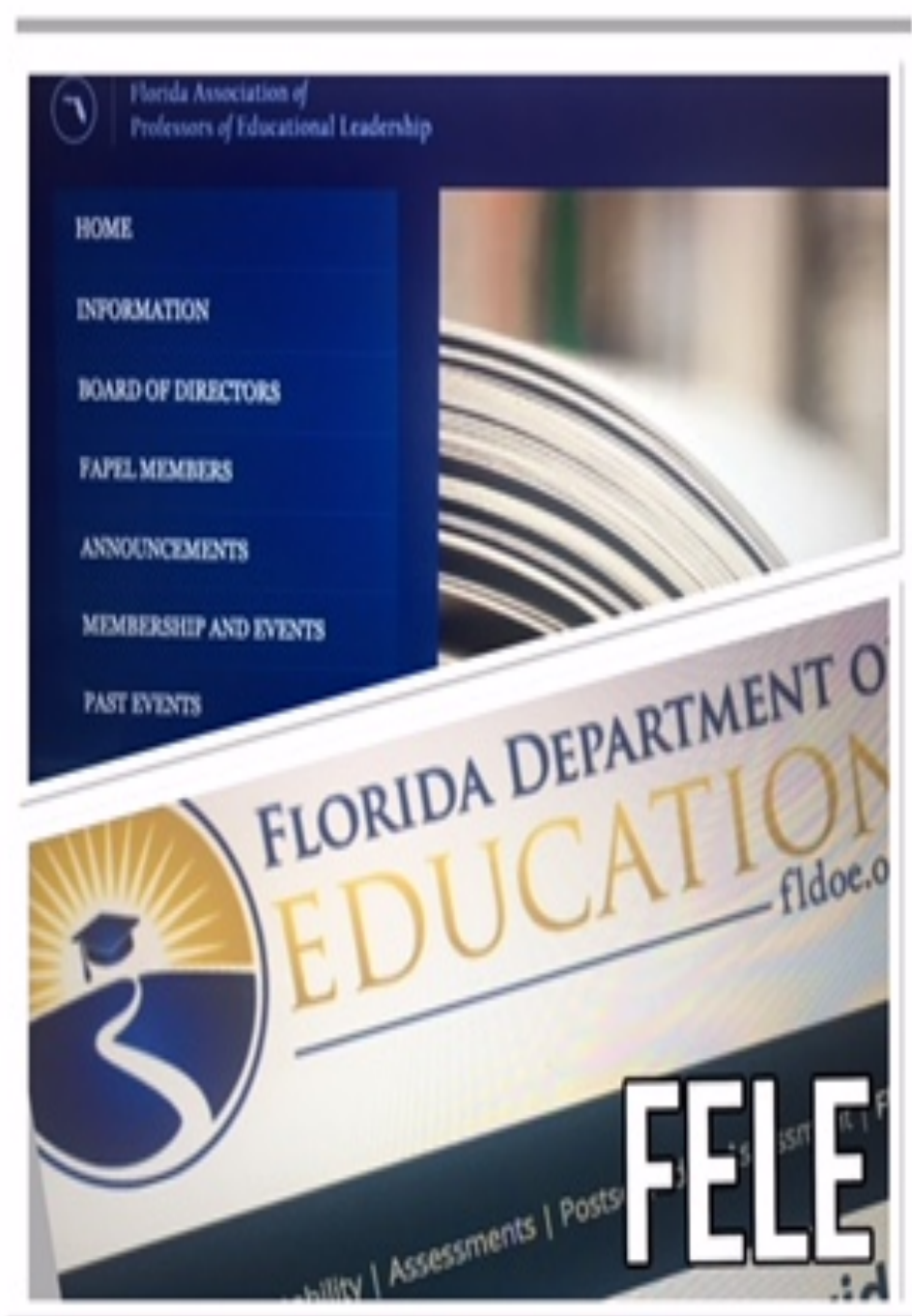


# PREPARING FOR THE FLORIDA EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP EXAM (FELE) 3.0.

## 12 HELPFUL TIPS



**This FELE resource booklet has been prepared for Florida  
Association of Professors of Educational Leadership  
(FAPEL)**

