artifacts.

Documents must be legible. Handwritten agendas and minutes, for example, must be readable.

- Included an analysis of your leadership skills in the commentary?

The analysis of the candidate's leadership skills should be emphasized, regardless of whether the candidate feels the work on each task was successful. Include a description of how challenges were approached. Candidates should describe in detail, with specific examples, their leadership role throughout this task. Candidates should reflect on their leadership strengths and areas for growth, taking into consideration feedback gathered from relevant stakeholders.

- Reviewed the rubrics for this task?

Read the descriptions of each rubric in the next section. The rubrics will be used to score candidates' work. Before submitting, candidates are strongly encouraged to evaluate their work using the rubrics.

Task 1: Leadership through a Vision for High Student Achievement Rubrics

How Will the Evidence of Your Leadership Practice Be Assessed?

As you prepare your artifacts and commentary, use the following rubrics to guide your thinking, planning, action, analysis, and presentation.

Rubric 1.a: Investigate and Prepare a Vision

MA Standard 1. Instructional Leadership: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes effective teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

How does the candidate gather and analyze data to identify a priority academic area and targeted student group?

The primary sources of evidence for Rubric 1.a are Artifact 1, Category Documents, and Commentary.

In addition to these primary sources, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
1.a.1: Data collection	<p>Collects data on just one data element.</p> <p>Limits data collection to only one or two years.</p> <p>Does not collect information for one or more student subgroups or designate a target student group.</p>	<p>Collects data on two or more elements.</p> <p>Makes a weak connection between the selection of the priority academic area and the data collected.</p> <p>Collects data for at least one quantitative and at least one qualitative element.</p> <p>Collects two or more years of data for at least one element.</p> <p>Collects data for at least one student subgroup and designates a target student group.</p> <p>Collects little or no data that clarify the target</p>	<p>Collects data on three or more elements.</p> <p>Makes a clear connection between the selection of the priority academic area and the data collected.</p> <p>Collects data for at least two quantitative or at least two qualitative elements.</p> <p>Collects three or more years of data for at least one data element.</p> <p>Collects data for two or more student subgroups and designates a target student group.</p> <p>Collects some relevant data from teachers and/or students about</p>	<p>Collects data on three or more elements. Generates a hypothesis about the underperformance of the student subgroups in a priority area to guide data collection.</p> <p>Collects data for at least two quantitative AND at least two qualitative elements.</p> <p>Collects three or more years of data for at least one data element.</p> <p>Collects data for two or more student subgroups and designates at least one target student group.</p> <p>Collects relevant data from</p>

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
		student group’s learning problems in the priority academic area .	performance and/or student culture that help to clarify some reasons for the target student group’s learning problems.	stakeholders (students, teachers, etc.) that clarify the reasons for the target student group’s learning problems.
1.a.2: Data analysis and priority definition	Provides little or no analysis except to state the priority area or student group. Presents some data, with little to no connection to the priority academic area or target student group.	Presents some analysis of the data collected, with a weak connection to the identified priority academic area and target student group.	Presents a comprehensive analysis of data collected with a clear connection to identify the priority academic area and target student group. Connects the data analysis and identification of the priority area and target student group to school and district goals.	Analyzes, integrates, and interprets relevant data elements across multiple years to identify the priority academic area and target student group. Generates a defensible hypothesis about how to improve student performance in a priority area, based on the data collected and analyzed. Makes a clear connection to existing school and district goals.
1.a.3: Evaluation of existing policies, practices and programs	Does not consider existing policies, practices and programs in describing the priority area and student needs.	Identifies some existing policies, practices and programs, with limited connection to the priority academic area and student needs.	Evaluates relevant existing policies, practices and programs and identifies their strengths and challenges in relation to the priority area and student needs.	Evaluates relevant existing policies, practices and programs and generates a hypothesis about how changes in them could lead to improved student performance in the priority area.

Rubric 1.b: Design an Integrated Plan for Strategies to Develop and Implement Improvement in the Priority Academic Area

MA Standard 1. Instructional Leadership: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes effective teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

MA Standard 2. Management and Operations: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

How does the candidate design a vision and plan to improve student learning?

The primary sources of evidence for Rubric 1.b are Artifact 2 and Commentary.

In addition to these primary sources, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
1.b.1: Vision plan and focus	<p>Presents no vision.</p> <p>Proposes one general goal with no outcome-based objectives.</p> <p>Generally describes an area of focus.</p> <p>Does not reflect the school context or school culture in the plan.</p>	<p>Presents a weakly articulated vision.</p> <p>Identifies at least one well-defined goal with specific student performance objectives.</p> <p>Creates a plan focus that generally reflects the analyzed data, school context, and school culture.</p>	<p>Presents a vision, well-defined goal(s), and specific student performance objectives.</p> <p>Makes clear connections between the data analysis and the vision, goals and objectives, and a plan focus that reflects school context and culture.</p>	<p>Presents a coherent and compelling vision, with well-defined measurement-based goals and objectives.</p> <p>Draws on the findings from the data analysis and explains how school context and culture are related to the vision, goals, and priorities.</p> <p>Presents a clearly articulated theory of action that relates the vision,</p>

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
				goals and objectives, and plan focus. Takes into account the gaps and opportunities in existing school policies and practices in stating the vision, goals, objectives, and plan focus.
1.b.2: Solicitation of input from teachers and other stakeholders	Solicits no input from key stakeholders at any time during the planning process.	Solicits some input from some stakeholders that minimally helps to inform the selection of strategies to improve student performance.	Solicits input and guidance from relevant stakeholders that directly informs the selection of strategies to improve student performance.	Solicits strategic input and guidance from relevant stakeholders that informs the selection of plan strategies and their implementation details.
1.b.3: Plan details	Identifies one or two strategies without sufficient details to implement. Makes no connection between the strategies and the desired student performance.	Describes one or two strategies, along with responsibilities and resources, and some implementation details. Makes limited connections between the plan strategies and how they will improve on the quality of learning that is already taking place. Makes little connection to the school context and culture.	Describes two or more relevant strategies, along with specific details about the responsibilities and resources required to implement them. Explains how the strategies relate to accomplish specific proposed student outcomes. Aligns the plan to school context and culture.	Describes two or more strategies with extensive details about the responsibilities and resources required to implement them. Makes clear and coherent connections between the analysis of the data, school culture, and how the plan’s strategies relate to improve student performance. Aligns the plan to school context and student culture and provides clear evidence of feasibility.

Rubric 1.c: Assess and Analyze Feedback from Participants

MA Standard 1. Instructional Leadership: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes effective teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

MA Standard 4: Professional Culture: Promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

How does the candidate use feedback in analyzing and planning for the priority academic area?

The primary sources of evidence for Rubric 1.c are Artifact 3 and Commentary.

In addition to these primary sources, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
1.c.1: Plan feedback	<p>Provides no evidence of collecting feedback on the plan.</p> <p>Provides no evidence of plan revision.</p>	<p>Attempts to collect some school leaders’ feedback, but provides minimal documentation in discussing the feedback.</p> <p>Collects feedback that is minimally related to the plan’s quality or relevance for improving student learning in the priority area.</p> <p>Shows little or no evidence of soliciting feedback to improve the plan that could lead to revisions.</p>	<p>Collects, analyzes, and interprets specific feedback from school leaders on the quality and relevance of the plan for improving student performance in the priority area.</p> <p>Solicits some input or feedback from other stakeholders.</p> <p>Shows how leaders’ feedback was used to shape the final plan.</p>	<p>Collects, analyzes, and interprets detailed feedback from school leaders and other stakeholders on the quality and relevance of the plan for improving student performance in the priority area.</p> <p>Provides detailed evidence on how feedback was used to make specific revisions to the plan.</p>

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
1.c.2: Assessment of leadership skills and practices	Discusses leadership in general, if at all, and with little attention to this task.	Conducts a general analysis of some leadership skills and practices used in completing this task, without drawing on specific experiences. Recaps the steps taken in completing the task with little evaluation of his or her leadership skills.	Evaluates relevant leadership skills and practices needed to complete this task by drawing on specific experiences. Identifies what worked well and what he or she could have done differently. Identifies changes that could be made to improve his or her leadership skills in the future.	Evaluates relevant leadership skills and practices needed to complete this task, based on experiences, and describes how he or she adjusted leadership practices throughout the task. Solicited feedback on his or her leadership skills from stakeholders involved in this task. Identifies what worked well and what he or she could have done differently and proposes specific steps to improve his or her practice.

Task 2

Instructional Leadership for a Professional Learning Culture

What Do School Leaders Need to Think about When Creating a Professional Learning Culture through Professional Learning Groups?

Task 2 requires school leadership candidates to demonstrate how to foster school improvement by developing and supporting groups of teachers as professional learning groups. A candidate works with one small group of teachers as an ongoing learning group or community of practice by engaging in structured learning activities to improve the practice of its members with the goal of improving student performance in a student **priority academic area**. A **priority academic area** is an area in which improved student performance is desired based on input from staff at the school and district level, and with attention to federally designated priority student groups or other groups that are a priority in the school. Candidates are required to provide evidence that demonstrates the chosen subject or academic performance area and target student group are priorities. As an example, a candidate might designate 4th grade ELA close-reading skills for ELL students as a Task 2 priority academic area after carefully analyzing ELA MCAS data, as well as 4th grade first term common assessment data and school and district improvement plans, and consulting with the 4th grade PLC teachers. The following are not acceptable priority academic areas because they are not sufficiently focused on specific student learning performance and subject area: attendance, absenteeism, **discipline or behavioral issues**, graduation or **retention** rates, or AP enrollment. While these concerns may be a secondary issue related to a priority academic area, they cannot be the primary focus creating a professional learning culture. The group, facilitated by the candidate, defines a focus area for study and selects a new curriculum, instructional approach, assessment procedure, or student engagement strategy to try out individually and then shares the results collectively to improve each other's practice.

Task 2 assesses your capacity to create and facilitate a professional learning culture among a small group of teachers over time. Your aim as facilitator is to promote professional group learning norms and practices; teacher learning; and effective curriculum, instruction, and/or assessments. Using structured group building³ and group process activities, you will prepare, facilitate, support, and assess the group's learning

³ Also known as *team building*.

and individual teacher learning.

This is not intended to be specific professional development for a group of teachers where the group is a passive recipient of information regarding a pre-determined topic. Rather, the candidate should foster and facilitate an ongoing professional learning group by actively engaging selected teachers in a collaborative process to determine and/or investigate a student **priority academic area** and a common instructional focus designed to improve student learning in the selected **priority academic area**.

Your work on this task should directly relate to the [Massachusetts Professional Standards and Indicators for Administrative Leadership](#). You can draw on [Massachusetts’s recommended guidelines for school and district team data use and inquiry](#).

Schools have three interrelated cultures: professional culture, student culture, and the culture of family engagement and community involvement. This task focuses on developing a learning orientation within the school’s professional culture to improve student learning.

Consider the school’s professional culture with respect to groups and group processes. Schools use different approaches to structure and support teachers’ work in groups. Some approaches are based on divisions within the school, with groups formed within departments or within grade levels, while other approaches are ad hoc or informal. Some staff are trained in norms and practices and are supported as a collective learning community, while others do not receive training at all on how to be part of a professional learning community or community of practice.

The nature of the school’s professional learning culture with respect to the use of groups to increase each teacher’s learning will bear on how new or existing groups of teachers (and other staff) work on improving their instructional practice in the priority area.

What Do You Need to Do to Complete This Task?

- Select a student **priority academic area** for improvement and begin to organize a group of interested teachers for collective learning.
- Document relevant school context information, including the school and district goals and vision, and the policies and structures (such as meeting time, space, and resources) that support professional learning.
- Describe any existing types of teacher or staff groups, their membership, and how

they are used in the school. Consider the nature of the current school culture for teacher groups, and for group-based professional learning, and how it would shape your group work.

- Identify and invite teachers to be members of a professional learning group related to the student **priority academic area** and provide a rationale for their inclusion. If assigned a group, explain how the group is to be engaged specifically around the **priority academic area** and a focus for instructional improvement.
- Work with this group to identify an area of focus within the **priority academic area** for group learning and improving practice, and to develop a plan for how to work together over time.
- Facilitate group learning activities over time.
- Collect evidence of the group members' roles in selecting the student learning focus within the **priority academic area** and of their learning activities; and information about curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices or engagement strategies. Based on the collection of evidence, develop a plan to pilot a new or improved practice.
- Support individual teachers as they try out new practices or take steps to improve existing instructional practices and share their experiences with the group.
- Collect evidence on new or improved practices that group members implement (individually or collectively) and analyze their initial impact on student performance (e.g., student behavior, student work samples and student feedback).
- Analyze the professional learning that group members engage in and collect feedback on their perceived effectiveness, individual and group learning, and improvement of practice, and on their evaluation of your facilitation and support.

What Do You Need to Consider to Complete This Task?

- What is a **priority academic area** where professional learning is needed to improve the instructional practice skills of a group of teachers or other staff for better student learning?
- What is the current school culture for teacher groups and for group-based professional learning?
- In what way will you identify the teachers (or other staff) to participate in this task as a group? Can you accomplish this task with an existing group or a subset of an existing group that may be able to sustain the work after completing it? How will you engage them in this work?
- Within the priority area (such as the area identified in Task 1), what do you envision

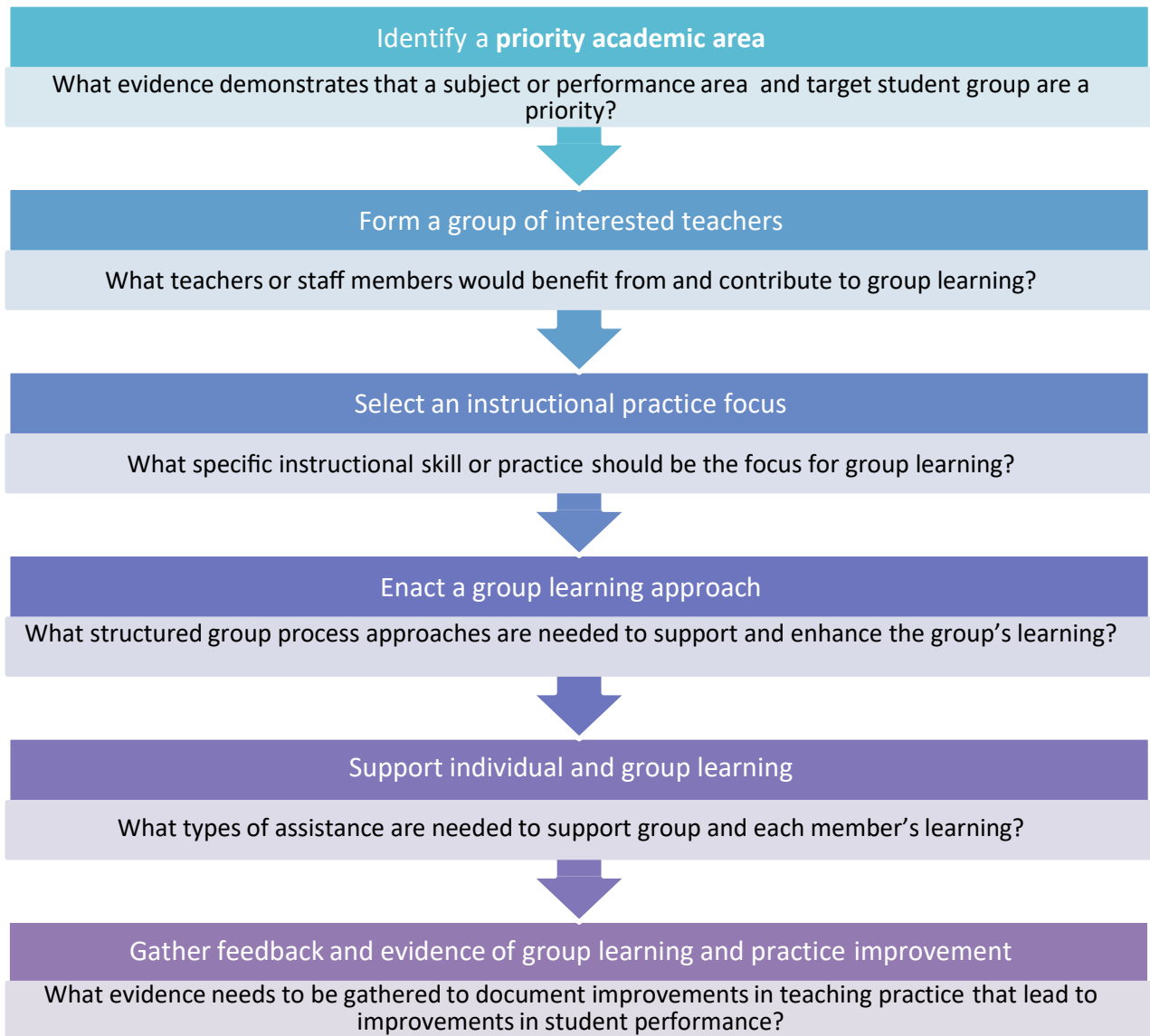
as the focus of the group’s professional learning and how does it relate to school and district priorities?

- What research-based group learning activities should you use to foster group learning? How will you support the group’s learning?
- What instructional practices can the group pilot or improve, as they engage in the task? How does the group learn about these practices and prepare to try them? How will these changes in instructional practice improve learning for all students?
- What evidence of implementation and the initial impact on student performance is needed to assess the benefits of this professional learning experience for the group of teachers (and other staff)?

