

North Carolina Principal Portfolio Assessment

Administrative Field Guide for Principal Preparation Programs

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Introduction

This *Administrative Field Guide for Principal Preparation Programs* provides information, suggestions, and support documents for programs that are working with education professionals seeking a school principalship. The purpose of this document is to facilitate the efforts of programs to provide these candidates with guidance as they undertake the three North Carolina Principal Portfolio Assessment (NCPA) tasks and prepare the required work products for each task.

As a resource for preparation programs, [Appendix A](#) of this guide indicates the alignment of the NCPA tasks with the [North Carolina Standards for School Executives](#).

[Appendix B](#) shows the alignment of the NCPA tasks and the [Educational Leadership Coordinating Council \(ELCC\) performance assessment requirements as part of national program accreditation](#).

[Appendix C](#), The Role of K–12 Supervising Practitioners of Leadership Candidates, presents a model explanation for building and district supervisors about each task and how to support principal candidates. This appendix also includes a summary of the three NCPA assessment tasks.

Requirements for Principal Licensure Candidates

With the passage of Session Law 2024-57, any candidate who has not completed at least one course toward a degree or licensure-only program by August 31, 2025, will be required to complete the NCPA for obtaining a principal license. Candidates are required to register for and pay a fee to complete each NCPA 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 NCPA task instructions and rubrics will be reviewed for improvements, required 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 three tasks must be completed.
- Scores must meet state standards for licensure decision.
- Score reports will be released.

Passing Criteria

Criteria for passing the NCPA: To be determined by the North Carolina State Board of Education.

The Role of Programs in Helping Principalship Candidates Complete NCPPA

Knowledge and Use of NCPPA Assessment Information by Program Faculty

Principal preparation programs can take several steps to provide information and support to their participating candidates as they complete the three North Carolina Principal Portfolio Assessment (NCPPA) assessment tasks.

The first step is for the program faculty to become familiar with the NCPPA assessment tasks through the following:

- Attend state meetings and webinars about NCPPA. Notifications of these meetings and webinars will be sent to organizations via email.
- Access the [NCPPA program website](#) for information and resources.
- Review all NCPPA information and materials, including the current NCPPA Candidate Assessment Handbook.

The second step is to share information with candidates and their K–12 school and district leaders:

- Disseminate NCPPA information and links to the NCPPA program website, including online resources and the Candidate Assessment Handbook.
- Host orientation sessions for candidates to become familiar with the NCPPA assessment task expectations and requirements.
- Provide an overview of the NCPPA assessment tasks and field-related expectations to K–12 school and district leaders. A model letter is included in this guide in [Appendix C](#).

The third step is to align the NCPPA assessment tasks and preparation program expectations:

- Identify areas of overlap or potential integration with program courses and assessment requirements.
- Identify ways to integrate the NCPPA assessment tasks into fieldwork requirements and practicum seminars.

- Align the requirements of the assessment tasks for video recording and other forms of data collection for educational purposes with program and district requirements.
- Align the NCPA policies and schedules with program practices to ensure that candidates have sufficient opportunities to learn, perform, and complete the tasks as part of state licensure. Communicate those policy expectations to candidates.

The fourth step is to encourage program faculty and internship supervisors to apply to become scorers. Scorer training and scoring experience will enable them to do the following:

- Become familiar with the NCPA assessment task requirements.
- Learn about the rubrics and the levels of performance. The rubrics and task descriptions are available in the Candidate Assessment Handbook. As part of training, scorers learn to use the rubrics to identify and evaluate evidence in candidates' work products.
- Observe differences among candidates' work submissions.

Information on becoming a scorer is available on the NCPA program website.

The fifth step is to integrate NCPA assessment preparation into the program:

- Assign one faculty member to be the NCPA assessment coordinator who serves as a liaison for sharing information to other faculty, internship supervisors, and candidates, as well as to K–12 school and district leaders.
- Incorporate NCPA assessments as performance assessment evidence for national accreditation requirements.

Program Support for Candidates Completing NCPA

NCPA is a summative, portfolio-based assessment of principal performance. Candidates' primary feedback is through their score reports and task ratings. Candidates' opportunities for formative feedback on their leadership development come through their preparation coursework and field experiences. Professional conversations about leadership, teaching, and school improvement associated with the outcomes assessed in NCPA should occur in an educational leadership program or preparation experience (for candidates in this licensure pathway). Given that candidates can complete NCPA tasks while engaged in a principal preparation program and having field experiences, there are opportunities for formative support using the guidelines discussed in the sections below.

Program faculty and others offering support should stress to candidates that fabricating evidence, duplicating the work of others, not citing sources of information, or plagiarizing work will disqualify their submission and possibly their licensure opportunity. Since candidates will use or adapt existing district or school resources (e.g., school mission statement, teacher observation form) developed by others, they must cite the source of adapted materials appropriately. As well, candidates will be working with others to complete the tasks and must explain in the submissions their own role and the role of others in doing the work and producing artifacts, documents, and commentary.