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## The Significance of Leader Certification

Effective organizational leaders possess credentials to signal that they have the skills, knowledge, and experience required to be a successful leader in their profession. School leaders are no different. Thus, in order to become a principal, candidates first must become certified. Certification systems vary by state. In most states, to be considered for licensure, candidates must (a) possess a minimum number of years of teaching experience, and/or (b) hold a master's degree in educational leadership or a closely related field, and/or (c) complete an accredited/approved preparation program. Quality school leaders are second only to teachers in ensuring student success in the classroom.

Additionally, research has shown that knowledge and experience *alongside* pedagogy are needed in order to be an effective principal. Therefore, principal certification systems that carefully certify those candidates who have demonstrated mastery of the skills necessary to be an effective principal are a critical component to improving teaching and student learning.

*Source: UCEA, 2018, ESSA Brief series Issue #4 Certification of Educational Leaders*

## FLORIDA EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP EXAMINATION 3.0

Perhaps your principal has recognized you as a future school leader or your mentor has suggested that you might consider following a school leadership pathway. It is likely that you have spent time reviewing educational leadership programs at the master's level and found there is an enormous choice: state accredited programs, F2F programs, online programs, public university programs, private university programs, for profit institution programs, etc. Perhaps your Superintendent or principal has recommended a specific program, and you know of colleagues that completed the program and are now leading schools. You make your choice and submit the application materials.

Acceptance into a state approved program is rigorous, and the required commitment from you and your principal are considerable but you are undaunted. Eventually after communication, submission of two recent performance evaluations showing effective or higher on *Performance of Students* and *Instructional Practice*, and in some cases an interview during which you have the opportunity to demonstrate your leadership potential i.e. critical skills/dispositions, you have been accepted onto a state approved program and you promise yourself that you will work as hard as you can to develop a scholarly foundation on which to ground your current excellent practice; and to achieve a position as an assistant principal/school leader.

Soon however you realize that to graduate from a state approved program you need to successfully pass the Florida Educational Leadership Exam, known as the FELE. Why? Because the Florida State Board of Education require that candidates seeking certification in Educational Leadership demonstrate a mastery of the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) as defined in [SBE Rule 6A-5.080](#), Florida Administrative Code. FELE 3.0 is aligned to *Competencies and Skills Required for Certification in Educational Leadership in Florida, Fourth Edition 2012*. These revised competencies and skills reflect an alignment to the revised Florida Principal Leadership Standards, Rule 6A-5.080, Florida Administrative Code. As you no doubt know these standards serve as Florida's core expectations for effective school administrators and are based on contemporary research on multi-dimensional school leadership<sup>1</sup>.

Although the FELE is a licensure exam and as such can be regarded as the gateway into an amazing career as a future school instructional leader it frequently strikes fear into an aspiring school administrator especially if test taking was something that you thankfully left behind years ago. So what can you do to help yourself be successful when taking the FELE?

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<sup>1</sup> School principalship certification-Level One is granted when a person completes required coursework and passes the Florida Educational Leadership Exam (FELE). This level allows for persons to apply to the applicant pool for administrative positions in local school districts and state department positions requiring leadership certification (Rule 6A-4.0082, F.A.C.).

Level Two certification is designated as School Principal which requires documentation of successful performance in a leadership position by a comprehensive performance appraisal system, approved by the district school board and the Department (Rule 6A-4.0083, F.A.C.). The majority of Florida school districts require experience as an assistant principal before a person may apply for a principal position. The assistant principalship is the first logical step in the progression of most Florida school administrative careers.

The twelve tips outlined in *The FELE Experience* section are grounded on knowledge of the test and practitioner experience. Read each tip carefully as it will really help you as you prepare for the test. Note that the twelve tips are not tricks or shortcuts to answering the questions but genuine tips that will help you achieve the success you are seeking.