The Components of the Task

The four component steps of this task require working with a group of teachers and other staff to address a student **priority academic area**, through a group professional learning cycle as shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Task 2 Group professional learning cycle



Component 1: Investigate

Select a student **priority academic area** for this task by identifying a student performance problem or need. This area—which should relate to school and district priorities, planning, and goals and take account of existing student group performance differences—can be the same priority area selected for Task 1.

Next, identify the nature of existing teacher groups (grade level, department, content area, special interest, or other) in the school community.

With input from one or more school and teacher leaders, select a group of two to five teachers (teaching a common grade or content area) with which to improve instructional practice for better student learning in the **priority academic area**. This group can be the whole or part of an existing group or newly formed. Determine the members' strengths, interests, and needs related to the student **priority academic area**, and assess their related prior knowledge and skills, their norms and expectations for group learning, and relevant school and student cultural influences.

Arrange a meeting time (during or outside the school day) and schedule for a series of meetings to foster the professional learning of the group over time.

Finally, as part of getting started, determine together which group learning approach to use (such as a professional learning community, community of practice, collaborative action research, or other action-oriented learning approach). Develop a plan for how the group will work together, share responsibilities, manage agendas and minutes, and use protocols to facilitate inquiry and learning.

A student priority academic area should be based on student performance indicators for one or more student groups. A priority student group can be defined as one or more of the federally designated priority student groups (students with disabilities; English language learners; African American, Hispanic, and Native American students; low-income students; and students performing below state proficiency levels) or other groups that are a priority in your school.

Teachers can improve student learning by focusing on and strengthening one or more of the following instructional practices: their instructional content knowledge, their pedagogical practices, their understanding of student development and learning, and the integration of the relationship among these critical instructional components into their practice.

Consider school-level conditions that hinder or foster opportunities for teachers to work together on curriculum, instruction, and assessment; ways to establish a common planning time for this task; and how frequently the group can meet.

Component 2: Prepare

Through a series of structured group meetings, help the members narrow their focus to a specific student performance priority. This process includes setting regular meeting times, having agendas and keeping minutes, assigning roles and responsibilities in the group learning process, and using protocols and tools to facilitate inquiry and learning.

Next, help the group identify a meaningful professional learning goal. The goal should be designed around improving course content, instruction, or classroom practice and should lead to improved student learning. Further, it should include objectives for group learning and for steps that each teacher takes to improve his or her practice to improve student learning. The goal should include objectives for collaboratively sharing instructional practices and learning from each other, through monitoring and collecting feedback on the effects of trying new or improved instructional practices, particularly to support students with different instructional or learning needs.

As an extension of these objectives, identify the key ideas that the group members are developing and instructional improvement strategies they are trying, relating them to the school context and desired outcomes.

Finally, determine what resources and supports the group members need to foster learning during meetings, try out new instructional practices in each of their classrooms, and monitor their improvements and document their benefits for student learning.

Consider the group members' individual and collective strengths, interests, and needs in relation to the priority area, drawing on relevant professional learning and adult development theory and research.

Consider a professional learning goal that enables group members to give constructive feedback to each other and take the initiative in trying out new instructional practices for the priority area.

Component 3: Act

In the group meetings, facilitate the group members as they work to improve their instructional practice (and thus student learning) in their classrooms. It is expected that such group learning would require at least three meetings over time.

Use a group learning process consisting of preparing, acting, and assessing. Direct the group's learning toward implementing a new instructional practice or improving on an existing practice to increase student learning in the focus area, such as the following:

- A new or revised curricular unit (such as a unit related to [the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](#)).
- A new or improved instructional practice (such as performance-based learning or literacy instruction embedded within a subject-matter curriculum).
- A new or improved assessment practice (such as formative and interim assessments aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks or a performance assessment).
- New or improved strategies to improve student engagement through more effective differentiated instruction and support for positive student behavior that lead to improved student learning.

Your role as facilitator and support provider, which is critical to the group learning process, includes the following:

- Convening regular meetings for teachers to prepare, implement, and assess their work.
- Maintaining agendas and minutes.
- Coaching the group process, using learning protocols and tools, and reinforcing appropriate norms for group learning.
- Facilitating group learning through the full inquiry cycle (plan, act, monitor and assess, draw conclusions and implications).
- Facilitating problem solving.
- Documenting implementation experiences and learning and work of the group.
- Assisting in implementing and assessing new instructional strategies.
- Providing support to individual teachers as they try out or work to improve their instructional practices.
- Maintaining the group's focus and energy.
- Assessing progress, change, and impact, including evaluating the members' capacity to learn as a group.

Consider which aspects of changing practice are, or may be, the most difficult for teachers to accomplish; determine how to engage both the group as a whole and individual members, particularly the teachers who support struggling, disengaged, or gifted and talented students.

Component 4: Assess

Assess whether and how the instructional practices of the participating teachers improve through the group learning process and their individual learning efforts. Describe your own and the members' roles in the group learning and improvement process.

Document the implementation of new or changed practices. Through a feedback form or group discussion, ask the members to comment on and evaluate the group learning process, the quality of the professional guidance and support they received from each other and from you, and what they believe changed in their knowledge and skills as a result of the learning activities and tryout work. The focus should be on what the teachers learned about their own instructional practice, the changes they adopted or used, and what they learned from these.

Where possible, solicit teacher feedback on how changes in their practices impacted the focus area for student learning and their evidence of the impact, benefits, and challenges.

Consider how the group's professional learning activities enhance each member's professional growth and development related to improving instructional practices for better student performance. How can the members sustain their work individually or within the group and use their learning process as a foundation to build group and school capacity?

Analyze what you learned from the group building and group learning experiences and solicit feedback from the teachers about your facilitation skills. Draw on theory, research, and best practices in leadership development, professional group building, and group learning, and on the role of interpersonal skills in group facilitation.

Finally, identify problems and successes in facilitating group building and learning, including how you enabled teachers to take greater responsibility in initiating change. As you develop a detailed analysis of leadership skills used to complete this Task, include specific examples of those leadership skills and specific examples of what worked well and what could be improved. Focus your analysis on the steps you took to assemble

your team, identify a **priority academic area** and focus, promote a positive and productive group learning environment, and provide support to the group as well as individual members. Avoid simply recapping the steps you took to complete the Task and focus on the **analysis of your leadership** in completing the Task. Draw implications from this work for improving your own group building and group learning facilitation skills for the future.

Artifacts, Documents, and Commentary

This section provides instructions for school leadership candidate submissions for the review process:

- Confidentiality and Anonymity Form. An editable version is available within the ePortfolio system. You are required to complete and upload this form for each task.
- Your three artifacts.
- Documents that support your artifacts.
- Your commentary in narrative form in response to a series of prompts about the development of your leadership skills while completing this task.

Artifacts

The artifacts that you submit for scoring, each in a separate file, are described below.

The artifacts submitted must represent authentic work completed by candidates and members of the working groups formed for three of the tasks. Listed below are descriptions of the artifacts required for Task 2.

Artifact #1: Description of the Priority Area and the Group

In a **memo** of up to two single-spaced pages (up to 1,000 words) written by you to the principal or superintendent, explain the academic priority focus area and the group of teachers that will address it. Include the following specifically:

- A description of a student priority academic area for group learning and the focus within this area that the group selected for its learning together. Explain how the group decided on its area of focus or shared work and how you facilitated the group's decision to narrow its focus within the priority area for student learning. Candidates should also include how and what input was received from the school's administrative team. Explain your use of data and how you considered competing priorities and demands. As part of this task, include the following information:
 - An analysis and interpretation of student demographic, academic performance, and other relevant data on the importance of this student priority area, with reference sources provided as appropriate.

- An explanation of the focus of the improvement work for the group of teachers (i.e., curriculum, instruction, assessment) as a means of addressing a specific **priority academic area**.
- A brief explanation of the relationship between the focus and the school or district priorities and practices.
- An explanation of how school context and student, teacher, and school culture influence the focus within the **priority academic area** and are being addressed through the professional learning process.

Note: Synthesize the data used to define your priority academic area for improving student performance and the focus your group selected. Do not present tables of information without interpretation and conclusions about the focus used for this task. Use tables of data judiciously to guide and inform readers.

- A description of the group selected for this task that includes a list of the members (by role, not name), and the reasons for the inclusion of each.
- Placement of this proposed group within the school context by including the following information:
 - An analysis of the role that group learning currently plays in the school's teacher and student culture, as an active part of school improvement efforts.
 - Identification of the types of groups that already exist in the school.
 - Information on recent formal training on professional learning communities, group building, or group process, and the nature of this training.
 - An explanation of how you obtained group members' commitment to participate, including their reasons for doing so.
 - A description of your role in facilitating the group formation and focus selection.

Artifact #2: Description of the Group Learning Experiences and Results

In a **report** of up to five single-spaced pages (up to 2,500 words) written by you to the principal or superintendent, provide a summary of what the group did over the course of its meetings. Specifically, include the following information:

- An explanation of how you supported the group's work over time, including how you garnered and structured time and resources to support the group's work that includes the following information:
 - How you secured and scheduled meeting time.
 - How you secured support to enable group work.

- How you secured other, non-staff resources to support group work or pilot new strategies.
- How you differentiated support for teachers over time.
- An explanation of how you engaged teachers in a group learning process in order to enable them to improve their own practice in a manner that will positively influence student learning in the identified **priority academic area**. Include the following elements:
 - A justification of how the selected research-based adult learning approach(es) supported group learning.
 - An explanation of how the approach will facilitate changes in practices for the focus area and lead to improved student learning in the **priority academic area**.
 - An explanation of how the group learning approach is situated within the school's professional learning culture, history, and context.
- A description of the group learning norms that were created and sustained to support how the members worked together.
- A brief explanation of the nature of the group's learning and how the learning was structured that includes the following:
 - The schedule of meetings and a summary of the steps the group took to conduct its work.
 - A description of how protocols or other resources were used to support group learning during and between meetings.
 - A description of your role in facilitating the group process and how group members shared responsibilities.
 - A description of how you monitored the effectiveness of the group's implementation of the intervention.
 - A description of how you supported the collective work of the group as well as differentiated support for individual group members over time.
 - Evidence of what the teachers have learned individually and collectively and how it connects to the focus area.
- A description of how you supported individuals within the group over time and the different types of support offered. Include:
 - What different or extra supports were needed for individual group members and why.
 - How you differentiated support for individual group members over time.

- How successful you were in differentiating support for individual teachers.
- A summary of the work that the group did to foster learning in the focus area, and of the group’s experiences in supporting each other’s learning, including:
 - The ideas discussed during regular meetings and the learning activities.
 - A description of new content or practices teachers were trying out between meetings.
 - A description of how the work relates to the focus within the student priority area and has been relevant for group members.
- A description of the challenges and problems, including conflicts and member differences, that arose and how you and the group resolved them.

Artifact #3. Findings, Feedback, and Recommendations

In a **memo** of up to three single-spaced pages (up to 1,500 words) written by you to the principal or superintendent, provide an analysis of the group members’ feedback on group learning, group task accomplishment(s), the groups’ receptivity for collaborative professional inquiry, and your facilitation role. Also provide evidence of the benefits of the work for improving teaching practice and student learning. Specifically, include the following information:

- A summary identifying which group members (by role) provided feedback and how it was collected.
- An analysis and interpretation of group or group members’ feedback that you collected about the following aspects of the task, including a list of the individuals (by role, not name) who provided feedback and a brief description of how you obtained feedback:
 - Their experiences learning together as a group over time.
 - Your group facilitation and support skills.
 - Evidence of what group members learned individually as well as collectively.
 - How differentiated feedback is connected to the **priority academic area**.
 - How the work addressed the selected focus within the **priority academic area**, and what group members tried out and learned individually and collectively.
 - The group’s accomplishments, challenges, and implications for improving group members’ teaching practices.
 - How group member disagreements or conflicts were addressed and how members learned to work to resolve differences.
 - Preliminary evidence of how group members’ work together is impacting student learning in the **priority academic area**.

- The potential and recommendation for sustaining the group and/or use of groups, the group’s receptivity for collaborative professional inquiry generally, and changes in instructional practice.
- Recommendations for sustaining the group or use of groups to foster a professional learning culture in the school to improve student learning.

NOTE: All supporting documents, reports, and tables of data that are referenced in these artifacts must be included in the appropriate category of documents below and be appropriately cited.

Documents by Category

First, you must complete the Confidentiality and Anonymity Form for each task and upload it as you submit your work products for Task 2. An editable version is available within the ePortfolio system. Candidates are required to complete and upload this form for each task.

Documents that must be submitted are supporting materials used by you and the working groups to complete the task. These documents provide supporting evidence pertaining to the task work and are necessary to inform scoring.

In addition to the artifact files described above, submit the following documents used in the task, using a separate file for each of these six categories:

- **Category #1:** Background data and other information that defines the **priority academic area** and focus selected.
- **Category #2:** A list of teacher or other staff groups existing in the school.
- **Category #3:** A list of the group building and discussion group protocols you used to facilitate your group.
- **Category #4:** The agendas and minutes for all the group meetings.
- **Category #5:** Other materials that are relevant to the work that the group undertook, such as references for readings used in group meetings or samples of student work that were examined.
- **Category #6:** The group learning feedback form and summary findings.

Commentary

You must submit a clearly presented and well-focused written commentary that explains how you accomplished the task.

Write a **personal commentary** of up to two single-spaced pages (up to 1,000 words) on your own learning and leadership development through this experience. Avoid simply recapping the steps you took to complete the task and focus on the analysis of your leadership for improving your own group building and group learning facilitation skills for the future. Base your analysis on the activities and on the feedback received from group members about your leadership and how it influenced their professional learning. It is critical to include your own learning about your leadership and ability to foster group learning.

The commentary should not be a description of all of the actions you took to complete the task or a reiteration of the work accomplished, which has been covered in other artifacts and documents. Rather, identify and describe the leadership skills you used over the course of the Task 2 project. Where applicable, provide examples of these leadership skills in action. Be sure to reflect upon the leadership skills you used and describe how your leadership skills developed or changed over the course of the Task 2 project.

Specifically address your leadership skills and practices in response to the following questions about aspects of this task.

- What leadership skills did you use to build a professional learning community? What particular lessons did you learn that shaped your leadership approach?
- Describe any adjustments you made to your leadership practices throughout the task. How did your leadership skills change over time? Describe any adjustments you will make to your leadership practices in the future.
- In what ways did you help the group members make progress in improving instructional practice for the designated focus area?
- What problems did you face and what successes did you achieve in facilitating group building and group learning? How did you handle conflict or group member differences? How did you enable teachers to take greater responsibility in initiating learning and change? How did you promote sustainability? What lessons have you learned to improve your ability to facilitate group learning in the future?
- What would you do differently to improve group effectiveness? Why would you take these new steps? Include specific examples of what worked well and how you would improve your leadership skills in facilitating a group learning process for the future.

- Identify your successes and challenges as a leader in completing Task 2. Explain what you would have done differently, based on your experiences. Identify the implications for your future school leadership work, including acknowledgement of your strengths and areas for growth and proposing what skills and practices you need to improve to develop further as a school leader.
- What feedback did you receive from PLC group members, school leaders and other stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers or administrators outside of the working group, and/or parents and community members) regarding your leadership during Task 2, and how can you use this feedback to improve your leadership practices moving forward?

Task 2 PAL Evidence Chart

This chart provides a list of all required work products for PAL Task 2, as well as a description of supported file types for submission. Your PAL work products must conform to the artifact, document, category, and commentary specifications for each task. Candidates are required to submit all artifacts, commentary, and relevant documents without any information that would identify them (e.g., candidate name), their school or district, individual students, staff, and others who were part of task completion.

Note that your evidence cannot contain hyperlinks to required uploads. Any web content you wish to include as part of your evidence must be submitted as a document file, which must conform to the file type requirements listed below.

Please refer directly to the Artifacts, Documents, and Commentary section of Task 2 in this handbook for detailed requirements pertaining to the intent and content requirements of each file.

PAL Task 2 Evidence Chart				
Instructional Leadership for a Professional Learning Culture				
Part	Work Product / Evidence	Specifications (if required)	# of Files	Acceptable File Types
Part A	Confidentiality and Anonymity	Template provided	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part B	Artifact #1 - Description of the Priority Area and the Group	Max 2 single-spaced pages (no more than 1,000 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part C	Artifact #2 - Description of the Group Learning Experiences and Results	Max 5 single-spaced pages (no more than 2,500 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf

PAL Task 2 Evidence Chart				
Instructional Leadership for a Professional Learning Culture				
Part D	Artifact #3 - Findings, Feedback, and Recommendations	Max 3 single-spaced pages (no more than 1,500 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part E	Category Documents 6) Background Data 7) Teacher List 8) Protocols 9) Agenda and Minutes 10) Other Materials 11) Feedback and Summary	Separate file(s) for each of these 6 file categories	6	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part F	Commentary	Max 2 single-spaced pages (no more than 1,000 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
The maximum size for any individual file is 500 megabytes (MB). There is no limit on the number of MB uploaded for an entire task. The success of an upload through any application depends heavily on the type of network, the file size, and the network capacity at upload time.				

Note:

Scorers are not required to read artifacts and commentary that either exceed or do not meet the requirements. Submissions that fall far short of the required word length are likely to lack sufficient information and detail, which would adversely affect how the scorers evaluate the work products and thus the candidate’s potential score.