In addition, in the event that a candidate is collaborating with any other individual in any aspect of NCPPA, the candidate must describe any and all points of collaboration with any other individual(s), including the rationale or purpose of the collaboration, and clearly state their role in the collaboration and the role(s) of their collaborators. **Candidates who collaborate cannot turn in identical artifacts and/or commentaries even when collaboration is present.** Each submission should reflect individual thought and reflection on each task.

Strategies for Formative Support

The most critical support that program faculty can provide is to foster candidates' knowledge and understanding of the NCPPA tasks and their relationship to program coursework, fieldwork, and formative assessment experiences. Preparation program faculty should help candidates examine the specific task requirements of the assessments and discuss how they will demonstrate their performance as aligned to the tasks' expectations. An ideal way to clarify what NCPPA requires *and* to prepare candidates to successfully complete its three tasks is to discuss the rubrics listed with the three tasks (see the Candidate Assessment Handbook).

Programs can provide formative support in courses and/or field experiences prior to candidates' completion and submission of NCPPA work products. Acceptable forms of formative support that programs can offer include the following:

- Distribute NCPPA support documents. These documents cannot include draft or final submissions from NCPPA candidates.
- Provide explanations of terminology and concepts covered by NCPPA.
- Examine the language, structure, and progression of the NCPPA rubrics (see [Appendix A](#)) during formative experiences throughout the program.
- Assign formative tasks during coursework, such as analyzing video clips of teaching, leading a professional learning group of teachers, and analyzing school and district data.
- Use rubric constructs or rubric language to debrief observations made by field supervisors as part of the internship supervision process.

- Offer candidate seminars focusing on the skills and abilities that NCPA requires candidates to possess.
- Arrange technical and logistical support for video recording and uploading documents into the electronic platform.

Acceptable Types of Feedback

Once candidates draft artifacts and commentaries for their summative NCPA portfolio, which will be formally submitted for official scoring, faculty must limit their direction and feedback to candidates. The table below indicates specific types of direction and feedback that are acceptable and unacceptable for program faculty to provide candidates on their NCPA submissions.

Type of Support	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Program resources	Direct candidates to the program website to access the NCPA Candidate Assessment Handbook and additional resources.	Display or advise candidates to post and share their NCPA submissions on publicly accessible electronic platforms or websites. Provide candidate submissions, both draft and final.
Explanations of the rubrics	Explain rubric constructs or rubric language to provide candidates with guidance on how their work products will be evaluated formally once submitted.	Use NCPA rubrics to provide formal feedback and scores on drafts of NCPA work products.
Leadership strategies or materials	Discuss leadership strategies or materials in a seminar or field observation, while leaving it to candidates to make selections and/or adaptations based on their own knowledge of their school, teachers, and students.	Make choices about leadership strategies or materials for the candidate.
Encouragement of collaborative work	Encourage candidates to work with others to complete the performance assessment tasks, including forming work groups. Advise candidates that they must submit original work, even when the work is created	Advise candidates that it is acceptable to submit duplicate artifacts for collaboratively performed work.

Type of Support	Acceptable	Unacceptable
	collaboratively, and provide appropriate attribution to the work of others.	
Feedback	Encourage candidates to reflect on their work products in reference to theory, coursework, and research, and to reach their own conclusions about their leadership practice.	Provide alternative responses to commentary prompts. Suggest changes to make in an NCPA draft or final version. Use NCPA rubrics to provide scores for official NCPA work products.
Editing	Refer candidates to appropriate copyediting resources for grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation.	Edit any commentaries or artifacts.
Electronic platforms	Support candidates' efforts to upload their work products into the electronic platform.	Upload artifacts, documents, or commentaries for candidates.
Technical assistance	Arrange technical resources for video recording and guidance with uploading documents into electronic platforms. Ensure that candidates understand the video requirements for Task 3, as well as the evidence that should be visible in their videos. See "Before Making Video Recordings."	Tell candidates which clips to select, review video clips, and/or offer formal feedback/scoring of the clips. Tell candidates they are exempt from video submissions.

Support for Candidates in Performing and Reporting Shared or Collaborative Work

Task completion requires candidates to work with others in both planning and implementation. In some cases, two or more candidates may be working together to complete their performance assessments. To support candidates as they undertake this shared or collaborative work while producing their own NCPA task submissions, program faculty and staff should guide them to:

- Develop collaborative leadership skills and capacities by seeking input from others, forming work groups, facilitating professional learning or inquiry groups, and working with others to implement strategies.
- Assume leadership responsibilities as part of completing the task. The aim of candidates is not to report on the work of others but to demonstrate their own leadership skills in undertaking the work.
- Explain how shared or collaborative work is undertaken and the roles and responsibilities of others as well as those of the candidates.
- Stress that they are to prepare their own work products, with appropriate attribution for aspects of the work products that were developed with others.

Collaboration and Required Disclosure

Candidates can collaborate with others; however, each candidate must submit original work products, including written artifacts and commentary. **That means that each candidate's submission must be written by the candidate in his or her 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, candidates should 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 their role in the collaboration and the role(s) of their collaborators. Each candidate must provide appropriate attribution(s) so that scorers are able to differentiate the candidate's original work from the work of others. Failure to disclose collaboration as required in this section may result in disqualification of the candidate's submissions and the imposition of sanctions on his or her educator license(s).