## THE FELE EXPERIENCE

The tips below come from my own personal experience of taking the FELE. Yes, I am an active practitioner and educational leadership faculty but I felt compelled to take the FELE so that I could talk to you authentically about the experience. Taking practice tests in the Turlington Education Building in Tallahassee as a member of a FELE validation committee is not the same experience as taking the test at a test center. So here goes...

It's a long day and due to the cost of the test<sup>2</sup>, the time taken to be thoroughly prepared, and scheduling the test to suit your schedule, you may end up feeling under considerable personal and professional pressure. Obviously, you will do your best but it may help to know how the day is likely to progress. Try to speak to colleagues who have already successfully taken the test. Any tips they can give can only be of help.

I found Florida's Department of Education (FLDOE) interactive *FELE Test Information Guide* (TIG)

[http://www.fl.nesinc.com/studyguide/FL\\_SG\\_about\\_081.asp](http://www.fl.nesinc.com/studyguide/FL_SG_about_081.asp) extremely helpful. So please read the TIG carefully.

Logistically, remember that although your admission ticket will state your appointment time you are required to arrive at the test site at least 30 minutes early

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<sup>2</sup> First attempt \$215 (any combination of subtests). If you need to retake a test then it costs \$150 (a single section of Subtest 3), and \$225 (any combination of subtests).

(late examinees are not allowed to test irrespective of the reason. You are marked as a "No Show" and are not eligible for a refund or credit.)

Once you arrive at the test center you will be required to show proof of identity (as described in the "[Identification Policy](#)"). Surprisingly, attempts at surrogate test taking have been known to occur. A test administrator will sign you in. A digital image will be taken of your palm, and your photograph will also be taken, all for the purposes of identity verification. Finally, you will be required to place your watch, cell phone and other belongings in a locker. Whilst following test protocol is essential I found the process to be quite depersonalizing, and distracting. It caused me to reflect on what was happening around me rather than focusing on the test. So be warned and prepared!

You will be given a specific seat and computer. I also had not given thought to the fact that there would be other people taking tests that might be shorter than the FELE and so there is some background noise from other test takers as they move in and out of the room. Hopefully there is no test taker with a cough or cold. Make sure that you are prepared for temperature extremes.

For a more formal outline of FELE Testing rules and FELE scores you may want to visit [http://www.fl.nesinc.com/FL\\_bulletinforms.asp](http://www.fl.nesinc.com/FL_bulletinforms.asp). This FLDOE FELE website also contains registration and testing program information; online services to register to test or to attend a score verification session; download a *Test Information Guide*.



## TWELVE TIPS

### REMEMBER THAT...

#### TIP #1.

The current FELE (computer based test [CBT]) is aligned with the 2011 Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) ([Rule 6A-5.080, F.A.C.](#)) with which you are no doubt familiar through your Educational Leadership program. In fact a state approved program will cover all aspects of the FPLS. In the syllabus for each course taken in your program you will find a list of the FPLS standards being addressed and the aligned FELE competencies and skills. This is an important part of the syllabus. You need to become familiar with not only the FPLS but also the FELE competencies and skills. This will be helpful to you when taking the FELE, as you will have an awareness of the competencies being tested in each subtest. The 10 FPLS are divided into three subtests.

Subtest 1: Leadership for Student Learning

Subtest 2: Organizational Development

Subtest 3: System Leadership

Written Performance Assessment

**TIP #2.**

It is important to first understand the design and format of the FELE and second to understand the test level of performance required to pass each section of the test.