If any submitted materials do not meet the [Submission Requirements](#), a condition code may be applied during the scoring process instead of a numerical score. If a condition code is applied to **any indicator**, the entire task will be unscorable. If your complete submission, or portions thereof, cannot be scored due to failure to meet Submission

Requirements, no refund will be issued and no portion of your assessment fee can be applied to the cost of any future PAL registration or associated services.

Please consult the PAL website at www.ma-pal.nesinc.com to review submission requirements, passing standards, and other policies related to submitting and scoring of PAL Tasks.

Submission Readiness

Scorers will be reviewing your submission to determine if you have complied with the PAL Submission Requirements located at the end of this handbook and [on the Candidates/Policies page](#) of the program website and included in this handbook. If your submission does not meet the Submission Requirements, a condition code may be applied during the scoring process instead of a numerical score. If a condition code is applied to any indicator or rubric, the entire task will be unscorable.

Review the [Task 2 Evidence Chart](#) located in the Task 2 section of this handbook and on the Candidates/Resources page of the program website to confirm your completion of all required work products and specifications.

Before submitting, have you:

- Appropriately **blinded your submission with all candidate, school, district, staff, and student identifying information removed?**

Candidates are required to submit all artifacts, commentary, and relevant documents without any information that would identify them (e.g., candidate name), their school or district, individual students, staff, and others who were part of task completion. This includes screenshots, identifiable school logos and emblems, web addresses, URLs, and website graphics. Candidates must use generic labels (e.g., Principal A, School B, Teacher C, Teacher D), and **not** aliases, pseudonyms, or first names (e.g., Ms. Smith, Mr. Jones, Sally, Tom).

- Completed and uploaded the Confidentiality and Anonymity Form for this task?

To confirm that the work has been appropriately blinded, candidates must submit a completed Confidentiality and Anonymity Form with each task submission, in which they confirm that they have **removed all personally identifying information and the names of their school, district, staff, and others.**

The editable Confidentiality and Anonymity Form is provided within the ePortfolio system. Candidates are required to **check the boxes** and upload this

form for each task.

- Addressed a **priority academic area** for the school?

A **priority academic area** is an area in which improved student performance is desired, with input from staff at the school and district level, and with attention to federally designated priority student groups or other groups that are a priority in the school.

- Cited supporting documents?

Candidates are to cite supporting documents, submitted for each task, in the relevant artifacts for the same task.

Is the submission complete in that it contains all supporting documents in each category? Hyperlinks provided in lieu of required uploads are not permissible.

- Clarified your role?

Candidates must **explain their role** in completing the tasks to ensure authenticity of work being submitted.

In addition, you must describe any and all points of collaboration with any other individual(s), include the rationale or purpose of the collaboration, and clearly state your role in the collaboration and the role(s) of your collaborators. Have you provided appropriate attribution(s), so that scorers are able to differentiate your original work from the work of others?

- Demonstrated feedback collection and use of feedback evidence?

Throughout the four tasks, candidates are asked to collect, analyze, and use feedback on plans, strategies, and collaborative work. In written submissions and supporting documents, candidates must demonstrate that feedback was collected; report on the number and roles of people interviewed, surveyed, or consulted; present analyses; and draw conclusions about the feedback. It is insufficient to collect feedback on the candidate's leadership of the group.

- Proofread all documents?

Candidates are to proofread all documents before uploading to:

- Remove all names of the **candidate, school, district, staff, and student identifying information.**

- Correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Candidates are strongly encouraged to compare each artifact against the instructions and rubrics before submission to ensure relevance and completeness.

After uploading into the PAL system and before submitting, candidates are required to check their work to ensure that they do not upload duplicate artifacts and documents or blank files, and that every file can be opened without error.

- Prepared all documents by category?

Submitted documents should be specific to the task and discussed and referenced in the relevant artifact(s). Complete school report cards, school improvement plans, and school handbooks should not be uploaded as documents. Only relevant tables of information or plan and handbook excerpts should be uploaded as category documents and discussed and referenced in the appropriate artifacts.

Documents must be legible. Handwritten agendas and minutes, for example, must be readable.

- Included an analysis of your leadership skills in the commentary?

The analysis of the candidate's leadership skills should be emphasized, regardless of whether the candidate feels the work on each task was successful. Include a description of how challenges were approached. Candidates should describe in detail, with specific examples, their leadership role throughout this task. Candidates should reflect on their leadership strengths and areas for growth, taking into consideration feedback gathered from relevant stakeholders.

- Reviewed the rubrics for this task?

Read the descriptions of each rubric in the next section. The rubrics will be used to score candidates' work. Before submitting, candidates are strongly encouraged to evaluate their work using the rubrics.

Task 2: Instructional Leadership for Learning Culture through Professional Learning Groups Rubrics

How Will the Evidence of Your Leadership Practice Be Assessed?

As you prepare your artifacts and commentary, use the following rubrics to guide your thinking, planning, action, analysis, and presentation.

Rubric 2.a: Plan to Facilitate Group Learning

MA Standard 1. Instructional Leadership: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes effective teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

MA Standard 4. Professional Culture: Promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

How does the candidate plan for a professional learning culture to improve instructional practice and student learning?

The primary source of evidence for Rubric 2.a is Artifact 1.

In addition to this primary source, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
2.a.1: Group identification and group formation	<p>Identifies two or more teachers with whom to work.</p> <p>Informally forms a group, only for information sharing.</p>	<p>Selects two or more teachers whose work is related to the priority area.</p> <p>Forms the group for information sharing and professional learning.</p> <p>Develops a weak commitment among the group members to try out new instructional practices.</p>	<p>Selects two or more teachers for a professional learning group with an interest in improving teaching practice in the focus selected for the priority area.</p> <p>Forms the group for professional learning with a clearly defined facilitation role.</p> <p>Develops a moderate commitment among the group members to try out new instructional practices</p>	<p>Engages two or more teachers for a professional learning group, with school and leader input, based on their individual and collective strengths clearly connected to the priority area and focus.</p> <p>Forms the group for professional learning with a clearly defined facilitation role and expectations for shared leadership.</p> <p>Develops a strong commitment among the</p>

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
			to improve student learning.	group members to support each other in trying out new instructional practices to improve student learning.
2.a.2: Group learning plan	<p>Does not identify a priority area or does not link a focus to student performance data.</p> <p>Provides limited information on school context for group learning.</p> <p>States an aim for group learning.</p> <p>Does not propose a plan for group learning or has a plan that has few or no strategies to support group learning.</p>	<p>Generally defines a priority area with limited use of student performance data and information on the school context and culture.</p> <p>Provides an aim to improving teachers’ instructional practice and a general plan for group learning.</p> <p>Includes some attention to strategies to support group learning in the proposed plan.</p>	<p>Identifies a priority area that reflects student performance data for one or more student groups.</p> <p>Uses data to explain how the priority area and focus for improving teachers’ instructional practice is influenced by school context and culture.</p> <p>Provides a goal and objectives for group learning based on the focus for the priority area.</p> <p>Provides a plan with structure and process for group learning.</p>	<p>Identifies a priority area and focus that explicitly links to student performance data for one or more student groups and subgroups.</p> <p>Uses data to explain how the priority area and focus for improving teachers’ instructional practice is influenced by existing practices and school context and culture.</p> <p>Provides a goal and measurable objectives for group learning that addresses the focus for the priority area.</p> <p>Has a research-based plan for group learning and a professional learning culture, with strategies, structure, and process.</p> <p>Links plan to school-level conditions, existing resources, school culture and broader school improvement strategies.</p>

Rubric 2.b: Enact a Professional Learning Culture to Support Team Learning

MA Standard 4. Professional Culture: Promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

MA Standard 1. Instructional Leadership: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes effective teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

How does the candidate support group learning?

The primary sources of evidence for Rubric 2.b are Artifact 2, Artifact 3, and Commentary.

In addition to these primary sources, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
Group process 2.b.1	<p>Does little to facilitate group learning. Is a member of the group; facilitator role is unclear.</p> <p>Does not help the group create and use learning norms.</p> <p>Does not hold group meetings over time.</p>	<p>Facilitates the group with limited evidence on how the facilitation engages group learning or individual learning.</p> <p>Establishes general group learning norms.</p> <p>Holds group meetings over a short time period, without sufficient time for a full inquiry cycle.</p>	<p>Consistently facilitates group learning related to the focus area. Has a clear role as the group’s facilitator or organizer.</p> <p>Establishes and uses shared norms for working and decision making.</p> <p>Uses protocols or structured group learning processes with the group to facilitate group learning.</p> <p>Provides support for individual teachers to facilitate learning.</p> <p>Holds group meetings over</p>	<p>Consistently facilitates group learning in the focus area and has a clear role as the group organizer and facilitator. Enables shared responsibility for facilitating group learning.</p> <p>Establishes and uses shared norms for problem solving, resolving conflicts, monitoring, and eliciting feedback.</p> <p>Uses protocols or structured group learning processes and individual teacher support strategies to</p>

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	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
			time with sufficient time for a full inquiry cycle.	facilitate learning. Holds group meetings over time with sufficient time for more than a full inquiry cycle. Differentiates support for individual teachers within the group and one-on-one.
Group learning and work 2.b.2	<p>Unsystematically shares information with others about practices.</p> <p>Identifies generally what the teachers learn individually and/or collectively.</p> <p>Provides at least some claims about how the teachers’ learning connects to the focus.</p>	<p>Directs teachers with limited information and support for individual and collective work.</p> <p>Describes in some detail what the teachers learn individually and/or collectively.</p> <p>Provides evidence on how the teachers’ learning connects to the focus.</p>	<p>Supports teachers’ ongoing individual and collective work.</p> <p>Employs different strategies, meetings, and other interventions to meet the diverse needs of each group member.</p> <p>Provides clear evidence on what the teachers have learned individually and as a collaborative group and how this learning connects to the focus area.</p>	<p>Promotes and deepens teachers’ ongoing individual and collective work through cycles of preparing, acting, monitoring, assessing, and sharing.</p> <p>Enables teachers to share their individual learning experiences with the group.</p> <p>Provides evidence on what the teachers learn individually and collectively through the group learning process, and that the evidence is differentiated by teacher need or interest and is connected to the focus.</p>

Rubric 2.c: Assess Team Learning to Improve Ongoing Group Learning

MA Standard 4. Professional Culture: Promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

How does the candidate assess progress and change pertaining to a group learning task?

The primary sources of evidence for Rubric 2.c are Artifact 3 and Commentary.

In addition to these primary sources, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
2.c.1: Assessment of group process and group work	Describes own learning accomplishments, with limited attention to others' learning experiences.	Describes what group members tried out and/or what occurred in the group process, and the task accomplishments, drawing on teacher feedback. Makes weak or no links between group process and group accomplishments.	Uses teacher feedback and other data on how group process facilitates group's learning and task accomplishments (individually and collectively).	Uses data on teacher feedback, documentation of practice, and other evidence to show how group learning and task accomplishments (individually and collectively) led to changes in teaching practices. Provides evidence that the group developed capacity as an ongoing learning community. Draws on theory, research, and best practices in leadership development, professional group building, and learning.

<p>2.c.2: Assessment of leadership skills and practices</p>	<p>Discusses leadership in general, if at all, but not relative to this task. Does not evaluate relevant leadership skills.</p>	<p>Conducts only a general analysis of some leadership skills and practices used in completing this task, without drawing on specific experiences.</p> <p>Recaps the steps taken in completing the task with little evaluation of his or her leadership skills.</p>	<p>Draws on specific learning experiences to evaluate his or her leadership skills and practices relevant to this task.</p> <p>Identifies what worked well and what he or she could have done differently.</p> <p>Identifies changes that could be made to improve his or her leadership skills in the future.</p>	<p>Drawing on specific learning experiences, describes and evaluates the relevant leadership skills and practices used to complete the task.</p> <p>Describes how he or she adjusted leadership practices throughout the task, providing specific examples.</p> <p>Solicits and analyzes feedback on his or her leadership skills from stakeholders involved in this task and utilizes this feedback to help identify what worked well and what he or she could have done differently.</p> <p>Proposes specific steps to improve his or her practice.</p>
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Task 3

Leadership in Observing, Assessing, and Supporting Individual Teacher Effectiveness

What Do School Leaders Need to Think about When Improving Teacher Effectiveness?

Effective school leaders understand and recognize the characteristics of high quality teaching and provide a range of supports to help classroom teachers improve instruction and the performance of all students.

Task 3 asks school leadership candidates to demonstrate instructional leadership skills. Specifically, it assesses your ability to improve a teacher’s instructional practice and effectiveness while engaging in the following activities: (1) gathering and analyzing classroom data, including the teacher’s self-assessment (if available), student and teacher work samples, and student performance data (as relevant for the grade and subject); (2) visiting three or more classrooms to identify common school practice; (3) conducting a pre-observation meeting; (4) conducting at least two classroom observations and reviewing related instructional artifacts; (5) assessing the classroom observation and student performance data for instructional strengths and areas for improvement; (6) providing formative feedback to the teacher; and (7) planning for professional support. It is important for you to know about the teacher’s classroom context, differences in individual student performance relative to a **priority academic area**, the school and/or district classroom observation protocols, and research-based practices in classroom observation and teacher development. A **priority academic area** is a subject or student learning area in which there is a need for improved student performance, as determined based on an analysis of data and input from staff at the school and district level, and with attention to federally designated priority student groups or other groups that are a priority in the school. Candidates are required to provide evidence that demonstrates the chosen academic area is a priority for district/school improvement efforts. As an example, a candidate might select “engaging and supporting students to develop close reading skills” as a standards-based instructional focus for their Task 3 observation after a careful analysis of student performance data, school priorities, teacher-identified areas for growth, and the observation of other classes. The following are not acceptable priority academic areas because they are not sufficiently focused on specific student learning performance and

subject area: attendance, absenteeism, **discipline or behavioral issues**, graduation or **retention** rates, or AP enrollment. While these concerns may be a secondary issue related to a priority academic area, they cannot be the primary focus when supporting teacher effectiveness.

These actions build on [Massachusetts Professional Standards and Indicators for Administrative Leadership](#) and state and district guidelines for educator evaluation.

Unlike a formal observation for teacher evaluation that examines all areas of a teacher's practice, your observations will focus on a specific area of standards-based instructional practice within the **priority academic area**, enabling you to integrate information on curriculum, instruction, and student performance to understand an individual teacher's content and pedagogical practices. While focused on a specific standards-based teaching area or practice, the observations and feedback should be guided by the descriptors of proficient and exemplary teaching in the [Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation](#).

What Do You Need to Do to Complete This Task?

- Collect, examine, and summarize classroom context information.
- Identify an instructional focus within a **priority academic area** (considering district, school, and teacher team priorities, where possible).
- Select a teacher to serve as a volunteer and select two or more of his or her class sessions for observation.
- Visit three or more classes similar to the one selected for this task (as in a walk-through or instructional round process or other form of brief, informal observational visits) and examine samples of student work and teacher assignments for the **priority academic area** to learn about instructional practice that is common in the school.
- Conduct a pre-observation meeting with the teacher where together you review pre-observation data (such as student test scores, classroom assessments, and performance tasks), instructional goals for the lesson and unit of study, common instructional practices, and the teacher's instructional strengths and mutually agreed upon areas for improvement. Agree upon the areas of focus for the observation as defined by your joint analysis of information and the interests of the teacher.
- Conduct two or more classroom observations and collect teacher and student information and samples of artifacts associated with the lesson. Prepare a **continuous, unedited 15-minute video segment** drawn from one observation.

- Analyze the teaching observation using the school's or district's observation protocol and the [Massachusetts Model System Educator Evaluation: Teacher Rubric](#).
- Identify the teacher's instructional strengths and one or more areas for improvement. Gather information on available resources (such as professional development, instructional specialists, and peer-facilitated learning) to support the teacher in improving instruction.
- Conduct at least one post-observation and feedback meeting with the teacher, discuss plans for improvement, and identify possible sources for professional learning. Prepare a **continuous, unedited 15-minute video segment** of this meeting.
- Gather feedback from the teacher to assess your leadership skills in the pre-observation meeting, observation, and post-observation meeting and feedback.

What Do You Need to Consider to Complete This Task?

- What is your area of focus in curriculum and instruction? Why is this focus a priority for improving learning for all students and (if applicable) targeted student subgroups?
- Which teacher will you observe and what can you learn about his or her teaching and students' learning prior to the classroom observation?
- What can you learn about current teaching practices in this focus area by observing teachers in three or more similar classes and analyzing student work and performance data? Are there school- or district-adopted instructional practices that should be evident?
- What are the typical teacher observation practices in the school and what protocols and rubrics are used to assess instructional practice and provide feedback?
- What are the school or district policies concerning video recording instruction? What consent forms are required and what video recording considerations need to be taken into account?
- What additional student or teacher information and artifacts are needed to inform your classroom observation and the feedback you provide to the teacher?
- What professional supports are available for teachers in the school after receiving feedback?

Consider that effective teaching encompasses the following: subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, an understanding of child and adolescent development, student engagement practices, cultural responsiveness, and mastery of the ability to combine knowledge in all of these areas to produce high quality teaching and meaningful learning to meet diverse student needs.

For purposes of this task, high quality teaching is defined by the descriptors of proficient and exemplary teaching in the [Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation: Teacher Rubric](#). Meaningful learning for all students is defined by these descriptors for student motivation and engagement and meeting diverse student needs, and by student performance outcomes on state assessments and other measures.

Candidate Confidentiality Guidelines for Video Recording

Candidates are required to submit two video recordings as part of completing Task 3. Candidates must protect the confidentiality of individuals who are video recorded and adhere to district policies and procedures about appropriate permissions and consent. These guidelines address the recording, submittal, and use of videos prepared for the PAL task requirements.