Promoting Ethical Assessment Practices

Program faculty can help prevent candidates from cheating, engaging in fraudulent practices, and plagiarizing by explaining how these illegal or inappropriate practices apply to the NCPA assessments and sharing the Rules of Assessment Participation (available on the [NCPA program website](#)). Program faculty should also do the following with their candidates:

- Demonstrate the appropriate means of citing the work of others, including unpublished material and online resources and data.
- Share the program's and its institution's policies and consequences for cheating, fraud, and plagiarism.
- Review the Rules of Assessment Participation and potential consequences for cheating, fraud, and plagiarism.

Administrative Review

- As stated in the Rules of Assessment Participation, 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 the submission but may also include a waiting period before a candidate is able to submit additional tasks and/or a letter of reprimand and other licensure consequences.
- Candidates are able to collaborate with peers on completing any or all tasks. See the ["Collaboration and Required Disclosure"](#) section above to review how candidates should frame their work when submitting for scoring.

The Logistical and Policy Considerations of Preparation Programs

Below are answers to frequently asked questions.

Logistics

Below is a summary of logistical and organizational questions and answers about the scope of the NCPPA tasks and their relationship to coursework and fieldwork

Topic	Answers
About NCPPA	NCPPA is not a timed test but is instead a series of performance tasks. Each of the three tasks requires several work product artifacts, documents, and commentary, as outlined in the task directions presented in the Candidate Assessment Handbook. Specifications for each upload are detailed in the Evidence Charts, which are available on the NCPPA program website . They are all to be prepared on the candidate’s own computer and uploaded to the electronic platform.
Use of the NCPPA tasks in coursework and as assignments	Preparation programs can incorporate some or all of each task and work product expectations into coursework or fieldwork/practicum requirements.
NCPPA tasks not required for coursework or fieldwork	Tasks can be completed independent of program coursework or internship expectations.
Use of NCPPA tasks as part of practicum hours	The fieldwork required to complete the tasks and prepare the work products can be counted toward candidates’ practicum hours.

Topic	Answers
School affiliation required for NCPA task completion	Candidates can complete the tasks without having a formal position in a school. However, candidates cannot do these activities without a school affiliation. The performance assessments are designed to determine whether candidates should receive principal licensure. Thus, candidates must demonstrate their ability to do the work within a school setting. Each task must be completed within a single school setting (e.g., all components of Task 2 must be based on the same school). However, different tasks may be completed at different schools (e.g., Task 1 at one school and Task 2 at another).
Time required to complete tasks	It is difficult to estimate the total amount of time required for several reasons. The time needed to complete a task varies because it depends on the work that candidates are already conducting in their schools, the scope of the issue or priority area they choose to address, and their proposed plans and activities. The tasks are designed to overlap with respect to the priority area selected for the school; therefore, the degree to which candidates can integrate their work on more than one task for a common priority area can limit the amount of total time needed for the completion of all the tasks. Further, the tasks are designed to be authentic work in school leadership and, as such, candidates may do more than the task requires as part of their responsibilities in their school or district. The tasks can be embedded in program coursework and/or added to other course-related requirements. Given these conditions, it is anticipated that it will take candidates 40–80 hours to complete a single task.
Scope of NCPA work and work products	Candidates must use good judgment about what is sufficient in terms of scope and amount of time for a school leader to identify and justify a priority area, develop plans and propose strategies to address the area, and gain input and feedback. Work product page lengths and word counts are provided in the task instructions.

Topic	Answers
Submission content in languages other than English	<p>If a portion of the candidate’s submission (written or verbal) is not in English, a translation is required.</p> <p>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 in video recordings should be translated. There is no page limit for required translations into English.</p>

Frequently Asked Questions

Work Required for a Task

Some of the demographic information is difficult to obtain, such as free/reduced-price lunches for children. How can candidates access this information for the purposes of completing a task?

Candidates should provide as much information as is readily available. Some information may only be available for the school as a whole (such as the number of children eligible for free/reduced-price lunch) and candidates can suggest how a given class of students may be similar to or different from the school-wide data.

Task 1 requires several artifacts and requirements. Do they all need to be submitted separately?

The Candidate Assessment Handbook explains how these documents are to be grouped for submission, and the electronic platform and [NCPPA program website](#) provide online guidance for submission.

Can any reciprocity or compensation be given to individuals who must be observed in order for a task to be completed?

There is no reciprocity or compensation for such individuals except professional courtesy and the opportunity to receive feedback from candidates based on the district or state teaching standards and indicators.

How can a candidate successfully implement classroom observations?

Candidates will need to begin by sharing information about the task requirements with their building supervisors. [Appendix C](#), The Role of K–12 Supervising Practitioners of Leadership Candidates, presents a model explanation for building and district supervisors about each task and how to support principal candidates.