<b>Subtest 1-Leadership for Student Learning</b>	
<p>Subtest 1 contains approx. 70 multiple-choice questions. You will have 2 hours to complete the subtest.</p> <p>Testing 17 skills or approximately 4 items per skill.</p>	
<b>Test</b>	<b>Competency Name</b>
Subtest 1	Facilitate student learning goals
Subtest 1	Prioritize student learning via leadership
Subtest 1	Develop/implement instructional framework
Subtest 1	School environment for student learning
<b>Subtest 2- Organizational Development</b>	
<p>Subtest 2 contains approx. 70 multiple-choice questions. You will have 2 hours to complete the subtest.</p> <p>Testing 16 skills or approximately 4 items per skill.</p>	
<b>Test</b>	<b>Competency Name</b>
Subtest 2	Recruitment and induction practices
Subtest 2	Faculty/staff development and retention
Subtest 2	Develop leadership w/in the organization
Subtest 2	Personal/professional behavior practices

### Subtest 3 -Systems Leadership

Subtest 3 contains 2 sections-multiple choice questions and a written response. The multiple-choice section contains approx. 55 questions and you have 90 minutes to complete the section.

Testing 15 skills (approx. 3-4 items per skill).

The written performance assessment prompt must be completed in 60 minutes.

Testing 3 skills

Test	Competency Name
Subtest 3	Decision-making processes
Subtest 3	School operation management practices
Subtest 3	Financial and resource management
Subtest 3	School legal practices and applications
Subtest 3: WPA	Effective communication practices

You need to achieve the following scores to pass the FELE

<b>Subtest 1:</b> Leadership for Student Learning	48/70	69% required to pass
<b>Subtest 2:</b> Organizational Development	48/69	70% required to pass
<b>Subtest 3:</b> System Leadership	36/55	66% required to pass
Written Performance Assessment	7/12	59% required to pass

**TIP #3.**

You must also familiarize yourself with the content of each subtest, and the number of multiple-choice questions you will be required to successfully answer to pass the test.

Florida Educational Leadership Examination (FELE) Test Configuration Model				
Subtest Area	Covering Standards	Number of Items	Scoring	Testing Time
Subtest 1: Leadership for Student Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Learning Results</li> <li>• Student Learning as a Priority</li> <li>• Instructional Plan Implementation</li> <li>• Learning Environment</li> </ul>	Approximately 70 multiple-choice items.  Testing 17 skills or approximately 4 items per skill.	Scaled	2 hours
Subtest 2: Organizational Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty Development</li> <li>• Leadership Development</li> <li>• Professional and Ethical Behavior</li> </ul>	Approximately 70 multiple-choice items.  Testing 16 skills or approximately 4 items per skill.	Scaled	2 hours
Subtest 3: Systems Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision Making (multiple choice)</li> <li>• School Management (multiple choice)</li> <li>• Communication (WPA)</li> </ul>	Multiple-choice: approximately 55 items; testing 15 skills (approx. 3-4 items per skill).  Written Performance Assessment (WPA); testing 3 skills.	Multiple-choice: Scaled  WPA: Holistic	Multiple-choice section: 1.5 hours  WPA: 1 hour

**Note:** This test configuration model refers to the new version of FELE that began administration in January 2015.

**TIP #4.**

Each subtest contains questions categorized as low, moderate and high complexity. A low level complexity problem is more than likely to be a closed question i.e. a direct question requiring a one or two word response and frequently requiring memory recall e.g. selecting the correct definition, principle, or statute; solving a one-step problem; recognizing component parts of a large system; or identifying specific theories, units of measurement, text, or mere facts. The moderate complexity questions require reflection, and decision making e.g. bringing together skills and knowledge from multiple domains; solving a problem with multiple steps; using informal methods of reasoning and problem-solving strategies; requiring responses that go beyond the habitual; analyzing a specific problem for the solution; or applying proven theories. Whereas, the high complexity questions are likely to present an authentic scenario that an assistant principal might face such as managing change, teacher feedback, and classroom discipline. Additionally, there may be a data table to analyze. Successfully answering complex questions require the examinee to analyze and apply knowledge and practice e.g. explaining, generalizing, or making multiple connections; solving a problem that requires analysis and synthesis of information; engaging examinees in more abstract reasoning, planning, analysis, judgment, and creative thought; assessing a situation to determine the next step; evaluating student, classroom, or school data; or diagnosing student errors and omissions and selecting a correct methodological response (FLDOE, 2018).