Before Making Video Recordings

Before you record and submit your video recordings, you must do the following:

- 1) Review the Video Recording Permissions policy on the [Candidates/Policies](#) page of the program website. Model consent forms are provided on the [Candidates/Resources](#) page of the program website. Check with your preparation program and school district for other specific information that you may be required to include in the consent form.
- 2) Secure appropriate permission from the school district, parents, and guardians of students, and from teachers and other adults who appear in the video recording. Keep the signed consent forms on file for your use if needed.

While Making Video Recordings

- 1) For both video recordings, use generic labels and general references (e.g., “the school,” “the district”) for the school or district to protect confidentiality. **Blind or remove all names on any typed or written material appearing in the video** (e.g., work products, commentaries, lesson plans, student work samples) that could identify individuals, including your name, or institutions. During video recording, use students’ first names only. You may mute identifying information in the audio before submitting the video. However, your video submission must contain audio that is clear and loud enough for scorers to review.
- 2) For the classroom observation video, the teacher must be visible, and there should be evidence that teacher-student interaction is taking place (i.e., that students are present). Clear audio evidence is sufficient, and the video recording may capture students from the back; students’ faces do not have to be visible in the video.
- 3) For the post-observation video, both you and the teacher must be visible. Your video submission must contain audio that is clear and loud enough for scorers to review.

Before Submitting Video Recordings

The video and audio for required video components must be intelligible to scorers. If your video clip(s) include audio in which the school and/or district is identified or in which students and/or members of the faculty, staff, or administration are personally identified by last name, and you wish to mute this audio to remove the personally identifiable information, this is acceptable. Please note, however, that you may be assigned a condition code to one or more indicators if your video contains no audio, or if the audio associated with your video is of insufficient quality or volume for scorers to review.

If the teacher observation video contains instruction delivered in a language other than English, a translation is required. The translation should be appended to Task 3 Artifact #1 (Pre-Observation Template). All primary dialogue (relevant, direct, i.e., not background chatter) from both teacher and students should be translated. There is no page limit for required translations into English. If a translation is not provided, a condition code will be applied.

Storage and Use of Video Recordings

In order to protect the privacy of all individuals who appear in the video recording:

You MAY

- Store/upload your video recording in the PAL ePortfolio system.

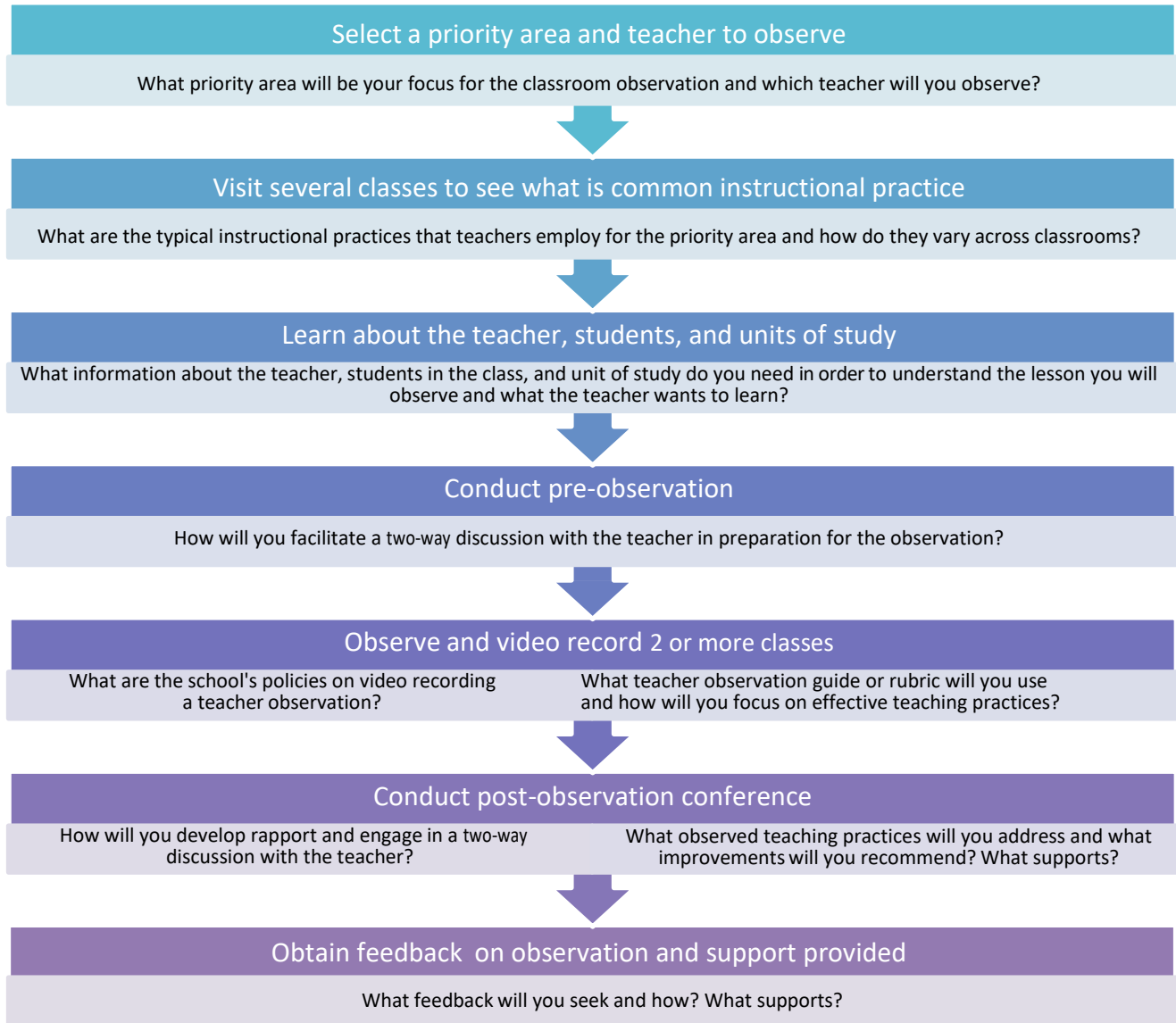
You may NOT

- Display the video publicly (i.e., personal websites, YouTube, Facebook).
- Post video recordings in any location other than the Pearson ePortfolio system.

The Components of the Task

Your investigation should progress through the inquiry process illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Task 3 Providing observation feedback and support for an individual teacher



Component 1: Investigate

Begin with a **priority academic** area, such as the area selected for Task 1 and possibly also used in Task 2. Based on student performance and other relevant evidence, as well as school and district goals and priorities, choose one or more instructional focus areas within the **priority academic area** on which to focus the teacher observations (see introduction section above for considerations in selecting an instructional focus within a **priority academic area**).

The pre-observation investigation should include the following steps:

- 1) Analysis of relevant student performance and other indicators that frame the area(s) of focus.
- 2) Identification of how the focus area(s) relate to district, school, or teacher team goals and priorities.

Next, select and ask a teacher to volunteer to be observed and receive feedback as you complete the work for this task. The volunteer could be one of the teachers with whom you worked in completing Task 1 or 2.

Before preparing to observe this teacher, learn more about the typical instructional practice for the focus area in the school by visiting three or more similar classes (as in a walk-through or instructional round process or brief visit) to document the nature of instructional practice (including examining a sample of assignments and student work).

Teacher performance has a direct relationship to student learning. As you investigate the learning context for the teacher observation, consider how classroom instruction is shaped by individual students' strengths, interests, cultural assets, and needs; required standards; instructional objectives; standardized tests; and available resources.

Each classroom has different demographic, cultural, and academic attributes that comprise its context. All impact a teacher's instructional choices and strategies. Consider the relevant classroom context attributes and their relationship to the academic focus and instructional strategies.

Finally, learn more about the teacher observation practices in the school. While you are not conducting a formal teacher observation for evaluation purposes, it is important to know how teacher observations are conducted in the school and to identify the criteria for effective teaching that the school and district use. For example, find out how frequently all teachers are observed annually, the length and focus of teacher observations, the way that observations are recorded, and whether they are coupled with pre-observation and post-observation meetings.

Determine the environment for teacher observation, which varies widely among schools and districts. What are the expectations and practices for teacher observation and how do they relate to the state educator evaluation system? What training has the school or district provided to teachers and leaders about teacher evaluation? What is the culture of the school regarding teacher observation and how receptive are teachers to being observed for non-formal, formative purposes? How can you build trust and maintain confidentiality in completing this assessment?

How does the school climate and professional culture affect your capacity to undertake this task? What considerations are necessary in order to video record the observation and feedback sessions with the teacher?

To learn about the nature and focus of teacher observations in the school, collect forms and procedures that the school or district uses for teacher observation and evaluation. If the district's observation protocols do not include standards or expectations for effective teaching, consider using the [Massachusetts Model System Educator Evaluation: Teacher Rubric](#) in the observation of teacher practice.

Identify district policies and practices for video recording teachers and classes for developmental purposes only. They may include consent requirements for teachers and students, restrictions on video recording classes, and other related requirements. See the guidance for videotaping the classroom observation and post-observation meeting at the end of the task.

Identify school and district policies and practices concerning the length of observation time.

Component 2: Prepare

This component consists of preparing for and conducting the pre-observation meeting in preparation for the teacher observation. To prepare for this meeting, compile and analyze the following information:

- Evidence about the teacher's students and their performance in the **priority academic area**, using appropriate grade-level data and analyses for various demographic groups.
- The teacher's lesson plans for the unit of study that contains the lesson that will be observed and the teacher's intended instructional processes and student assignments leading to that lesson.
- Samples of student assignments and work related to the lesson being observed.

Using this information, generate questions for the teacher about the lesson to be observed.

Next, schedule a pre-observation meeting with the teacher that should include the following elements:

- Sharing information collected and identifying, through a two-way conversation, one or more areas of focus for the classroom observation, based on student needs, teacher needs or interest, common instructional practices, and student performance data.
- Presenting suggestions for improving the lesson.
- Documenting the teacher's and your roles and participation in the pre-observation meeting.

The focus of the observation should combine areas of interest to the teacher—what the teacher identified in the pre-observation meeting—and a focus you identified based on analysis of student performance and other indicators, brief observations of other classes, school priorities, and other evidence.

The pre-observation meeting could also include a discussion of the students in the class, the lesson objectives, and the lesson's fit within the unit planned curriculum; the way that the lesson is structured to help the students acquire the skills and knowledge presented in it; the way that instruction is differentiated based on student needs; the use of assessments to check student understanding; and the teacher's assessment of his or her content and instructional strengths and areas for improvement.

Component 3: Act

In this step, you observe the teacher, analyze the observation and other evidence (e.g., lesson plan, samples of student work and student performance evidence), and provide feedback about instructional strengths and areas for improvement, as well as recommended supports or actions.

First, conduct and video record observations of two or more class sessions (at least 30 minutes in all), using the district's teacher observation protocol or the Massachusetts recommended teacher observation guide, [Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation](#). Using this video recording, prepare a **continuous, unedited 15-minute video** of the observed teaching that aligns to your pre-observation focus and post-observation feedback. (See the Candidate Confidentiality Guidelines for Video Recording at the end of this section.)

Next, in memo form of up to two single-spaced pages (up to 1,000 words) to the observed teacher, prepare a written description of the observation that includes notes detailing evidence of instructional practices and student learning aligned with the selected standards-based instructional focus within the priority area. The notes—aligned to the observation video—should describe the observed teaching practices and techniques, pacing and timing, use

of technology, and connections to curricular standards. It is critical to include an in-depth description of the observation, including both teacher and student actions. Appropriate references to the district or other teacher observation rubric used should be included. The memo should conclude with an assessment of the teacher's strengths and areas for improvement addressing the standards-based instructional focus area, in relationship to effective teaching practices using the district's teaching rubric.

Using these results and the evidence compiled for the pre-observation meeting, select the strengths and most critical area(s) for improvement to discuss with the teacher. In addition, identify a strategy (involving one or more sources of support) to foster teacher learning and development in one (or more) identified focal areas, with a rationale for the way that the strategy will support teacher learning. Prepare this information as preliminary discussion points for the post-observation meeting with the teacher.

Conduct a post-observation meeting and feedback session in which you and the teacher discuss his or her strengths and areas for improvement, drawing on evidence from the observation. Discuss your observation analysis with the teacher and include the following:

- Identify essential qualities of observed teaching practices aligned with the identified standards-based instructional focus area.
- Provide the teacher with feedback, using at least two sources of data (including observation, student assignments, and student work or assessment results).
- Engage the teacher in a two-way conversation analyzing his or her performance.
- Discuss ideas for improving the teacher's instructional practice and provide improved practice suggestions.
- Identify available references, resources, and strategies aligned with the teacher's specific needs.

The aim of this post-observation meeting is to foster a learning conversation with the teacher to improve his or her practice. Engage the teacher in reflecting on dimensions of effective teaching and evidence of student learning. The meeting should demonstrate mutual respect for, rapport with, and responsiveness to the teacher and challenge him or her to engage in professional learning.

Video record this feedback session and submit **15 minutes of continuous, unedited footage** as a submission for scoring.

Consider how teacher performance can be improved with targeted feedback, professional development, and ongoing support.

Remember that your role in completing this task is to support teacher development, not to evaluate teacher performance. All observation notes and feedback generated through this process are confidential and cannot be used as part of a formal teacher evaluation process or for summative teacher ratings.

There are many ways of providing teachers with support to improve their practice. Support should be developed through a two-way discussion that encourages a teacher to take responsibility for his or her learning and improvement. It should include one or more of the following elements: information sharing, modeling, coaching, and feedback from peers (through inter-visitation and consultation); and suggestions from lead teachers (for modeling and coaching), school leaders, and external consultants and resources (such as a professional development workshop, conferences, and graduate coursework) that are available in the school or district.

Component 4: Assess

Analyze the development of your own leadership skills as you complete Task 3. Solicit and analyze feedback from the teacher about the pre-observation, observation, and post-observation experiences with you, your skills as you complete this task, and the implications of the feedback for the teacher’s work and improved practice. The following are required questions that the teacher must answer for you to solicit information about your observation and feedback skills.

- How effective was the candidate in facilitating the pre-observation discussion as a learning experience for you?
- How did the candidate conduct the observation? In what ways was the observation disruptive or not disruptive for your teaching?
- How effective was the candidate in conducting the post-observation meeting? What areas of teaching strengths and improvement did the candidate identify? How do they relate to your understanding of your own teaching practice?
- What recommendations for improvement did the candidate offer? How beneficial were they? How feasible? How likely are you to try them out?

Complete a detailed analysis of leadership skills used to complete this task. Include specific examples of those leadership skills and specific examples of what worked well and what could be improved. Focus your analysis on the steps you took to complete the pre-observation, observation, and post-observation activities; and on your feedback to the teacher to improve

his or her practice with respect to increasing student learning. Think about the following:

- The aim of this step is to assess your own skills and the implications for your further leadership development in observing, assessing, providing feedback, and supporting an individual teacher to improve instruction.
- Avoid simply recapping the steps you took to complete the task and focus on the analysis of your leadership in completing the task. Draw implications from this work for improving your own teacher observation and feedback skills for the future.

Artifacts, Documents, and Commentary

This section provides instructions for school leadership candidate submissions for the review process:

- Confidentiality and Anonymity Form. An editable version is available within the ePortfolio system. You are required to complete and upload this form for each task.
- Your five artifacts.
- Documents that support your artifacts.
- Your commentary in narrative form in response to a series of prompts about the development of your leadership skills while completing this task.

Remember: Your artifacts must not include personally identifying information about you, the school staff, or the students. Your submissions must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Be sure to protect the anonymity of the participants in your study by using generic labels (e.g., Principal A, School B, Teacher C)—not aliases, pseudonyms, or first names—for the district, the school, students, and other stakeholders.

Artifacts

The artifacts that you submit for scoring, each in a separate file, are described below.

The artifacts submitted must represent authentic work completed by candidates. Listed below are descriptions of the artifacts required for Task 3.

Artifact #1: Pre-Observation Template

This is a completed template that documents the pre-observation investigation and planning, describes the context of the classroom and the students to be observed, and articulates the **priority academic area** and instructional focus, including a rationale for selection of this focus. It is important that the template include a **detailed summary of the pre-observation meeting and findings**, including not only a description of the student performance data but also how this data was discussed with the teacher.

Additionally, information regarding specific student and or teacher needs, student performance data, common instructional practices, as well as school/district priorities discussed with the teacher during the pre-observation meeting should be summarized as they relate to the selection of an instructional focus and/or modification of the proposed lesson plan.

The template is presented at the end of this section. It is important to note that information missing from the template can reduce a candidate's score.

Pre-Observation Template

<p>Information About the Teacher to be Observed:</p> <p>*Teacher: Gender: Race/Ethnicity: Licensure Area:</p>
<p>Information About the Classroom to be Observed:</p> <p>Grade level: Subject: Number of students: Gender composition of the class: Racial/ethnic composition of the class: Percentage of students classified as economically disadvantaged (in the school): Number of students with IEPs: Number of English Language learners: Number and roles of other adults in the classroom (if applicable):</p>
<p>Information About the Lesson To Be Observed:</p> <p>Intended priority academic area and standards-based instructional focus for the lesson: Relationship between the intended focus and school/district goals or priorities: Relevant student performance data collected prior to the lesson, using available state or local evidence and delineating by subgroup when possible: Intended common instructional practices for use in the priority academic area (including practices observed in visits to other classrooms and research-based practices in the content area): Teacher’s pre-lesson self-assessment in this focus area, including strengths, areas in need of improvement, and goals: Essential question for the lesson to be observed: Objective for the lesson to be observed: Summary of the pre-observation meeting, including starting and ending times, location, and topics discussed:</p>
<p>Other:</p> <p>School/district policies for teacher observations (including contractual guidelines and/or union rules as applicable):</p>

*Please use the blinding labels for names (e.g., Teacher A).