In addition, candidates need to ask about their district’s policy related to informed consent and the video recording of lessons. Informed consent form templates for Task 3, which requires video recording, are provided on the [NCPPA program website](#); candidates must receive signed forms before beginning this task. District permission to conduct classroom observations is needed, and signing a consent form for this candidate activity may help to engage building-level leader support.

If candidates cannot get observation access in their own school or district to complete Task 3, preparation program faculty and internship supervisors should attempt to help candidates obtain access in another school or district as they would for any course-related project, practicum, or internship experience.

Submission and Scoring

Will candidates be prompted for a list of artifacts and other submission materials during the submission process?

All artifacts, documents, and commentary specified in the Candidate Assessment Handbook for each task are required. Refer to the NCPA Evidence Charts on the [NCPA program website](#) for details on each required work product.

The electronic portfolio platform will list the required work products to be uploaded when candidates view a task online. When a candidate is ready to upload materials for a task, the system will indicate the required work products and the upload status of each.

The candidate is required to confirm that each upload appears as intended (videos are playable, documents are viewable, etc.) prior to final submission.

Will candidates receive feedback on their submission?

For each task submitted, candidates will receive an NCPA Score Report, which provides scores at the Indicator, Rubric, Task, and Assessment Summary levels. In addition, the Score Report includes a section describing the candidate's task performance in relation to the indicator language. This information is intended to help candidates identify their relative strengths and weaknesses.

Licensure and Other State Policies

How will the state ensure that candidates get the appropriate support from their district?

DPI is communicating with districts about the implementation of its principal licensure assessment policy and expectations for school and district support. These communications will be posted on the DPI website.

My program has a significant number of out-of-state candidates who will return to their home state to seek licensing. Does this performance assessment apply to them?

NCPA applies only to candidates seeking North Carolina principal/assistant principal licensure.

NCPPA Submission Requirements

Before uploading an NCPPA task, candidates must review the Submission Requirements on the [NCPPA program website](#) to ensure that:

- All evidence necessary for scoring the submitted task has been provided.
- All materials meet the technical specifications as outlined in the task Evidence Charts on the NCPPA program website.

All NCPPA tasks that are successfully submitted in the Pearson electronic portfolio platform will go to scorers for scoring. A fully scorable task is one that can be reviewed by scorers and have scores assigned to every indicator and rubric.

If a candidate 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, the task will be unscorable. See “[Submission Requirements and Condition Codes](#)” section below for more information.

Consult the NCPPA program website to review passing standards to determine the impact of condition codes and an “incomplete” passing status, as well as policies, instructions, and guidance for retaking NCPPA tasks. “Understanding Your NCPPA Score Report” on the NCPPA program website contains detailed information.

Note that any material that is intended to be part of an NCPPA submission must be uploaded to the electronic portfolio platform prior to the final submission of each NCPPA task.

Scorers will not be able to access hyperlinks to documents or webpages contained in submitted artifacts and documents. Hyperlinks are acceptable only as references in citations and will not be used by scorers to reference information outside of a submission.

In addition to these specific Submission Requirements, candidates must also review and comply with all other requirements contained in the NCPPA Candidate Assessment Handbook as well as candidate registration, assessment, and score-reporting policies posted on the NCPPA program website.

Candidates will have the opportunity to review and confirm all materials before submitting for scoring.

Submission Requirements and Condition Codes

In order for an NCPA task submission to be scored, it must meet these Submission Requirements. If a task submission does not meet these requirements, and a submission or portion of a submission is deemed unscorable, the entire task will be marked as “incomplete” and the 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	Reason for Condition Code	1	2	3
A	Work is not blinded	✓	✓	✓
B	Does not address a priority area related to student academic performance	✓	✓	✓
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 	✓	✓	✓
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	✓	✓	✓

Condition Code A may be assigned to uploads throughout Tasks 1–3 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 1–3 if the candidate’s work does not address a priority academic area related to student academic performance.

Condition Code C may be assigned to uploads throughout Tasks 1–3 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 citations but will not be used by scorers to access information outside of the 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/or not continuous.
- Videos cannot be played.
- Audio cannot be heard.
- Unintelligible/unviewable videos are uploaded.
- Teacher and/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 on the [NCPPA program website](#), and be viewable by scorers.

After uploading videos, candidates must review them in the Pearson ePortfolio system prior to submitting the assessment, even if the video file was playable prior to upload. Candidates are

responsible for ensuring that any 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 if the work does not describe a working group.

Condition Code F may be assigned to uploads in Task 2 if the work does not include evidence that a PLC was formed for the purposes of professional learning in the academic priority area.

Candidate Score Reporting and Guidance

As of the date of publication of this document, the North Carolina State Board of Education has not yet determined the criteria for passing the NCPPA. Once those criteria are determined, this document will be updated, and a new version will be released.

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 NCPPA Score Summary Report, which shows the NCPPA Summary scoring information for the candidate's best attempt for each task. Based on the best attempt, a total NCPPA score is displayed that indicates whether the candidate has passed the NCPPA 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.