**TIP #5.**

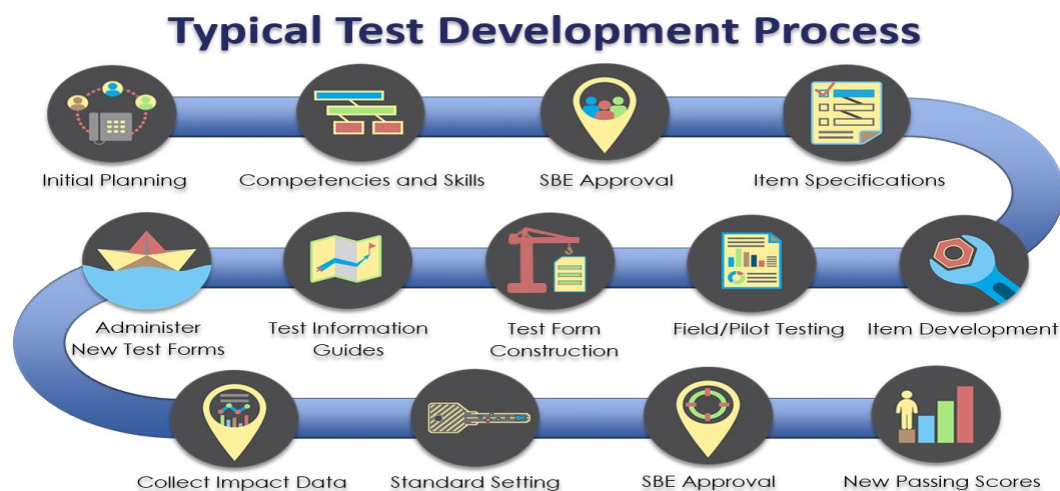
The FELE content is focused on strategies that impact student achievement positively. Throughout the question development process the profile of the target candidate i.e. Beginning Effective School Administrator Candidate (BESAC) is always of prime consideration.

*The beginning effective school administrator candidate (BESAC) understands a core of research on instructional strategies and behaviors, leadership, decision-making models, and state approved academic and accountability standards so that the administrator will have a high probability of positively impacting student achievement, faculty development, school management, and the development of professional and ethical behaviors.*

You will find that many of the questions are focused on the role of the Assistant Principal. Additionally, the question may specifically refer to an elementary, middle or high school. Sometimes this disconcerts students as they think that they are disadvantaged because they have no experience of the school tier. But you will find that the question stem addresses a required FELE competency and skill and that experience of the school tier is not a prerequisite to correctly answering the question.

**TIP #6.**

Irrespective of the question's complexity level you are always asked to identify the best answer from a choice of four possible responses. In a complex question this may sometimes feel overwhelming. Usually there are two responses that you can quickly reject which will leave you with the correct answer and what is known as a "distractor" response. Always go back and reread the question and underline the key words. Make sure that the answer you identify addresses *all* aspects of the question. The questions are not designed to catch you out or to trip you up. Each question stem has only one best response and this answer choice is supported by research, and literature. Additionally, every question has been reviewed by a validation committee consisting of principals, aspiring principals, program faculty and other stakeholders who take the test and spend time reviewing every question to ensure that the question is aligned with the identified FELE competency, there is no bias or ambiguity, and that the question is appropriate for a BESAC (see Figure 1 below for Test Development Process, FLDOE, 2018).



**TIP #7.**

FELE questions relate to Florida and not to a specific school district. It is of no consequence whether you teach in the Panhandle or Miami Dade. Each question has one specific answer supported by literature and research. Every test item has been through numerous test item development, bias review, language and culture comprehension committees.

All FELE test items are developed using processes that are consistent with national standards and best practices for developing large-scale examinations as articulated in *Standards For Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association [AERA], American Psychological Association [APA], National Council on Measurement in Education [NCME], 2014). During the review and validation process subject-matter experts make 2 rounds of judgments on each test item. (You probably know several educational leadership instructors and principals who participated in the process.) Question developers always consider the knowledge and skills that BESACs would be able to demonstrate.