Artifact # 2: Teacher Observation Video Recording

This is a **video recording** of 15 **continuous, unedited minutes** of observed teaching. Scorers will only review the first 15 minutes of the recording they receive.

If a portion of your submission (written or verbal) is not in English, a translation is required. The translation should be appended to Task 3 Artifact #1 (Pre-Observation Template). All primary dialogue (relevant, direct, i.e., not background chatter) from both teacher and students should be translated. There is no page limit for required translations into English.

Artifact #3: Post-Observation Meeting Video Recording

This submission consists of a **continuous, unedited 15-minute video recording** of your post-observation meeting with the observed teacher. As stated in Component 3, the feedback should:

- identify essential qualities of observed teaching practices aligned with the identified standards-based instructional focus area,
- provide the teacher with feedback, using at least two sources of data (including observation, student assignments, and student work or assessment results),
- engage the teacher in a two-way conversation analyzing his or her performance,
- discuss ideas for improving the teacher’s instructional practice and provide improved practice suggestions, and
- identify available references, resources, and strategies aligned with the teacher’s specific needs.

Please note: The continuous, unedited 15-minute video segment **must** clearly show both **you and the teacher you observed** in order to demonstrate how you are providing feedback and support as well as the teacher’s reactions in receiving feedback and engaging in discussions around improving his or her practice.

Artifact #4: Analysis of Observed Teaching

As stated in Component 3, write a **memo** of up to two single-spaced pages (up to 1,000 words) to the observed teacher, providing summary documentation and analysis of the observed teaching using the school/district teacher observation protocol. This memo should include observational notes that specifically address issues in the priority area and instructional focus, describing the observed teaching practices and techniques, pacing and timing, use of technology, and connections to curricular standards. It is

critical to include an in-depth description of the observation, including both teacher and student actions. Appropriate references to the district or other teacher observation rubric used should be included. The memo should conclude with an identification of the teacher's strengths and areas for improvement.

Artifact #5: Analysis and Implications of the Feedback of the Observed Teacher on the Candidate's Pre-Observation Meeting, Observation, and Post-Observation Meeting

Write a **memo** of up to two single-spaced pages (up to 1,000 words) to the teacher, analyzing the observed teacher's feedback about the pre-observation meeting, observation, and post-observation meeting experiences, and the implications for the teacher's work and improved student learning. Include an explanation of how the feedback was gathered and present the teacher's own analysis of these experiences.

The following are required questions that the teacher must answer for you to solicit information about your observation and feedback skills.

- How effective was the candidate in facilitating the pre-observation discussion as a learning experience for you?
- How did the candidate conduct the observation? In what ways was the observation disruptive or not disruptive for your teaching?
- How effective was the candidate in conducting the post-observation meeting? What areas of teaching strengths and improvement did the candidate identify? How do they relate to your understanding of your own teaching practice?
- What recommendations for improvement did the candidate offer? How beneficial were they? How feasible? How likely are you to try them out?

The memo should draw a clear connection between the **priority academic area** and instructional focus and the pre-observation meeting, observation analysis, post-observation meeting, and recommendations for improvements you provided to the teacher.

NOTE: All supporting documents, reports, and tables of data that are referenced in these artifacts must be included in the appropriate category documents below and be appropriately cited.

Documents by Category

Documents that must be submitted are supporting materials used by you to complete the task. These documents provide supporting evidence pertaining to the task work and

are necessary to inform scoring.

In addition to the artifact files described above, you must submit the following documents used in the task, using a separate file for each of these three file categories:

- **Category #1:** The teacher observation protocol and teacher evaluation rubric commonly used in the school and district. If the district uses the state rubric, include a reference to, or citation of, the rubric instead of uploading the whole document. Identify which categories and indicators were used for the observation.
- **Category #2:** The unit of study, lesson plan outline, core student assignments, and work samples (such as worksheets, assignments, and completed work).
- **Category #3:** Samples of relevant student and teacher information, and artifacts related to the lesson that were not included in Category #2. These include:
 - Protocol and Rubric
 - Lesson Plan and Work Samples
 - Student and Teacher Information

Commentary

You must submit a clearly presented and well-focused written commentary that explains how you accomplished the task

Write a personal commentary of up to two single-spaced pages (up to 1,000 words) on your own learning and leadership development through this experience. Avoid simply recapping the steps you took to complete the task and focus on the analysis of your leadership for improving your ability to conduct a teacher observation, provide feedback, and make recommendations for supports that could improve teaching practice. It is critical to include your own learning about your leadership and ability to recognize the characteristics of high quality teaching and provide a range of supports to help classroom teachers improve instruction and the performance of all students.

The commentary should not be a description of all of the actions you took to complete the task or a reiteration of the work accomplished, which has been covered in other artifacts and documents. Rather, identify and describe the leadership skills you used over the course of the Task 3 project. Where applicable, provide examples of these leadership skills in action. Reference examples from the pre-observation meeting, the classroom observation video, the post-observation meeting video, and feedback from the teacher. Be sure to reflect upon the leadership skills you used and describe how your leadership skills developed or changed over the course of the Task 3 project.

- Specifically address your leadership skills and practices in response to the following questions about aspects of this task.
 - How effectively did you prepare for and conduct the pre-observation meeting? What leadership skills did you use to engage the teacher? What particular lessons did you learn that might shape your leadership approach moving forward? What changes will you make moving forward?
 - How did you develop rapport with and demonstrate respect for the teacher and engage him or her in professional learning through the observation and feedback process? Were your strategies successful? Moving forward, are there other strategies you may employ to make the process more collaborative?
 - Describe any adjustments you made to your leadership practices throughout the task. How did your leadership skills change over time?
 - How did you use the district or state teacher observation protocol to conduct the observation, and how did you focus on and assess teaching practices?
 - How did the feedback you provided engage the teacher in reflecting on dimensions of effective teaching, on evidence of student learning, and on identifying specific areas for improving his or her instructional practice? Explain why your feedback focused on some areas for improvement rather than others. In what ways did you help the teacher make progress in improving instructional practice for the designated focus area?
 - What problems did you face and what successes did you achieve in conducting the teacher observation, providing feedback, and making recommendations for supports that could improve teaching practice? How did you engage the teacher in the process?
 - What would you do differently to improve your effectiveness in supporting teacher growth? Why would you take these new steps? Include specific examples of what worked well and how you would improve your leadership skills to support efforts to improve instruction and the performance of all students for the future.
 - What feedback did you receive from the teacher you observed, school leaders and other stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, and/or parents and community members) regarding your leadership during Task 3, and how can you use this feedback to improve your leadership practices moving forward?

Task 3 PAL Evidence Chart

This chart provides a list of all required work products for PAL Task 3, as well as a description of supported file types for submission. Your PAL work products must conform to the artifact, document, category, and commentary specifications for each task. Candidates are required to submit all artifacts, commentary, and relevant documents without any information that would identify them (e.g., candidate name), their school or district, individual students, staff, and others who were part of task completion.

Note that your evidence cannot contain hyperlinks to required uploads. Any web content you wish to include as part of your evidence must be submitted as a document file, which must conform to the file type requirements listed below.

Please refer directly to the Artifacts, Documents, and Commentary section of Task 3 in this handbook for detailed requirements pertaining to the intent and content requirements of each file.

PAL Task 3 Evidence Chart				
Leadership in Observing, Assessing, and Supporting Individual Teacher Effectiveness				
Part	Work Product / Evidence	Specifications (if required)	# of Files	Acceptable File Types
Part A	Confidentiality and Anonymity	Template provided	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part B	Artifact #1 - Pre-Observation Template	Template provided	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part C	Artifact #2 - Teacher Observation Video Recording	15 continuous unedited minutes	1	flv, asf, qt, mov, mpg, mpeg, avi, wmv, mp4, m4v

PAL Task 3 Evidence Chart				
Leadership in Observing, Assessing, and Supporting Individual Teacher Effectiveness				
Part D	Artifact #3 - Post-Observation Meeting Video Recording	15 continuous unedited minutes	1	flv, asf, qt, mov, mpg, mpeg, avi, wmv, mp4, m4v
Part E	Artifact #4 - Analysis of Observed Teaching	Max 2 single-spaced pages (no more than 1,000 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part F	Artifact #5 - Analysis and Implications of the Feedback of the Observed Teacher on the Candidate’s Pre-Observation Meeting, Observation, and Post-Observation Meeting Feedback	Max 2 single-spaced pages (no more than 1,000 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part G	Category Documents 1) Protocol and Rubric 2) Lesson Plan and Work Samples 3) Student and Teacher Information	Separate file(s) for each of these 3 file categories	3	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part H	Commentary	Max 2 single-spaced pages (no more than 1,000 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
<p>The maximum size for any individual file is 500 megabytes (MB). There is no limit on the number of MB uploaded for an entire task. The success of an upload through any application depends heavily on the type of network, the file size, and the network capacity at upload time.</p>				

Note:

Scorers are not required to read artifacts and commentary *or* view video submissions that either exceed or do not meet the requirements. Submissions that fall far short of

the required word length (or minute length for videos) are likely to lack sufficient information and detail, which would adversely affect how the scorers evaluate the work products and thus the candidate's potential score.

If any submitted materials do not meet the [Submission Requirements](#), a condition code may be applied during the scoring process instead of a numerical score. If a condition code is applied to **any indicator**, the entire task will be unscorable. If your complete submission, or portions thereof, cannot be scored due to failure to meet Submission Requirements, no refund will be issued and no portion of your assessment fee can be applied to the cost of any future PAL registration or associated services.

Please consult the PAL website at www.ma-pal.nesinc.com to review submission requirements, passing standards, and other policies related to submitting and scoring of PAL Tasks.

Submission Readiness

Scorers will be reviewing your submission to determine if you have complied with the PAL Submission Requirements located at the end of this handbook and [on the Candidates/Policies page](#) of the program website. If your submission does not meet the Submission Requirements, a condition code may be applied during the scoring process instead of a numerical score. If a condition code is applied to any indicator or rubric, the entire task will be unscorable.

Review the [Task 3 Evidence Chart](#) located in the Task 3 section of this handbook and on the Candidates/Resources page of the program website to confirm your completion of all required work products and specifications.

Before submitting, have you:

- Appropriately **blinded your submission with all candidate, school, district, staff, and student identifying information removed?**

Candidates are required to submit all artifacts, commentary, and relevant documents without any information that would identify them (e.g., candidate name), their school or district, individual students, staff, and others who were part of task completion. This includes screenshots, identifiable school logos and emblems, web addresses, URLs, and website graphics. Candidates must use generic labels (e.g., Principal A, School B, Teacher C, Teacher D), and **not** aliases, pseudonyms, or first names (e.g., Ms. Smith, Mr. Jones, Sally, Tom).

- Completed and uploaded the Confidentiality and Anonymity Form for this task?

To confirm that the work has been appropriately blinded, candidates must submit a completed Confidentiality and Anonymity Form with each task submission, in which they confirm that they have **removed all personally identifying information (e.g., candidate name) and the names of their school, district, staff, and others.**

The editable Confidentiality and Anonymity Form is provided within the ePortfolio system. Candidates are required to **check the boxes** and upload this form for each task.

- Addressed a specific instructional focus within a **priority academic area** for the school?

The instructional focus selected should be based on an analysis of common instructional practices, as well as student and teacher needs. A **priority academic area** is an area in which improved student performance is desired, with input from staff at the school and district level, and with attention to federally designated priority student groups or other groups that are a priority in the school.

- Cited supporting documents?

Candidates are to cite supporting documents, submitted for each task, in the relevant artifacts for the same task.

Is the submission complete in that it contains all supporting documents in each category? Hyperlinks provided in lieu of required uploads are not permissible.

- Clarified your role?

Candidates must **explain their role** in completing the tasks to ensure authenticity of work being submitted.

In addition, you must describe any and all points of collaboration with any other individual(s), include the rationale or purpose of the collaboration, and clearly state your role in the collaboration and the role(s) of your collaborators. Have you provided appropriate attribution(s), so that scorers are able to differentiate your original work from the work of others?

- Demonstrated feedback collection and use of feedback evidence?

Throughout the four tasks, candidates are asked to collect, analyze, and use feedback on plans, strategies, and collaborative work. In written submissions and

supporting documents, candidates must demonstrate that feedback was collected; report on the number and roles of people interviewed, surveyed, or consulted; present analyses; and draw conclusions about the feedback. It is insufficient to present only the candidate's conclusions about feedback received.

■ Proofread all documents?

Candidates are to proofread all documents before uploading to

- remove all names of the **candidate, school, district, staff, and student identifying information**
- correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Candidates are strongly encouraged to compare each artifact against the instructions and rubrics before submission to ensure relevance and completeness.

After uploading into the PAL system and before submitting, candidates are required to check their work to ensure that they do not upload duplicate artifacts and documents or blank files, and that every file, including videos, can be opened without error.

■ Prepared all documents by category?

Submitted documents should be specific to the task and discussed and referenced in the relevant artifact(s). Complete school report cards, school improvement plans, and school handbooks should not be uploaded as documents. Only relevant tables of information or plan and handbook excerpts should be uploaded as category documents and discussed and referenced in the appropriate artifacts.

Documents must be legible. Handwritten observation notes, for example, must be readable.

■ Included an analysis of your leadership skills in the commentary?

The analysis of the candidate's leadership skills should be emphasized, regardless of whether the candidate feels the work on each task was successful. Include a description of how challenges were approached. Candidates should describe in detail, with specific examples, their leadership role throughout this task. Candidates should reflect on their leadership strengths and areas for growth, taking into consideration feedback gathered from relevant stakeholders.

- Are both video recordings uploaded and of appropriate length and quality?

The submissions of the teacher observation video recording and the post-observation meeting video recording each must be 15 continuous, unedited minutes. The video recordings must be playable, audible, and viewable in the PAL ePortfolio system.

In the teacher observation video, the teacher must be visible.

In the post-observation video, you and the teacher must be visible.

- Included a translation appended to Artifact #1 if needed?

A translation is required for a Task 3 teacher observation video recording if the instruction is delivered in a language other than English.

- Reviewed the rubrics for this task?

Read the descriptions of each rubric in the next section. The rubrics will be used to score candidates' work. Before submitting, candidates are strongly encouraged to evaluate their work using the rubrics.

Task 3: Leadership in Observing, Assessing, and Supporting Individual Teacher Effectiveness Rubrics

How Will the Evidence of Your Leadership Practice Be Assessed?

As you prepare your artifacts and commentary, use the following rubrics to guide your thinking, planning, action, analysis, and presentation.

Rubric 3.a: Plan

MA Standard 1. Instructional Leadership: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes effective teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

MA Standard 2. Management and Operations: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

How does the candidate prepare for and conduct a pre-observation meeting?

The primary source of evidence for Rubric 3a is Artifact 1.

In addition to this primary source, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
3.a.1: Observation focus selection	Selects a focus with little or no analysis of common instructional practices, student needs, and teacher needs.	Selects a focus with some analysis of common instructional practices or student and teacher needs.	Selects a focus based on an analysis of common instructional practices and student and teacher needs.	Identifies standards-based instructional focus, based on thorough analysis of common instructional practices and student and teacher needs, which builds on district/ school improvement efforts.
3.a.2: Pre-observation meeting	Conducts an informal pre-observation discussion with little or no connection to student data and priorities.	Conducts a brief pre-observation meeting that includes reference to a focal area and solicits the teacher’s input on an area of interest supported by meaningful student data.	Engages the teacher in a pre-observation discussion, referring to common instructional practices or student/teacher needs and student data specifically related to the focus area.	Engages the teacher actively in a two-way discussion and refines proposed lesson. Builds discussion on common instructional practices and student and teacher needs and grounds it in identified focus area based on student performance data.

Rubric 3.b: Conduct the Observation

MA Standard 1. Instructional Leadership: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes effective teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

MA Standard 2. Management and Operations: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

How well does the candidate recognize qualities of teaching practice?

The primary sources of evidence for Rubric 3.b are Artifacts 2, 3, and 4.

In addition to these primary sources, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
3.b.1: Use and application of teacher observation rubric	<p>Identifies few or no essential qualities of observed teaching practices related to the focus area.</p> <p>Not clear if a district or state observation rubric is used.</p>	<p>Identifies some essential qualities of observed teaching practices.</p> <p>Uses the district or state observation rubric to define the essential qualities of observed teaching practice.</p> <p>Links the observation to the identified focus area.</p>	<p>Identifies essential qualities of observed teaching practices centered on clearly identified instructional focus area.</p> <p>Uses the district observation rubric as a framework for differentiating observed teaching practice.</p>	<p>Identifies essential qualities of observed teaching practices centered on identified instructional focus area and teacher or student context issues (or possibly subgroup issues) identified in pre-observation meeting.</p> <p>Uses the district observation rubric as a framework for differentiating observed teaching practice.</p>

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
3.b.2: Description of observations	Provides only a description or summary of the observation, lacking detail or a clear connection to the priority area and instructional focus.	Describes some details of the observation, including descriptions and summary judgment somewhat aligned to the priority area and instructional focus.	Documents the teaching observation, including attention to specific teaching practices and techniques (e.g., pacing and time, use of technology, connections to curricular standards) aligned with the priority area and instructional focus. Provides descriptive comments, including teacher and student actions. Provides supporting summary judgment. References applicable teacher observation/rubric standards where necessary.	Prepares an annotated and detailed summary and analysis of the observed teaching. Analysis includes specific instructional strategies aligned with the priority area and instructional focus and their effectiveness in supporting student learning needs.