If a retake(s) is required, the candidate should compare his/her task scores to the task-score threshold requirements listed above and review a pattern of task scores to identify strengths and weaknesses. The candidate will also need to review his/her total NCPPA score as compared to the Total Passing Score requirement listed above.

If the candidate does not earn an overall passing score, there is not one way that he or she must retake tasks. Below you will find three different scenarios to help guide the retake thought process.

- If the candidate's performance is consistent across all tasks and close to the overall passing score, the candidate may choose to select just one task to retake. In this scenario, it may be in the candidate's best interest to retake the task with the lowest score.
- If the candidate's performance is consistent across all tasks but far from the overall passing score, then the candidate may be best advised to select two or more tasks to retake.
- If the candidate's scores are inconsistent across the three tasks—with one or two strong scores—it may be best advised for the candidate to retake the task(s) with the lower scores.

Retake Information

As of the date of publication of this document, the North Carolina State Board of Education has not yet determined the criteria for passing the NCPPA. Once those criteria are determined, this document will be updated, and a new version will be released.

If a candidate does not meet or exceed the total NCPPA passing score, as well as the threshold score on each of the three tasks, he/she may elect to create a new registration to retake a task(s) to improve his/her individual task and overall score performance. While there is no limit to the number of times a candidate may retake the NCPPA, candidates will be charged for each task retake. Retakes of scored tasks that did not meet the minimum threshold for the task or the total NCPPA summary score must include new or substantially revised artifacts and commentaries where original candidate responses are required. Note that candidates may resubmit supporting documents by category (e.g., school or district data, a school plan, or other required components not originated by the candidate) without revision.

Candidates who receive condition code(s) (indicating materials were not scorable) may recreate or revise materials for a retake that specifically address the reason(s) for receiving the condition code(s).

Candidates electing to retake a task or tasks based on a prior submission that received condition code(s) should carefully review all NCPPA Submission Requirements, individual task components, the condition code(s) that were applied and reported in the Candidate Score Report, and specifications for required work.

All work submitted for retakes must be completed according to the task instructions in the current Candidate Assessment Handbook and will be scored according to the rubrics in use during the program year of resubmission.

In all cases, when a task is submitted as a retake the entire task is scored without reference to the previous submission. The highest task level score (not the rubric indicator level score) is applied to the overall NCPPA Summary Score.

All work must be completed following standard NCPPA submission policies and NCPPA Rules of Assessment.

Retakes Based on Scored Tasks

Retakes of scored tasks that did not meet the minimum threshold for the task or the total NCPA summary score must include new or revised artifacts and commentaries where original candidate responses are required. Note that candidates may resubmit supporting documents by category (e.g., school or district data, a school plan, or other required components not originated by the candidate) without revision.

In preparing new or revised materials, candidates must refer to the current NCPA Candidate Assessment Handbook, paying close attention to the task(s) for which new or revised work is being prepared. Candidates are strongly encouraged to review the components of each task and carefully review each artifact against the instructions and rubrics prior to submission, to ensure relevance, completeness, and adherence to rubric and indicator language.

Within each task, candidates should note the Artifacts, Documents, and Commentary requirements. Further, they should carefully review the progression of rubric text differentiating the rubric scores across “Beginning, Developing, Meeting, and Exceeding.”

For example, in Rubric 1c, the candidate may ask herself/himself, “To what extent do I use feedback in analyzing and planning for the priority academic area?” There are two individual indicators in Rubric 1c designed to expand on this guiding question. These indicators signal specific criteria against which submitted materials will be scored. Candidates should thoroughly review, for example, the distinction between a Beginning effort and the descriptions that would indicate an Exceeding score.

Retakes Based on Incomplete Scores

Candidates electing to retake a task or tasks based on a prior incomplete submission should carefully review all NCPA requirements, individual task components, the condition codes that were applied, and specifications for each required artifact. Refer to the condition codes table in this guide and in the NCPA Submission Requirements and Condition Codes on the [NCPA program website](#).

Candidates who receive condition code(s) (indicating materials were not scorable) may recreate or revise materials for a retake that specifically address the reason(s) for receiving the condition code(s). Retake submissions that rectify Condition Codes C, D, or X (e.g., video was unplayable) may include previously submitted materials that specifically address the reason(s) for condition codes being applied. In all other condition code cases (B, E, or F), the candidate must submit new or revised materials that address the reason(s) for the condition codes.

Faculty Confidentiality Guidelines for Video Recordings

Candidate Video Recordings

If a candidate shares his or her video recording with a faculty member, the faculty must treat the video recording as a confidential assessment record.

Faculty members may not:

- Share or post the video on the Internet (e.g., YouTube, Facebook) or other non-secured and/or publicly accessible locations.
- Show any candidate video to or share with any other individual, program provider, or entity unless permission is granted by the candidate and is within the parameters of the release forms the candidate has received for students or adults who appear in the video.

The [NCPA program website](#) provides information for candidates related to the creation, review, and handling of candidate assessment work products, commentaries, and other materials, particularly video recordings.