Subject matter experts (Principals, Assistant Principals, and college/university faculty, district curriculum coordinators) take the actual FELE aligned to the School Board of Education (SBE) approved competencies and skills to validate question authenticity, relevance, clarity, and accuracy.



**TIP #8.**

Many of the test items will be focused on a scenario and/or a data table. Read the question before analyzing the table as this will help guide you. The question will never ask for the correct response but it will always ask for the *best* response. You will already be familiar with how to tackle a multiple choice question, but I recommend that you always identify the key words in the question stem and *always* read the last sentence in the question several times to ensure that you are not misled by any of the answers and that you identify the answer that addresses *all* aspects of the question.

In reality you can usually eliminate two responses and you are then left with the distractor and the correct answer. Always remember the focus of the subtest you are taking and the competencies and skills being addressed within the subtest. This knowledge will then direct you to the correct answer. There are no specific tricks in answering the questions. As long as you prepare by reviewing your coursework, and are familiar with FPLS and FELE competencies and skills then the answer will be evident. Lower level questions dependent only on knowledge recall will quickly reveal whether you have prepared appropriately.

Remember that if you have any difficulty answering a question, you may mark it for review and return to it later, but you must respond to all the questions the allocated time.

**TIP #9.**

Subtest 3 of the FELE consists of 2 sections and you must pass both sections (multiple choice and the Written Performance Assessment [WPA]) independently to pass Subtest 3. A total score of at least 7/12 is required to pass the WPA.

The FELE WPA Rubric <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/fele/wpa.asp> is a guide for scoring. This rubric identifies performance features to be judged, including the criteria for evaluating those features, and describes how performance varies across the scoring scale. Written responses are scored using a 6-point rubric (6 is the highest possible score point, 1 the lowest). This rubric applies to all responses for the WPA on Subtest 3 of the FELE.

The WPA written responses are evaluated for content accuracy, data trend analysis, organization, appropriate audience level, and grammar. Scoring raters review the examinee's interpretation of data and writing ability as it relates to the data analysis and target audience identified in the prompt. They specifically look at organization, sentence structure, and mechanics, as well as the accuracy of data interpretation. An examinee's response is judged for its total effect. Three elements (rubric, prompts, and the supplemental rating criteria for the prompts) are used by two separate FELE raters to independently score responses. If the raters' scores differ by more than one point, a FELE Chief Rater resolves the discrepancy.

The supplemental rating criteria (SRC) details elements that should be present in a written response to achieve a particular score. Because these elements depend upon the wording of the prompt, the criteria are specific to a corresponding prompt. FELE raters use the criterion as a supplement to the FELE rubric in order to determine the score of a given written response.

The online [FELE Written Performance resource page](#) also includes several resources intended to further aid examinees in their individual test preparation efforts. These additional resources include an overview of the FELE written performance assessment, rubric and scoring information, sample prompts, and examples of supplemental rating criteria.

[Sample Prompts.](#)

<http://www.fldoe.org/asp/fele/wpa.asp#ratingcriteria>

**TIP #10.**

Whilst you may feel more comfortable purchasing a revision guide (see Amazon) or attending a private revision course this is not a required course of action as long as you do your homework. The FLDOE supply an abundant amount of information on their website about the FELE and whilst they may not provide an actual revision guide they do provide a *Test Information Guide* (7th edition, updated October, 2017) which contains excellent advice and practice questions, reflects the current FELE, and is regularly updated. The *Test Information Guide* (make sure you review the 7th edition) provides a general overview of each Subtest and the Written Performance Assessment (WPA) and can be of assistance in your efforts to create a plan of study prior to your test session. You will also find in the *Test Information Guide* the test blueprint, competencies and skills, and sample test items to help you prepare for the examination. These guides are the only materials the FLDOE endorses and of course the FLDOE guides always reflect current test content and standards as the website is regularly updated.