Rubric 3.c: Provide Feedback and Suggest Support

MA Standard 1. Instructional Leadership: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes effective teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

MA Standard 2. Management and Operations: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

How does the candidate foster teacher learning and development?

The primary sources of evidence for Rubric 3.c are Artifacts 3 and 5.

In addition to these primary sources, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
3.c.1: Feedback content	<p>Provides feedback with limited or no connections to observation data and essential qualities of observed teaching practices.</p> <p>Does not maintain a consistent focus from the pre-observation, observation, and post-observation meetings; and data gathering.</p>	<p>Provides feedback with some connection to observations or essential qualities of teaching practice generally connected to the focus area.</p> <p>Generally maintains a common focus across some of the following: the pre-observation, observation, and post-observation meetings; and data gathering.</p>	<p>Links feedback to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified focus area. • Observation data. <p>Provides observation evidence for every conclusion drawn for feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential qualities of observed teaching practice and performance level indicators used in the district/state observation 	<p>Makes a strong connection between student performance indicators and teacher observation analysis in feedback, which is coherent and integrated across the artifacts.</p> <p>Draws connections between the observations and different students' experiences in relation to indicators for the academic priority and instructional focus.</p>

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
			<p>rubric.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher or student issues identified in pre-observation meeting, including the teacher’s priorities for the observation. • Student performance indicators that frame the academic priority and instructional focus. <p>Maintains a consistent focus from the pre-observation, observation, and post-observation meetings through other data gathering.</p>	
<p>Rapport and teacher engagement 3.c.2</p>	<p>Directs the discussion and does not solicit teacher input or opinions.</p> <p>Discussion is directed by the observed teacher with little or no useful feedback provided by the observer.</p>	<p>Presents observation findings and solicits some teacher input.</p>	<p>Engages the teacher in a two-way discussion about his or her teaching.</p>	<p>Engages teacher actively in a two-way discussion and assists the teacher in analyzing his/her own performance.</p>
<p>Teacher development 3.c.3</p>	<p>Directs teacher on steps to improve practice with few references to observation data and few recommended resources.</p> <p>Provides improved practice suggestions that are general or not essential to improving</p>	<p>Provides general suggestions for teacher to improve practice with some reference to the observation data.</p> <p>Provides improved practice suggestions that are relevant and designed to improve teaching practices in at least</p>	<p>Engages teacher actively in a two-way discussion on improving practice and anchors improvement needs in observation data and initial student performance indicators.</p> <p>Provides improved practice</p>	<p>Engages actively in a two-way discussion on improving practice, anchored in improvement needs in observation data and student performance indicators.</p> <p>Identifies resources/support that are tailored to teacher’s</p>

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	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
	teaching practices as identified in the teacher observation.	one area identified in the teacher observation.	<p>suggestions that are relevant to the priority academic area and designed to improve teaching practices in two or more areas identified in the teacher observation.</p> <p>Identifies available references, resources, or strategies.</p>	<p>specific needs.</p> <p>Engages the teacher in proposing ways to improve instructional practice and means of monitoring and following up.</p> <p>Provides improved practice suggestions that target key ways for the teacher to improve student learning in the priority area.</p>

Rubric 3.d: Assess: Analyze and Identify Implications

MA Standard 2. Management and Operations: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

MA Standard 4: Professional Culture: Promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

How does the candidate assess his/her skills in observing, assessing, and providing feedback?

The primary source of evidence for Rubric 3.d is Commentary.

In addition to this primary source, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
3.d.1: Assessment of leadership skills and practices	Discusses leadership in general, if at all, but not relative to this task.	Conducts a general analysis of some leadership skills and practices used in completing this task, without drawing on specific experiences. Recaps the steps taken in completing the task with little evaluation of his or her leadership skills.	Evaluates relevant leadership skills and practices needed to complete this task, by drawing on specific experiences. Identifies what worked well and what he or she could have done differently. Identifies changes that could be made to improve his or her leadership skills in the future.	Evaluates relevant leadership skills and practices used in completing this task, based on experiences, and describes how he or she adjusted leadership practices throughout the task. Solicited feedback on his or her leadership skills from stakeholders involved in this task. Identifies what worked well and what he or she could have done differently and proposes specific steps to improve his or her practice.

Task 4

Leadership for Family Engagement and Community Involvement

What Do School Leaders Need to Think about When Promoting Family Engagement and Community Involvement?

In Task 4, school leadership candidates develop a plan and implement one of the strategies described in it to improve a priority area through family engagement and community involvement. The goal is to support student learning in a school priority area they select. The priority area can be related to student academic performance (e.g., a priority academic area from another Task) or to health, emotional, and/or social needs that impact learning. **However, whether directly academic or focused on health, emotional, and/or social needs, the priority area must be one that impacts student learning. If selecting a health, emotional, and/or social needs issue, the candidate must make clear connections between the focus area and students' academic achievement through available data. Candidates must use available state assessment data (ex: MCAS) or local assessment/student academic achievement data to justify a connection to the specific priority area, as well as research when applicable. The focus of this task is not to promote community engagement solely for its own sake.**

The following are not acceptable priority areas because they are not sufficiently focused on specific student academic performance, or on health, emotional, and/or social needs and their connection to student achievement: **attendance, absenteeism, discipline or behavioral issues, graduation or retention rates, or AP enrollment.** While these concerns may be a secondary issue related to an academic area or to health, emotional, and/or social needs, they cannot be the primary focus when promoting family engagement and community involvement.

The following example is helpful in illustrating how to select a priority area using available research and student achievement data to justify a Task 4 strategy.

For the past three years, the X school has witnessed a number of changes in students' **health, emotional, and/or social needs**, which affects their achievement in the classroom. Depression and cyberbullying in particular have been the focus of discussions in professional development, faculty meetings, and content-specific PLC meetings. In PLC meetings, student-level MCAS ELA achievement data has been analyzed. This data

shows that students who experience depression and bullying score on average 20% lower (or one achievement category lower) than their grade-appropriate peers. ELA common assessment data (ex: midterms and final exams) demonstrates that this same group of students trail their peers by one full letter grade in reading and writing to text. Reducing both depression and cyber-bullying are also part of the school and district-wide strategic plans. Research from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has produced a model that has been proven to increase academic achievement for students with a variety of social-emotional learning needs (Tolen, et.al, 2017; CASEL, 2019). The team will consider this research, data from meetings referenced above, as well as the school's/district's strategic plan in order to formulate a plan of action that enlists parents and the community to reduce depression and bullying in order to increase student achievement.

As part of this task, you will work collaboratively with school leaders, staff, families, and community representatives through a working group that you form with family and/or community member representation. The candidate should form an initial idea about what the priority area should be after looking at available data in order to make appropriate selections for the working group. However, **the final selection of a priority area that impacts student learning should not be determined solely by the candidate** but by a collaborative group, which must include parents and community members. As an example, a candidate might designate 4th grade ELA close-reading skills for ELL students as a Task 4 priority area after carefully analyzing ELA MCAS data, as well as 4th grade first term common assessment data and school and district improvement plans, and consulting with the 4th grade PLC teachers and members of the PTO. In this example, the group will meet throughout the investigation, planning, and strategy implementation process to investigate an area of academic concern, construct a plan, and implement a strategy. Throughout Task 4, the candidate should emphasize a collaborative approach to determining the priority area that impacts student learning, devising a plan to address the priority area, and implementing the strategy.

For the purposes of this task, consider various types of family and community engagement that could be developed or improved as a means for addressing the priority area and thus **improving student learning**, such as sharing information about student learning issues; communicating about student performance and related school matters, and responding to communication from the school; engaging family and community members in volunteering and supporting classroom and school activities (in relation to student learning needs); helping families to extend learning at home; involving family and community representatives in decision making on school matters related to the improvement of student learning; and accessing and utilizing community resources and services in ways that support student learning in the priority area directly or indirectly.

With your working group, develop a plan, including multiple strategies, that supports and improves the priority area and thus improves students learning. Do not simply plan a series of events to expand community engagement in the school for its own sake. It must be clear that the purpose of the community engagement is improving the priority area.

Overall, it is important for a school leader to know the school, the priority area and how different groups of students may have different experiences with it, and the school's current approaches to family engagement and community involvement in support of this priority area and the challenges it must overcome. In addition, you must make connections to relevant research on leadership and family engagement and community involvement.

Your work on this task should directly relate to [MA Professional Standards and Indicators for Administrative Leadership](#) and draw on state guidelines on [Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals](#). You may also reference [Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement in Massachusetts](#).

Consider what defines “family” in the school’s context. Family includes any caregiver who can support students educationally and play a central role in children’s school and home experiences, such as parents, guardians, siblings, other relatives, and other child-care providers.

Also consider what “community” means in the school’s context. It can include educational, health, recreational, social, cultural, and community-based organizations that serve the students. Community can also comprise local businesses; nonprofit organizations; libraries; religious organizations; parks and recreation departments; higher education institutions; and social service, police, juvenile justice, and other governmental offices that have an interest in the educational well-being of the students or can provide educational resources. Lastly, any other local individuals with an interest in students’ education as part of their civic interest can be part of the community.

What Do You Need to Do to Complete This Task?

- Select a priority area (such as the focus for the other tasks) based on student performance evidence (and on student differences in performance), or on evidence of student **health, emotional, and/or social needs needs that impact student learning**.
- Engage a small working group of school staff and 2-3 family and community

members (individuals who represent family and/or community groups) that represent diverse interests and who are directly impacted by the priority area.

- Meet regularly, in convenient times and locations, to create an engagement plan and prepare for the pilot implementation of one of the plan's strategies.
- Gather, analyze, and interpret school and community context information, data on student needs, and evidence related to existing family engagement and community involvement and needs, in relation to the priority area, by examining existing policies, strategies, programs, and practices.
- Develop a plan to address the priority area that involves school staff, family, and community members, in collaboration with the working group. The plan should have several well-justified strategies to improve family engagement and community involvement in relation to the priority area, based on data or research, and be connected with the school and district plans for family engagement and community involvement.
- Pilot one strategy, proposed in collaboration with members of the working group, that engages families and/or communities in addressing the priority area; document the implementation process.
- Assess the implementation process and initial outcomes, including those relating to the improvement of student learning or addressing student health and social needs that impact student learning.

What Do You Need to Consider to Complete This Task?

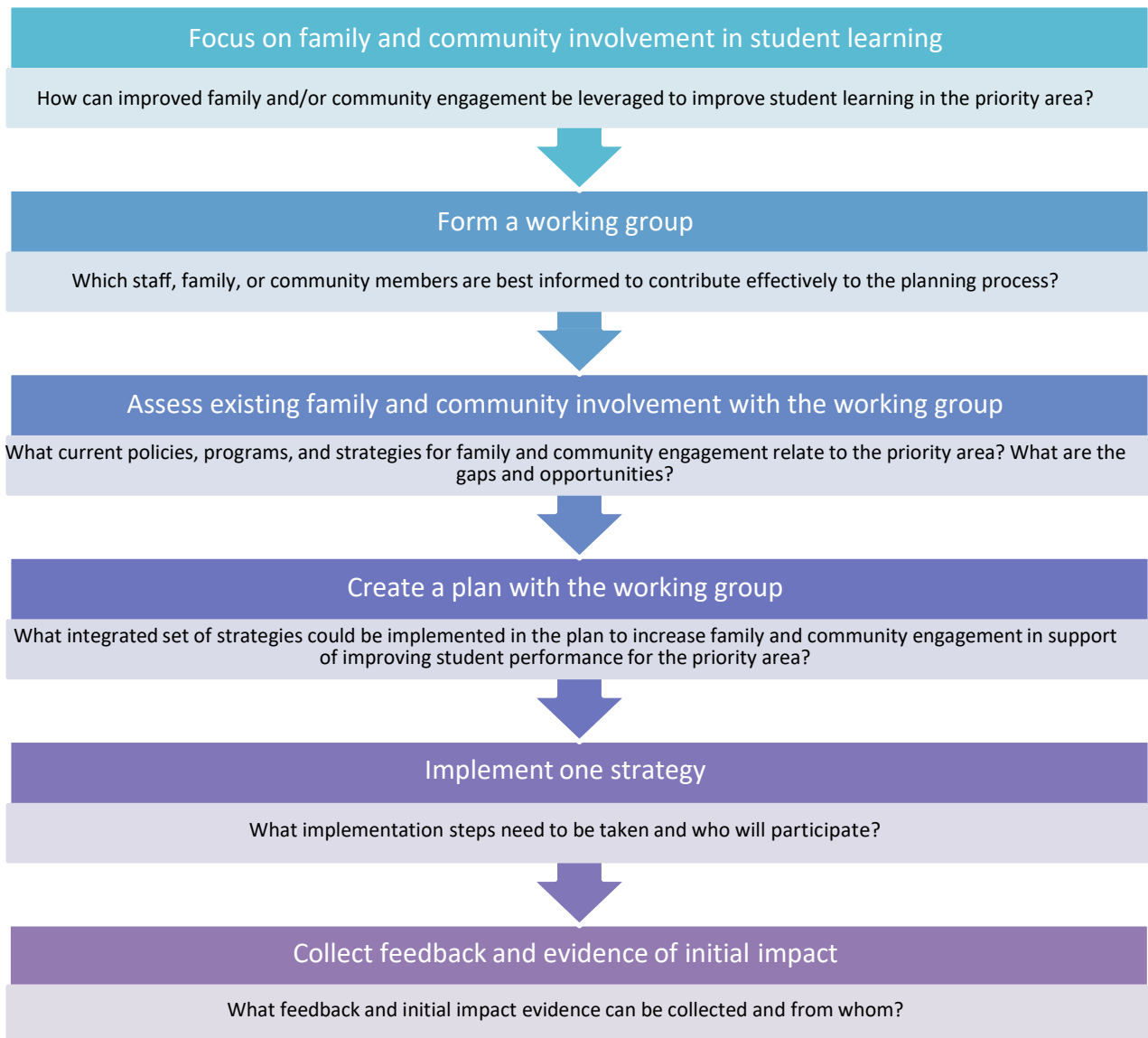
- How do family engagement and community involvement relate to the priority area that you selected? What evidence is available to support its selection? What is currently being done to encourage family and community participation in student learning, and what are the gaps and opportunities?
- How can improved or increased family and community engagement around the priority area leverage improvements in that area? How can family and community representatives of diverse interests be involved in the planning and implementation process in addressing the priority area?
- What family engagement and community involvement strategies can best support improved student learning or address student health and social needs that impact the priority area? What family and community resources could be used to support the priority area?
- How can reciprocal (two-way) family engagement and community involvement be fostered?

- What does it mean to engage families and the community with a school to support student learning or to meet student health, emotional, and social needs?

The Components of the Task

Your investigation should progress through the inquiry process illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Task 4 Planning and implementing a change for improved family or community engagement



Component 1: Investigate

Based on your initial idea for a priority area, identify two or three individuals from each of the following two categories: (1) key school staff (including teachers), and (2) family members and/or community representatives who represent diverse interests and who can be most supportive of your efforts to improve or increase family and community participation. **Please note: category 2 representation must be individuals not employed within the school.** With this group, select and finalize a priority area for this task based on evidence related to student academic performance and student performance differences, or on another student need that can impact student learning (such as a health, emotional, or social need). School leadership and family and community support are essential for this process. The group may be newly formed for this task or be all or part of an existing group. Most importantly, the group should be collaborative in determining the priority area that affects student learning, co-constructing the proposed plan, and implementing one of the plan's strategies.

With this school-family-community working group, meet two or more times for planning and to support the implementation of one of the plan's strategies, scheduling regular meetings with the working group at convenient times and in convenient locations either inside or outside of school. Throughout the task, clearly document how the group members participated.

With the group's assistance, identify existing school policies related to the priority area and relevant programs and services that the school provides. Gather evidence on how family and community members already participate and are engaged in the school's programs and services, and on the effectiveness of the programs and services. Evidence of school-family-community engagement might include family member attendance and participation in student-related events, teacher and family member survey responses on school communication and student learning support, family member use of learning resources and services for improving student learning (or related student health and social needs), participation in policy and program decision-making groups, observations of family and community support of student learning (or related student health and social needs), the existence of partnerships with local agencies and businesses, and/or the findings from focus groups with relevant parties.

Also with the group's assistance, identify gaps or needs for improved family engagement and community involvement related to the priority area.

The primary focus of this task is to improve student learning by addressing the priority area, a goal that families and the community can support directly or indirectly.

Consider how family engagement and community involvement can help address needs related to student academic performance and/or to health, emotional, and social issues that can impact learning, particularly for federally designated priority student groups (students with disabilities; English language learners; African American, Hispanic, and Native American students; low-income students; and students performing below state proficiency levels) or other groups that are a priority in your school.

Consider how improving family engagement and community involvement relates to school or district priorities for improving student learning.

Component 2: Prepare

With the working group, prepare a focused and coherent plan to improve school-family engagement and community involvement. Include in it well-justified strategies for improving policies, practices, and programs that are applicable to the priority area and that support the school’s and district’s mission and priorities. Strategies can focus on changes in policies; the improvement, expansion, or tailoring of existing practices; or the development of new programs and practices.