Video Recording Confidentiality

It is essential that candidates obtain appropriate permission from parents/guardians of children and from adults (e.g., teachers) who appear in video recordings. To assist candidates in obtaining permissions, the [NCPA program website](#) provides information about the nature of the assessment and how assessment materials may be used.

The NCPA program website contains sample informed consent forms for reference. Candidates should consult with their program and school district about other specific policies, procedures, and permissions for teacher, student, and parent informed consent.

Below are the guidelines created to enable candidates to maintain confidentiality and provide assurances for any video recording prepared as part of completing any NCPA task, particularly Task 3. Programs should share and review them with candidates.

Candidate Confidentiality Guidelines for Video Recording

Candidates can submit video recordings as work products for their NCPA tasks, and they 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, submission, and use of videos prepared for the NCPA task requirements.

Before Making Video Recordings

Before candidates record and submit video recordings, they must do the following:

1. Review the Video Recording Permissions policy on the NCPA program website for additional information and a link to sample consent forms provided for reference. Check with the preparation program and school district for other specific information that may be required for inclusion in the release 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 permission forms on file for their use if needed.

While Making Video Recordings

1. Candidates must use generic labels (e.g., Principal A, School B, Teacher C, Teacher D, the school, the district), and **not** aliases, pseudonyms, or first names (e.g., Ms. Smith, Mr. Jones, Sally, Tom) for the school, district, and observed teacher to protect confidentiality. Blind or **remove all names** on any typed or written material (e.g., work products,

commentaries, lesson plans, student work samples, screenshots) or signs within camera range that could identify individuals, including the candidate, or institutions. During video recording, use students' first names only. Candidates may mute identifying information in the audio before submitting the video. However, the video submission must contain audio that is clear and loud enough for scorers to review.

2. In the 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). 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. In the post-observation video, both candidate and teacher must be visible. If both are not visible, a condition code will be applied.

Before Submitting Video Recordings

Candidates must check the **audio** and **video** quality before submitting video recordings. If videos are not of the appropriate length (15 minutes) or quality, are edited and not continuous, or are unplayable/inaudible, they may be assigned a condition code, rendering the task unscorable. In addition, the teacher **and** candidate must be visible in the post-observation video.

Storage and Use of Video Recordings

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

Candidates MAY

- Store/upload their video recordings through the NCPA assessment system.

Candidates may NOT

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

Questions about Video Recording Confidentiality

Below are frequently asked questions and answers.

What documents can be provided for the individual being observed and video recorded that clearly state the video recording is not for public use?

Several documents outline the security features of the NCPA system and how any work product that is uploaded and shared for assessment is maintained in a secure and confidential manner. Only NCPA program staff and trained scorers have access to the work products, and they are required to maintain confidentiality. The exception is that DPI staff may have access to the work products as part of their oversight and project quality control, but for no other purpose, and they must maintain confidentiality.

A confidentiality form is presented on the [NCPA program website](#). It outlines how DPI adheres to all appropriate ethical professional standards for confidentiality and uses candidate work products only for the NCPA assessment system. Included are requirements for candidates on how they must keep their work products (including video material) secure and confidential.

The NCPA program website contains model informed consent forms for districts, observed teachers, students, and their parents, for candidates' assessment tasks. All observed teachers should be provided an informed consent form to sign prior to being observed.

Is the District Informed Consent Form used universally, or can a candidate use a form that is already in place on the district level?

As noted in the informed consent materials, candidates can use the forms already in place in their district unless these are inadequate for the task.

Is there a plan or form for classroom students who are shown in the observation video? Are releases needed for these students?

Model consent forms for observed teachers and classroom students and their parents are presented on the [NCPA program website](#).

Candidates need to find out their district's policy and requirements concerning teacher, classroom student, and parent consent for video recording. Candidates have permission to modify the model consent forms for their own use based on district and preparation program policies and guidelines.

What should a candidate do if permission to make a video recording in his or her school is denied?

Candidates should consult with their preparation programs about gaining access to another school.

Additional Program Policies

The following NCPA Program Policies are found on the [NCPA program website](#):

- Requesting Alternative Arrangements due to a Diagnosed Disability
- Assessment Fees and Payment Information
- Withdrawal and Refund Policy
- Payment Policy
- Use of Materials
- Candidate Confidentiality Guidelines for Video Recording
- Faculty Confidentiality Guidelines for Video Recording
- Changing Your Registration
- Confidentiality of Materials
- Registration Confirmation
- Reporting of Assessment Results to Candidates
- Retake Guidelines for Candidates
- Retake Policy
- Score Confirmation Policy
- Retention of Scored Tasks
- Submission Requirements and Condition Codes
- Submission Attestations
- Rules of Assessment Participation
- Score Void Policy

Exemplars

Anticipated being available in the future, a set of exemplar responses will be posted to the NCPPA program website.

NCPPA Assessments and National Accreditation

NCPPA was designed in part to align to national educator preparation assessment requirements. The Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) is the specialized professional association (SPA) for principal preparation, and it currently requires institutions to submit six candidates' assessments and evidence of candidate performance. They include the following:

- Two content knowledge assessments, one of which can be a state licensure assessment.
- Four professional leadership skill assessments. The summary table in [Appendix B](#) shows our recommended alignment of the four ELCC assessments and the three NCPPA assessment tasks.