Additionally, the *Test Information Guide* contains an annotated bibliography that lists textbooks and other resources that address specific competencies covered by the FELE. These references have been fully vetted by committees of subject matter experts in the field of educational leadership and are extremely helpful when studying specific competencies.

In previous years FLDOE *Test Information Guide* has been a PDF. document found on the FLDOE FELE website but in August 2018 it transitioned to an interactive format.

This new, interactive design includes:

- embedded links enabling users to focus on specific areas of interest;
- a single test item and response options on each screen with the related competency also listed;
- the ability to answer the question on the screen and then see whether each question was answered correctly or incorrectly before advancing to the next screen;
- the ability to print individual items or entire sections; and
- a revised introduction with updated preparation strategies and suggested study methods.

**TIP #11.**

There are numerous ways in which you can study for the FELE e.g. PQ4R (Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, and Recite, Review), flashcards etc. Irrespective of the technique used make sure that you know the theory supporting your excellent practice both as a teacher and a future assistant principal. I recommend that you study with a group of peers rather than on your own as they will ensure that you keep to your study plan schedule. I am sure that you will have mastered the exam content but there is always a need to revisit areas of your program in which you feel less confident. A useful tool is the [Test Competencies and Skills to Courses Taken Worksheet](#). Completing the worksheet will help you identify whether any competencies were either not yet covered in your coursework or that for some reason you have missing notes. Studying in a group will help you improve your knowledge in those areas.

It is always best to retain your course textbook, class notes and assignments until you have successfully passed the FELE. Course instructors choose their textbooks with great care. The FLDOE *Test Information Guide* concludes with an annotated bibliography that provides general references that you will find helpful. Each resource is linked to a FELE competency and skill used to develop the FELE. Of course other texts may have been used when questions were being developed but this annotated bibliography is extremely useful and I tend to find that many students are unaware of this resource.

**TIP #12.**

In conducting my own research for FELE preparation I *Googled* FELE Test Preparation and identified several websites focused on FELE revision. Additionally, I purchased available revision texts on Amazon. I found that some of the published revision guides: 1) regurgitate the FDOE *Test Information Guide* and other information given on the FLDOE FELE website; and 2) predominantly focus on a closed questions (low complexity). Remember, the nature of FELE 3.0 questions is very different from the earlier FELE 2.0.

If you are looking for tricks on how to answer FELE questions then you are likely to find them in some of the published guides. But before you make an expensive purchase check the website of the published guide you are interested in. If there are statements on the website about the FELE that you know not to be true then it is unlikely that the text itself is an accurate reflection of FELE. 3.0. Choose wisely but remember to not overlook the FLDOE *Test Information Guide*

[http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/postsecondary\\_assessment/fele](http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/postsecondary_assessment/fele) and the information given on the FLDOE website

[http://www.fl.nesinc.com/FL\\_TIGS.asp](http://www.fl.nesinc.com/FL_TIGS.asp) as the information given and the sample questions are an authentic reflection of the current FELE.

FLDOE preparation materials and resources for the FELE are available for every Subtest. Materials can be selected from a dropdown list at [Preparation and Resource Materials](#). You can also phone 866-613-3281 FELE Customer Service if you have a specific question that you can't find the answer to.

In conclusion

**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
CARRY ON**



## REFERENCES

Florida Administrative Code. Rule 6A-4.0082, Florida School Leaders Certification.

Florida Administrative Code. Rule 6A-4.0083, Florida School Leaders Certification .

## USEFUL LINKS

The FELE interactive *Test Information Guide* (TIG)

[http://www.fl.nesinc.com/studyguide/FL\\_SG\\_about\\_081.asp](http://www.fl.nesinc.com/studyguide/FL_SG_about_081.asp)

<http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/postsecondary-assessment/fele/ftce-fele-cognitive-complexity.shtml>

Frequently Asked Questions

<http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/postsecondary-assessment/faq.shtml#4906>