The goal of the strategies is to create opportunities for families and community members to directly support and enhance student learning or to address related student health, emotional, and social needs that impact student learning directly or indirectly. A persuasive theory of action—an explanatory map of how certain policies and practices will improve specific outcomes—should inform the development of the strategies and be presented in the plan. Draw on current research and best practices to identify strategies that are responsive to the school’s priority area and feasible within the school and community culture and context. Then select for implementation one or more of them.

In addition to providing a blueprint for the development and implementation of the strategies, the plan should include steps to assess their implementation and outcomes.

Document the working group’s role and input in preparing the plan. Before finalizing it, solicit feedback from school leaders and the broader school-family community and obtain their support to implement one or more strategies. Such feedback and subsequent revisions should be reflected in the final version of the plan.

Include the following specific elements in the plan:

- Goals and objectives, including the scope and nature of the family and community

engagement desired.

- A set of two or more action strategies to improve family and/or community engagement in relation to the priority area.
- A theory of action and rationale for how these strategies will lead to improved family and community engagement in ways that contribute to addressing the priority area and thus improved student learning.
- Existing resources to be accessed and new resources required.
- The roles and responsibilities of group members or staff who will implement the plan and its strategies.
- Actions to engage families, community members, and school staff to support the plan's implementation.
- A timeline for implementing the plan and selected strategies.
- The proposed evaluation technique and feedback method to determine how the plan and selected strategies lead to the intended outcomes.

Consider strategies that foster an inclusive school culture by developing reciprocal school-family engagement and community involvement and by sharing knowledge and responsibility that strengthen the capacity of families and community members to become active partners in student learning and that develop the sensitivity and skill of school staff in engaging and working productively with family and community members to improve student learning.

Such strategies should be culturally responsive and based on student, family, and community needs and priorities. They might also take different forms at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Consider the ways that the proposed plan specifically addresses a specific group of students relative to the priority area.

Component 3: Act

You must implement one family and community engagement strategy from the plan. Implementation should be undertaken in cooperation with school staff and family and/or community members, particularly those from the working group. The implementation process can include piloting a new or improved program or practice, developing and implementing a new policy, and/or creating new roles for family and/or community member involvement.

Consider a policy, program, or communication strategy that creates new, or enhances existing, forms of family and community engagement and involvement, that also improves or increases the number and diversity of family and/or community participants, and that leads directly or indirectly to improved student learning in the priority area. Consider, as well, how the strategy can be integrated within the school and will be sustained over time.

Document the implementation of the strategy and the ways that family and community members are involved. Describe your role and the working group's role in this process. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of implementation and the ways that its enactment enhanced family and community participation. Identify problems that arose and document how they were addressed. Cite any evidence that demonstrates that these actions have already contributed to improved student learning.

Component 4: Assess

Solicit and analyze feedback from working group members on the feasibility, usefulness, and benefits of the school-family engagement and community involvement plan and implemented strategy. Collect information and documentation to show how the program, practice, or policy was implemented; how it has enhanced family and community participation; and how it addressed the priority area.

Solicit feedback from the working group members and school leaders about your leadership effectiveness in focusing on a high priority area, working with the group, developing the plan, and implementing a strategy.

Analyze the effectiveness of the planning and strategy implementation process that you and others used, particularly in how actively family and community members were involved. Discuss the implications for sustainability and future development or expansion of the strategy in this area.

Artifacts, Documents, and Commentary

This section provides instructions for school leadership candidate submissions for the review process:

- Confidentiality and Anonymity Form. An editable version is available within the ePortfolio system. You are required to complete and upload this form for each task.
- Your three artifacts.
- Other relevant documents that support your artifacts.

- Your commentary in narrative form in response to a series of prompts about the development of your leadership skills while completing this task.

Artifacts

The artifacts that you submit for scoring, each in a separate file, are described below.

The artifacts submitted must represent authentic work completed by candidates and members of the working groups formed for three of the tasks. Listed below are descriptions of the artifacts required for Task 4.

As you discuss each step of the implementation process for Task 4, you should do so clearly and using the active voice. An example (for artifact 2) would be the following: “Parent members of our team provided support to students during the academic intervention block by delivering math lessons and tutoring students.” Be sure to actively describe in detail each step of the planning and implementation process.

Artifact #1: Analysis of the Data, Priority Area, and Plan

In a **proposal** of up to five single-spaced pages (up to 2,500 words) written by you to the principal or superintendent, submit a plan to improve or increase family engagement and community involvement with the purpose of improving student learning (directly or indirectly) related to a **priority area** (as described above). Specifically, the document must provide the following information:

- A description of, and justification for, the selection of a priority area for the plan’s focus, related to student academic performance or student health, emotional, and social needs that impact student learning, which will serve as a focus for improving family and community involvement. Include an **analysis of state assessment data (e.g., MCAS) or local assessment/student academic achievement data** related to the **priority area**. Explain how the team analyzed the data in order to determine a plan of action. Provide all relevant documents related to the team’s data analysis.
- A list of members (by category) of the small working group of representative school staff, family, and community members that you assembled; the rationale for including each member in the group; and a description of the group’s purpose.
- A description of the ways that the group worked together, including the number of meetings, the members’ roles and responsibilities, the issues discussed, and the actions taken. Include a discussion of your own role in these meetings.
- An analysis and interpretation of school and community context information relevant to the priority area and based on an examination of existing policies,

strategies, and programs; and relevant information about existing family engagement and community involvement. Describe the sources of evidence.

- Information received from family and community members and staff about the gaps or needs for improved family engagement and community involvement to address the priority area. Describe the sources of evidence for this input.
- A plan for improving family engagement and community involvement in a priority area, with a compelling rationale justifying the proposed strategies. The plan must include the following elements:
 - Goals and objectives, including the scope and nature of the family and community engagement desired.
 - A description of two or more action strategies to improve family and community engagement in relation to the priority area.
 - A description of the theory of action and a research-based rationale for how these strategies will lead to improved family and community engagement in ways that contribute to improved student learning or related student health and social needs.
 - A list of existing resources and new resources required.
 - Definitions of roles and responsibilities of group members or staff or other stakeholders who will implement the plan.
 - Descriptions of actions to engage constituents, such as families, community members, and school staff, to support the plan's implementation.
 - A timeline for implementing the plan and its strategies.
 - A proposed evaluation and method for obtaining feedback to determine how the plan and selected strategies lead to the intended outcomes.
 - A description of individuals who contributed to the plan and how.

Note: Synthesize the data used to define your student priority area and the focus selected. Do not present tables of information without interpretation and conclusions about the focus used for this task. Use tables of data judiciously to guide and inform readers. Include all components.

Artifact #2. Implementation of One Strategy

In a **memo** of up to three single-spaced pages (up to 1,500 words) written by you to the principal or superintendent, provide the following information:

- A detailed description of the strategy that was implemented, with justification for starting with this choice and information about how it addressed the priority area that affects student learning.
- An outline of the steps taken to implement the strategy, identification of the roles

and responsibilities of those who enacted it, and a list of the resources used. Clearly explain your own role in the implementation process, including your role in supporting group members' research and work on the priority area that affects student learning.

- A description of how families, community members, and students were involved, and how they are benefiting from or being impacted by the strategy. Include quantifiable evidence on family, community, and student participation.
- A discussion of the strengths and weaknesses evidenced during implementation of the strategy, with an identification of problems that arose and the way they were addressed or would need to be addressed in the future. Describe the sources of evidence for this discussion.
- A discussion and compelling explanation of the ways the strategy enhanced family and community participation. Provide quantifiable evidence for this explanation and recommendations for improving and sustaining the strategy.

Artifact #3. Feedback

In a **report** of up to three single-spaced pages (up to 1,500 words) written by you to the principal or superintendent, present an analysis of feedback from working group members and school leaders and other staff and stakeholders that includes the following:

- A description of the individuals who provided feedback on the design and execution of the plan and implemented strategy and how the feedback was collected. Include quantifiable information on the number of individuals and the nature of their feedback. As you explain feedback, differentiate it by group or individual.
- A summary analysis and interpretation of the feedback pertaining to the following questions about the plan:
 - How feasible is the family and community engagement plan for the school setting?
 - In what ways can the plan increase, improve, and diversify family and community engagement?
 - In what ways are the proposed strategies expected to improve or increase family and community engagement in order to improve student learning (or related health and social needs)?
 - How culturally responsive is the plan for the families, the community, and the school?
 - How can the plan be improved?
- A summary analysis and interpretation of the feedback pertaining to the

implemented strategy:

- In what ways did the strategy improve or increase family and community engagement?
- In what ways did (or will) the strategy address the priority area, and thus improve student learning?
- How can each strategy’s design, implementation, and use be improved?
- How sustainable is the strategy?
- A summary analysis and interpretation of the feedback pertaining your leadership skills, including:
 - A description of which group members provided feedback, including differentiated feedback by group member.
 - A description of your group facilitation, strategy planning, and implementation skills

Documents by Category

Documents that must be submitted are supporting materials used by you and the working groups to complete the task. These documents provide supporting evidence pertaining to the task work and are necessary to inform scoring.

In addition to the artifact files described above, submit the following documents used in the task, using a separate file for each of these three file categories:

- **Category #1:** Evidence compiled to justify the priority area selected and the role for family and community engagement.
- **Category #2:** A summary of relevant school policies and a description of currently implemented strategies and programs for family engagement and community involvement.
- **Category #3:** Evidence of existing participation and engagement of families and community representatives for the priority area. Include quantifiable information, and where applicable, any questionnaire or survey instruments and feedback received from participants and working group members.

Commentary

You must submit a clearly presented and well-focused written commentary that explains how you accomplished the task.

Write a personal commentary of up to two single-spaced pages (up to 1,000 words) on your own learning and leadership development through this experience. Avoid simply

recapping the steps you took to complete the task and focus on the analysis of your leadership for developing a plan to improve family and community engagement and implementing at least one strategy described in the plan. It is critical to include your own learning about your leadership and ability to foster community engagement.

The commentary should not be a description of all of the actions you took to complete the task or a reiteration of the group's work accomplished, which has been covered in other artifacts and documents. Rather, identify and describe the leadership skills you used over the course of the Task 4 project. Where applicable, provide examples of these leadership skills in action. Be sure to reflect upon the leadership skills you used and describe how your leadership skills developed or changed over the course of the Task 4 project.

Specifically address your leadership skills and practices in response to the following questions about aspects of this task.

- How did you determine the priority area and the needs for improved family and community engagement in relation to this priority area? What particular lessons did you learn that may shape your leadership approach going forward?
- How did you form a working group and engage others in the planning process throughout the planning and implementation process?
- How did you facilitate development of a culturally responsive plan?
- How did you implement a strategy and address implementation opportunities and challenges?
- How did you garner support and solicit feedback for the plan and strategy among working group members? Family and community members? School leadership team members?
- How did you foster diverse family and community participation throughout planning and implementation?
- What problems did you face and what successes did you achieve in facilitating improved family and community engagement? Describe any adjustments you made to your leadership practices throughout the task. How did your leadership skills change over time?
- What insights did you gain about a leader's role in facilitating family and community engagement? What would you do differently to improve your ability to foster engagement? Why would you take these new steps? Include specific examples of what worked well and how you would improve your leadership skills in the future.
- Identify your successes and challenges as a leader in completing Task 4. Explain what

you would have done differently, based on your experiences.

- Identify the implications for your future school leadership work, including acknowledgement of your strengths and areas for growth, proposing what skills and practices you need to improve to develop further as a school leader.
- What feedback did you receive from working group members, school leaders and other stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers or administrators outside of the working group, and/or parents and community members) regarding your leadership during Task 4, and how can you use this feedback to improve your leadership practices moving forward?

Task 4 PAL Evidence Chart

This chart provides a list of all required work products for PAL Task 4, as well as a description of supported file types for submission. Your PAL work products must conform to the artifact, document, category, and commentary specifications for each task. Candidates are required to submit all artifacts, commentary, and relevant documents without any information that would identify them (e.g., candidate name), their school or district, individual students, staff, and others who were part of task completion.

Note that your evidence cannot contain hyperlinks to required uploads. Any web content you wish to include as part of your evidence must be submitted as a document file, which must conform to the file type requirements listed below.

Please refer directly to the Artifacts, Documents, and Commentary section of Task 4 in this handbook for detailed requirements pertaining to the intent and content requirements of each file.

PAL Task 4 Evidence Chart: Leadership for Family Engagement and Community Involvement				
Part	Work Product / Evidence	Specifications (if required)	# of Files	Acceptable File Types
Part A	Confidentiality and Anonymity	Template provided	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part B	Artifact #1 - Analysis of the Data, Priority Area, and Plan	Max 5 single-spaced pages (no more than 2,500 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part C	Artifact #2 - Implementation of One Strategy	Max 3 single-spaced pages (no more than 1,500 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf

PAL Task 4 Evidence Chart:				
Leadership for Family Engagement and Community Involvement				
Part D	Artifact #3 - Feedback	Max 3 single-spaced pages (no more than 1,500 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part E	Category Documents 1) Priority Area Justification 2) Summary of Policies and Strategies 3) Participation and Engagement of Families	Separate file(s) for each of these 3 file categories	3	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
Part F	Commentary	Max 2 single-spaced pages (no more than 1,000 words)	1	.doc; .docx; .odt; .pdf
<p>The maximum size for any individual file is 500 megabytes (MB). There is no limit on the number of MB uploaded for an entire task. The success of an upload through any application depends heavily on the type of network, the file size, and the network capacity at upload time.</p>				

Note:

Scorers are not required to read artifacts and commentary that either exceed or do not meet the requirements. Submissions that fall far short of the required word length are likely to lack sufficient information and detail, which would adversely affect how the scorers evaluate the work products and thus the candidate’s potential score.

If any submitted materials do not meet the [Submission Requirements](#), a condition code may be applied during the scoring process instead of a numerical score. If a condition code is applied to **any indicator**, the entire task will be unscorable. If your complete submission, or portions thereof, cannot be scored due to failure to meet Submission Requirements, no refund will be issued and no portion of your assessment fee can be applied to the cost of any future PAL registration or associated services.

Please consult the PAL website at www.ma-pal.nesinc.com to review submission requirements, passing standards, and other policies related to submitting and scoring of PAL Tasks.

Submission Readiness

Scorers will be reviewing your submission to determine if you have complied with the [PAL Submission Requirements](#) located at the end of this handbook. If your submission does not meet the Submission Requirements, a condition code may be applied during the scoring process instead of a numerical score. If a condition code is applied to any indicator or rubric, the entire task will be unscorable.

Review the [Task 4 Evidence Chart](#) located in the Task 4 section of this handbook and on the Candidates/Resources page of the program website to confirm your completion of all required work products and specifications.

Before submitting, have you:

- Appropriately **blinded your submission with all candidate, school, district, staff, and student identifying information removed?**

Candidates are required to submit all artifacts, commentary, and relevant documents without any information that would identify them, their school or district, individual students, staff, and others who were part of task completion. This includes screenshots, identifiable school logos and emblems, web addresses, URLs, and website graphics. Candidates must use generic labels (e.g., Principal A, School B, Teacher C, Teacher D), and **not** aliases, pseudonyms, or first names (e.g., Ms. Smith, Mr. Jones, Sally, Tom).

- Completed and uploaded the Confidentiality and Anonymity Form for this task?

To confirm that the work has been appropriately blinded, candidates must submit a completed Confidentiality and Anonymity Form with each task submission, in which they confirm that they have **removed all personally identifying information (e.g., candidate name) and the names of their school, district, staff, and others.**

The editable Confidentiality and Anonymity Form is provided within the ePortfolio system. Candidates are required to **check the boxes** and upload this form for each task.

- Addressed a **priority academic area** or a student health, emotional, or social issue that impacts student learning for the school?
- Cited supporting documents?

Candidates are to cite supporting documents, submitted for each task, in the relevant artifacts for the same task.

Is the submission complete in that it contains all supporting documents in each category? Hyperlinks provided in lieu of required uploads are not permissible.

- Clarified your role?

Candidates must **explain their role** in completing the tasks to ensure authenticity of work being submitted.

In addition, you must describe any and all points of collaboration with any other individual(s), include the rationale or purpose of the collaboration, and clearly state your role in the collaboration and the role(s) of your collaborators. Have you provided appropriate attribution(s), so that scorers are able to differentiate your original work from the work of others?

- Demonstrated feedback collection and use of feedback evidence?

Throughout the four tasks, candidates are asked to collect, analyze, and use feedback on plans, strategies, and collaborative work. In written submissions and supporting documents, candidates must demonstrate that feedback was collected; report on the number and roles of people interviewed, surveyed, or consulted; present analyses; and draw conclusions about the feedback. It is insufficient to present only the candidate's conclusions about feedback received.

- Proofread all documents?

Candidates are to proofread all documents before uploading to:

- Remove all names of the **candidate, school, district, staff, and student identifying information**.
- Correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Candidates are strongly encouraged to compare each artifact against the instructions and rubrics before submission to ensure relevance and completeness.

After uploading into the PAL system and before submitting, candidates are required to check their work to ensure that they do not upload duplicate artifacts and documents or blank files, and that every file can be opened without error.

- Prepared all documents by category?

Submitted documents should be specific to the task and discussed and referenced in the relevant artifact(s). Complete school report cards, school improvement plans, and school handbooks should not be uploaded as documents. Only relevant tables of information or plan and handbook excerpts should be uploaded as category documents and discussed and referenced in the appropriate artifacts.