It is our judgment that the three NCPPA assessment tasks meet the ELCC reviewer evaluation rubric expectations for alignment, depth, and breadth based on the assessment description, scoring guides, and data reports that programs will be provided. Thus, programs can use the three NCPPA tasks as their performance assessments for national program accreditation purposes.

Programs can only report state-provided candidate scores on these tasks and cannot independently score NCPPA assessment tasks for assessment purposes.

Appendix A

NCPPA Rubric Alignment to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Standards for School Executives

- Standard 1: Strategic Leadership
- Standard 2: Instructional Leadership
- Standard 3: Cultural Leadership
- Standard 4: Human Resource Leadership
- Standard 5: Managerial Leadership
- Standard 6: External Development Leadership
- Standard 7: Micropolitical Leadership
- Standard 8: Academic Achievement Leadership

Task 1

NCPPA Rubric	Standards for School Executives
Rubric 1.a: Investigate and Prepare a Vision	NC Standard 1. Strategic Leadership
Rubric 1.b: Design an Integrated Plan for Strategies to Develop and Implement Improvement in the Priority Academic Area	NC Standard 1. Strategic Leadership NC Standard 2. Instructional Leadership NC Standard 4. Human Resource Leadership NC Standard 6. External Development Leadership
Rubric 1.c: Assess and Analyze Feedback from Participants	NC Standard 2. Instructional Leadership NC Standard 3. Cultural Leadership

Task 2

NCPPA Rubric	Standards for School Executives
Rubric 2.a: Plan to Facilitate Group Learning	NC Standard 3. Cultural Leadership NC Standard 4. Human Resource Leadership
Rubric 2.b: Enact a Professional Learning Culture to Support Team Learning	NC Standard 3. Cultural Leadership NC Standard 4. Human Resource Leadership
Rubric 2.c: Assess Team Learning to Improve Ongoing Group Learning	NC Standard 3. Cultural Leadership NC Standard 7. Micropolitical Leadership

Task 3

NCPPA Rubric	Standards for School Executives
Rubric 3.a: Plan	NC Standard 2. Instructional Leadership
Rubric 3.b: Conduct the Observation	NC Standard 2. Instructional Leadership
Rubric 3.c: Provide Feedback and Suggest Support	NC Standard 2. Instructional Leadership
Rubric 3.d: Assess: Analyze and Identify Implications	NC Standard 5. Managerial Leadership

Appendix B

Alignment of Educational Leadership Constituent Council Requirements and NCPA Tasks

The [Educational Leadership Constituent Council \(ELCC\)](#) requires programs, as part of its national accreditation review process, to submit evidence of candidates’ “professional leadership skills” through four performance assessments (and two knowledge assessments). The table below demonstrates the alignment of the ELCC required performance assessments (assessments 3–6) and the three NCPA tasks.

ELCC Assessment Requirements	NCPA Tasks
Assessment 3: Demonstration of candidate application of building-level leadership skills in instructional leadership	Task 2: Instructional Leadership for a Professional Learning Culture
Assessment 4: Demonstration of candidate application of building-level leadership skills in a school level internship/clinical practice setting(s)	Task 3: Leadership in Observing, Assessing, and Supporting Individual Teacher Effectiveness
Assessment 5: Demonstration of candidate application of building-level leadership skills that support an effective P–12 student-learning environment	Task 1: Leadership through a Vision for High Student Achievement
Assessment 6: Demonstration of candidate application of building-level leadership skills in organizational management and community relations	Task 1: Leadership through a Vision for High Student Achievement

Appendix C

The Role of K–12 Supervising Practitioners of Leadership Candidates

Preparation program faculty and internship supervisors are strongly encouraged to share information with relevant entities and individuals about the PPA assessment tasks and the nature of the work that candidates must complete in a school setting. To facilitate this communication, a model letter for school and district leaders (particularly supervising practitioners) is presented below. It includes an overview of the NCPA assessments, a summary of the field-based requirements for each task, ways that supervising practitioners can support candidates, and a summary of the three tasks. These materials can be adapted for program use.

Sample Introductory Letter to a Supervising Practitioner

Dear [Supervising Practitioner],

This letter introduces you to North Carolina's performance assessment for principal candidates and the work that your own leadership preparation candidate will undertake as part of this assessment. It also invites you to become a trained scorer.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requires candidates to complete the Performance Assessment for Leaders (NCPA) when seeking initial principal licensure. This performance assessment is a key component of NC DPI's strategy to support educator development and is aligned with other key department initiatives, including educator evaluation and leadership preparation program redesign. (For more information on the assessment system and its development, see the [NCPA program website](#).)

DPI launched the implementation of all three NCPA leadership assessment tasks beginning in August 2025 (a description of the tasks is appended). To be eligible for licensure, principal preparation candidates must complete three tasks and submit work products for scoring.