Documents must be legible. Handwritten agendas and minutes, for example, must be readable.

- Included an analysis of your leadership skills in the commentary?

The analysis of the candidate's leadership skills should be emphasized, regardless of whether the candidate feels the work on each task was successful. Include a description of how challenges were approached. Candidates should describe in detail, with specific examples, their leadership role throughout this task. Candidates should reflect on their leadership strengths and areas for growth, taking into consideration feedback gathered from relevant stakeholders.

- Described a working group and demonstrated family or community member input in the planning process?
- Included evidence that at least one of the plan's strategies was implemented?
- Reviewed the rubrics for this task?

Read the descriptions of each rubric in the next section. The rubrics will be used to score candidates' work. Before submitting, candidates are strongly encouraged to evaluate their work using the rubrics.

Task 4: Leadership for Family Engagement and Community Involvement Rubrics

How Will the Evidence of Your Leadership Practice Be Assessed?

As you prepare your artifacts and commentary, use the following rubrics to guide your thinking, planning, action, analysis, and presentation.

Rubric 4.a: Plan to Promote Family and Community Involvement

MA Standard 3. Family and Community Engagement: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.

How does the candidate document existing family engagement and community involvement strategies to promote a proposal for improving a priority area?

The primary sources of evidence for Rubric 4.a are Artifacts 1 and 3.

In addition to these primary sources, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
4.a.1: Investigation of the priority area	<p>Provides a vague reference to a priority area that impacts student learning.</p> <p>Makes limited or no connection to family and community engagement in defining a priority area that impacts student learning.</p> <p>Does not investigate current school practices or data that focus on family engagement and community involvement.</p>	<p>Identifies a priority area that impacts student learning and makes general use of data.</p> <p>Makes some connection between family and community engagement and a priority area that impacts student learning.</p> <p>Informally or unsystematically compiles information about current practices for family and community engagement.</p>	<p>Clearly defines a priority area that impacts student learning, using available student performance or other relevant data.</p> <p>Clearly explains how developing or expanding family and community engagement would enhance a priority area that impacts student learning or issue impacting it.</p> <p>Systematically describes existing information and data on policies, programs, and</p>	<p>Clearly defines a priority area that impacts student learning and differentiates student needs within it for different student groups using relevant qualitative and quantitative data.</p> <p>Clearly explains how developing or expanding family and community engagement should take into account the different needs and roles of families and community members.</p> <p>Differentiates analyses of</p>

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
			strategies for family and community engagement.	school policies, programs, and strategies for family and community engagement for different student groups in a priority area.
4.a.2: Investigation of work group engagement	<p>Consults with others but does not form a working group.</p> <p>Demonstrates little or no evidence that family or community members were involved in the planning process.</p> <p>Does not explain the candidate’s role in the working group.</p>	<p>Forms a working group that meets once.</p> <p>Includes one family and/or community member in the planning.</p> <p>Generally consults with school leaders, staff, and family and community members in the planning process.</p> <p>Provides a general description of the candidate’s role in the working group.</p>	<p>Forms and facilitates an ongoing working group.</p> <p>Includes two or more family and community members in the planning process.</p> <p>Actively engages appropriate representative school leaders, staff, and family and community members as working group members in the planning process.</p> <p>Explains the candidate’s role in facilitating the working group and supporting the research and planning.</p>	<p>Forms and shares leadership with an ongoing working group.</p> <p>Forms a working group representative of school leaders, staff, and family and community members in the planning process.</p> <p>Uses various strategies to seek input from the larger family or community membership to inform planning and decision making for the engagement plan.</p> <p>Explains the candidate’s role in facilitating the working group, sharing responsibility, supporting the research and planning, and engaging the broader parent and community members in the planning process.</p>

<p>4.a.3: Preparation of the plan, including strategies</p>	<p>Proposes an idea with few of the plan elements listed in Artifact #1.</p> <p>Has only one strategy. Lacks a rationale for how the plan will improve or increase family involvement or improve student learning.</p>	<p>Proposes a plan with some supporting detail and plan elements listed in Artifact #1.</p> <p>Has a plan with two or more strategies.</p> <p>Has a vague rationale for how the plan will improve or increase family and community engagement in the priority area.</p>	<p>Develops a complete, detailed plan.</p> <p>Includes two or more distinct strategies that focus on the same priority area issue.</p> <p>Explains how the plan is responsive to family and community engagement in the priority area.</p>	<p>Develops an integrated, coherent plan with a compelling rationale focused on a priority area of student learning.</p> <p>Has a plan with two or more distinct strategies that focus on the same priority area issue and reflect different groups and needs.</p> <p>Provides evidence on how the proposed strategies will improve or increase family and community engagement and contribute to improved student learning.</p>
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Rubric 4.b: Implement an Engagement or Involvement Strategy

MA Standard 3. Family and Community Engagement: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.

How does the candidate implement an effective strategy to improve family engagement or community involvement?

The primary source of evidence for Rubric 4.b is Artifact 2.

In addition to this primary source, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
4.b.1: Implementation of the strategy	<p>Claims to have implemented a family and community engagement strategy with little or no description of steps or evidence.</p> <p>Does not describe how family and community members participate in the strategy.</p> <p>Does not explain the candidate’s role in implementing the strategy.</p>	<p>Generally describes the strategy that was implemented and the implementation steps.</p> <p>Describes limited family and community involvement in participating in the strategy or in benefiting from it.</p> <p>Describes generally how the candidate was involved in implementing the strategy.</p>	<p>Clearly describes the strategy that was implemented.</p> <p>Provides detailed description of the implementation steps, roles, resources used, and challenges.</p> <p>Provides some detail on how the strategy involved family and community members in the implementation and how it benefited or impacted the targeted family or community group.</p> <p>Describes the candidate’s role in implementing the strategy.</p>	<p>Provides a coherent, detailed description of the strategy and implementation steps, roles, resources used, and challenges encountered.</p> <p>Provides detail on how the targeted family and community group members benefit from, or are impacted by, the strategy.</p> <p>Describes the candidate’s role in the implementation and how he/she shares responsibility in implementing the strategy.</p>

Rubric 4.c: Analyze Feedback from Participants and Assess Leadership Skills

MA Standard 3. Family and Community Engagement: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.

MA Standard 4. Professional Culture: Promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

How does the candidate assess the effectiveness of the proposed plan and implemented strategy and his or her own leadership role?

The primary source of evidence for Rubric 4.c is Commentary.

In addition to this primary source, relevant information found in other parts of the submission may impact the score for each rubric.

	Beginning (1.00 to 2.09)	Developing (2.10 to 2.74)	Meeting (2.75 to 3.49)	Exceeding (3.50 to 4.00)
4.c.1: Assessment and analysis of feedback on the family and community engagement plan and strategy	<p>Provides a summary assessment of feedback on the plan or strategy but not both.</p> <p>Provides little or no detail about which individual(s) provided the feedback and how feedback was obtained.</p> <p>Does not collect feedback from working group members.</p> <p>Does not clearly explain the candidate’s role in collecting feedback.</p>	<p>Collects feedback on the plan from some working group members.</p> <p>Collects feedback on the implementation strategy from some working group members.</p> <p>Collects feedback on the implemented strategy from some family or community members who participated in the strategy.</p> <p>Provides a cursory analysis of feedback in a summary form.</p>	<p>Systematically collects, analyzes, and interprets feedback from working group members to determine the effectiveness of the plan and strategy.</p> <p>Systematically collects, analyzes, and interprets feedback from family and community members who participated in the strategy.</p> <p>Clearly explains the candidate’s role in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the feedback</p>	<p>Coherently analyzes and interprets feedback from working group members about how and in what ways the plan and strategy were effective and impacted the priority area.</p> <p>Provides evidence on how the feedback was collected and from whom.</p> <p>Collects, analyzes, and interprets family and community member feedback on the implemented strategy, differentiating by relevant</p>

		Explains the candidate’s role in collecting feedback.	data.	subgroups. Draws implications for future development of the plan and strategy and the strategy’s sustainability. Explains the candidate and work group members’ roles in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting feedback.
4.c.2: Assessment of leadership skills and practices	Discusses leadership in general, if at all, but not relative to this task. Does not evaluate relevant leadership skills.	Conducts only a general analysis of some leadership skills and practices used in completing this task, without drawing on specific experiences. Identifies the steps taken in completing the task with little evaluation of his or her leadership skills.	Draws on specific learning experiences to evaluate his or her leadership skills. Identifies what worked well and what he or she could have done differently. Identifies changes that could be made to improve his or her leadership skills in the future.	Drawing on specific learning experiences, describes the relevant leadership skills used to complete the task. Evaluates relevant leadership skills and practices used in completing this task and, based on experiences, describes how he or she adjusted leadership practices throughout the task. Solicited feedback on his or her leadership skills from stakeholders involved in this task.

Candidate Score Reporting and Guidance

Because there are two score components, candidates will have access to two levels of score report detail.

- The first is a score report that shows the detailed scoring information for each task submitted for that specific reporting date. This report shows the indicator, rubric, and task scores for each task submitted for that reporting date, and indicates by task whether the score meets the threshold requirement. From this report, candidates will also be able to access rubric language feedback based on the indicator scores.
- The second is a candidate's best attempt PAL Score Summary Report, which shows the PAL Summary scoring information for the candidate's best attempt for each task. Based on the best attempt, a total PAL score is displayed that indicates whether the candidate has passed the PAL assessment by earning a total score that meets or exceeds the required total passing score in place.

Note: Best attempt applies only at the task level, not at the indicator level. A candidate cannot combine best indicator scores across multiple submissions to determine an overall task score.

Additional information is available on the [Candidates/Scores](#) page of the PAL program website, including:

- [Understanding Your PAL Score Report](#)
- [Retaking PAL](#)

Submission Requirements and Condition Codes

Condition Codes

In order for your PAL submission to be scored, it must meet the [Submission Requirements](#). If your submission does not meet these requirements and your submission or portion of your submission is deemed unscorable, the task(s) will be marked as “Incomplete” and your associated score report will specify one or more of the following “Condition Codes” indicating the requirement(s) that were not met. Where applicable, examples of reasons why a particular condition code may be assigned are provided as an illustration for candidates. Please note, however, that these are examples only and not a complete list of reasons.

Condition Code	General Reason for Condition Code	Associated Task(s)			
		1	2	3	4
A*	Work is not blinded*	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	Does not address a priority area related to student academic performance or for Task 4 to the health, emotional, and/or social needs that impact learning	✓	✓	✓	✓
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Does not include all supporting documents, or; ■ Incorrect file provided, or; ■ Missing artifact or referenced artifact not submitted, or; ■ Blank or incomplete artifact submitted, or; ■ Inaccessible file (file could not be opened for technical reasons), or; ■ Hyperlinks are provided in lieu of required evidence, or; ■ Confidentiality and Anonymity Form has not been completed or is missing 	✓	✓	✓	✓

Condition Code	General Reason for Condition Code	Associated Task(s)			
		1	2	3	4
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Videos are not of the appropriate length (15 minutes) or quality, are edited, or are unplayable/inaudible, or; ■ Video cannot be played, or; ■ Video is of insufficient technical quality to view, or; ■ Video is not the required length of 15 minutes, or; ■ Teacher or candidate is not visible in the post-observation video, or; ■ Missing translation required for videos where instruction is delivered in a language other than English, or; ■ Video is edited and is not a continuous segment 			✓	
E	Does not describe a working group and/or does not include family or community input		✓		✓
F	A strategy was not implemented		✓		✓
X	No numeric score due to Condition Code(s) elsewhere in task	✓	✓	✓	✓

(*Submissions prior to 2018–2019)

***Condition Code A** may be assigned to uploads throughout Tasks 1–4 if materials have not been properly blinded with **all** candidate, school, staff, and student-identifying information removed.

Condition Code B may be assigned to uploads throughout Tasks 1–4 if your work does not address a priority academic area related to student academic performance or for Task 4 to the health, emotional, and/or social needs that impact learning.

Condition Code C may be assigned to uploads throughout Tasks 1–4 if:

- All required files/documents are not uploaded
- Blank or incomplete artifacts are submitted
- Incorrect files are provided
- Inaccessible files are uploaded (files could not be opened for technical reasons)

- Missing artifacts or referenced artifacts are not submitted
- Hyperlinks to external files are provided in lieu of required uploads. Note: Hyperlinks are acceptable only as references in your citations but will not be used by scorers to access information outside of your submission
- Confidentiality and Anonymity Form has not been completed or is missing

Condition Code D applies to video uploads, and may be assigned in Task 3 if:

- Videos are not of the appropriate length and quality;
- Videos are edited and not continuous
- Videos cannot be played
- Audio cannot be heard
- Unintelligible/unviewable videos are uploaded
- The teacher or candidate is not visible in the post-observation video
- A translation for instruction delivered in a language other than English (in the Task 3 observation video) is not provided. Translations should be appended to Task 3 Artifact #1 (Pre-Observation Template). There is no page limit for required translations into English.

All required files and video components must conform to technical specifications (e.g., format, file type), as identified in the task Evidence Charts in this handbook (also located on the [Candidates/Resources](#) page of the PAL program website), and be viewable by scorers.

After uploading your videos, you must review them in the Pearson ePortfolio system prior to submitting your assessment, even if the video file was playable prior to upload. You are responsible for ensuring that your submitted videos meet the technical specifications and length requirements, and can be viewed by scorers, by confirming successful playback prior to submission.

Condition Code E may be assigned to uploads in Task 2 and 4 if your work does not describe a working group and/or (for Task 4 only) demonstrate family or community member input in the planning process.

Condition Code F may be assigned to uploads in Task 2 and 4 if your work does not include evidence that (for Task 2) a PLC was formed for the purposes of professional learning in the academic priority area or (for Task 4) at least one of the plan's strategies was implemented.

Assessment Policies

The [Candidates/Policies page](#) of the PAL program website contains Registration, Assessment, and Score Reporting Policies.

Candidates are expected to review the policies and will be required to confirm as part of the registration and submission processes.

The following is a brief description of the Assessment Policies.

Rules of Assessment Participation

Rules and requirements for registering and participating in the PAL assessment.

Confidentiality Guidelines

Candidate Confidentiality Guidelines for Video Recording are contained in this handbook.

Video Recording Permissions

Memo from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding use of video. Model consent forms are provided on the program website.

Submission Requirements and Condition Codes

Requirements for a fully scorable task submission and score report codes indicating requirements not met.

Submission Attestations

Candidate confirmation of program requirements that is part of the submission process.

Retake Policy

Rules and guidelines for task retakes.

Strong Examples

A set of strong examples for each of the four tasks is available on the [Candidates/Resources page](#) of the PAL program website.

Glossary

Artifacts. Primary sources of evidence created by the PAL candidate and required for scoring. Each task description designates required artifacts that are described in the Candidate Assessment Handbook. Examples include memos, reports, video recordings, completed templates, and proposals.

Blinding. The required removal of all personally identifying information from all task submission files prior to uploading. This includes any information that may identify a candidate, district, school, university, students, faculty, staff, as well as any person(s) who appear in videos.

Category Documents. Required supporting documents (data reports, school improvement plans, surveys, agendas, etc.) that are specific to the task and category in which they have been collected or developed. Each task description in the Candidate Assessment Handbook defines the required category documents.

Collaboration. Candidates are encouraged to collaborate with others; however, each candidate must submit original work products, in your own words, including written artifacts and commentary, even when the work is created collaboratively. As required in the Rules of Assessment Participation 2.B.1, the candidate must identify any and all points of collaboration with any other individual(s), include the rationale or purpose of the collaboration, and clearly state her or his role in the collaboration and the role(s) of the collaborators. Appropriate attribution(s) must be provided so that scorers are able to differentiate the candidate's original work from the work of others.

Commentary. An original narrative written by the candidate in response to a series of prompts about the development of his or her leadership skills while completing each task. Commentaries are not intended to be collaborative, but are an individual's reflections on leadership skills used to complete task work. Each task description in the Candidate Assessment Handbook includes directions and prompts for the commentary.

Data analysis. Data analysis is a systematic process used to organize and evaluate data using analytic and logical reasoning for the purpose of uncovering useful information and gaining insights to solve a problem.

Data element. Data elements are the specific components that are collected, reviewed, and examined, such as measures of student performance in MCAS scores, attitudes and experiences in survey responses, attributes of classroom practices drawn from observations, participation rates, or attributes of student work. One or more data elements can be gathered from one data source.

Data source. A data source is the entity supplying the data, such as the Massachusetts Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) website for performance and demographic data, or individuals, such as teachers, parents, students, and school leaders who provide information through surveys, interviews, and other types of data collection.

Feedback. Feedback entails soliciting information from stakeholders about specific attributes of a plan, strategy, or experience, such as its quality, feasibility, and relevance to achieving the desired outcome. Feedback is not just an endorsement or agreement about a plan, strategy, or experience. The purpose of collecting feedback is to make revisions to the plan, strategy, or experience to improve the likelihood that it will accomplish the desired outcome.

Priority Academic Area. An area in which improved student performance is desired based on input from staff at the school and district level, and with attention to federally designated priority student groups or other groups that are a priority in the school. Candidates are required to provide evidence that demonstrates the chosen subject or performance area and target student group are priorities.

Strategy. A **strategy** is a new approach or modification of an existing approach aimed at achieving a desired outcome. Strategies are designed to address a specific measurable **objective** or measurable objectives that quantify the desired level of change. Strategies are composed of a series of **steps**, which specify the actions that need to be taken to effectively implement the strategy.