The identity of the school, district, and candidate will be maintained confidentially, and the results of the candidate's work will only be used to improve the performance assessment tasks and system for future licensure purposes.

Detailed information on how you can support a candidate in completing the tasks is attached.

Thank you for your support of this work and the development of your candidate who is preparing for principal licensure. Your contribution is an essential and highly valued part of the assessment development process. If you have any questions, please refer to the [NCPA program website Contact Us page](#).

Sincerely,

Principal Candidate

How School-Based Supervisors Can Support Task Completion by Candidates

Task 1: Leadership through a Vision for High Student Achievement

This task allows leadership candidates to demonstrate their ability to develop a vision of high-quality student achievement and a plan for improving learning in a priority academic area for a target group of students.

To complete Task 1, candidates must do the following:

- 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 student groups, based on the information collected and analyzed.
- Provide special attention to student groups, particularly members of student groups who have been identified as a priority at the individual school level.
- Collect additional qualitative and quantitative information, including findings from observations, staff and student interviews, focus groups, and surveys pertaining to student, teacher, and school cultures for the priority academic area.
- Document existing school programs, services, and practices that are relevant to the priority area and ascertain the gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- Develop a plan with a vision, goals, and a set of action strategies to improve student learning in the priority area.
- Solicit feedback about the need for attention to the proposed priority area and proposed plan from school leaders and key stakeholder groups in the school and its community.

To help a candidate complete Task 1 successfully, a supervising practitioner needs to do the following:

- Provide access to available data on student performance and school context and culture, and documentation on relevant programs, services, and practices.
- Support identification of a priority area, target group of students, and staff to provide input and guidance.
- Grant the candidate permission to collect additional information from students, staff, and families through interviews, observations, or surveys.
- Provide guidance in developing appropriate action strategies.
- Give feedback on the proposed plan's focus, strategies, and operational elements.

We ask that you, as your candidate's supervising practitioner, support this candidate in undertaking all phases of this task and provide direction on the steps required to gather available data and collect new information.

The candidate's work to complete this task should be beneficial to your school's improvement work by providing in-depth inquiry, analysis, research, and focus to a priority area for a targeted group of students. The quality, relevance, and utility of the analysis and proposed strategies are key to how the candidate demonstrates skill proficiency.

Task 2: Instructional Leadership for a Professional Learning Culture

This task requires that leadership candidates work with a small group of teachers in their school to engage as a team in structured learning activities to address a focus area within a priority academic area of interest. As part of this task, candidates work with the group to define the focus area and pilot a new curriculum, instructional approach, assessment procedure, or student engagement strategy. Using structured team-building and group-process activities, candidates prepare and support the group's learning and then assess their own learning through group feedback on their leadership skills and practices.

To complete Task 2, candidates must do the following:

- Document relevant school context information, including school and district goals and vision, and policies that support professional learning.
- Select a priority academic area of interest for improvement. (This can be the same priority that was identified in Task 1.)
- Map out the existing types of teacher teams or staff groups, their membership, and the ways that they are used in the school.
- Identify teachers who are interested in the priority academic area of interest to be members of a professional learning group and provide a rationale for their inclusion.
- Work with the group to identify an area of focus within the learning priority area for team learning and improving practice.
- Facilitate group learning activities.
- Collect evidence of the group members' roles in selecting the student learning priority area; the team's learning activities; and the curriculum, instruction, assessment, or engagement strategies to try out for new or improved practice.
- Collect evidence on new or improved practices that the group piloted (individually or collectively) and analyze their initial impact on student performance.

- Analyze the teachers' professional learning and collect group member feedback on the effectiveness of the group regarding teaching, learning, and improvement of practice, and on the candidate's facilitation and support.

To help a candidate complete Task 2, a supervising practitioner needs to do the following:

- Provide access to relevant information on the school context, goals, and policies, particularly as related to professional learning.
- Provide an overview of the teacher teams and groups already organized in the school.
- Support selection of a priority academic area for improvement.
- Support identification or recruitment of a group of teachers to engage in group learning over two to three months or longer.
- Enable meeting times for the group.
- Support collection of information through interviews, observations, or surveys on the implementation of team learning activities and the new or improved practices that the teachers try out.
- Provide feedback on the strategies and other work of the candidate and the group.

We ask that you, as your candidate's supervising practitioner, support the candidate in undertaking all phases of this work and provide direction on the steps required to gather available data and collect new information as needed, if formal school or district permission is required. The candidate's activities to complete this task should be beneficial to your school's improvement work by supporting teachers to improve their practice in relation to a priority area. The quality, relevance, and utility of the team's learning and new or improved strategies are key to how the candidate demonstrates skill proficiency.

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

This task allows leadership candidates to demonstrate their ability to observe a classroom teacher, assess the teacher's standards-based teaching strengths and weaknesses, and provide feedback to help that teacher become more effective and improve the performance of all students.

To complete Task 3, candidates must do the following:

- Identify a student priority academic area (such as used in Tasks 1 and 2) and a content and instructional focus (considering district, school, and teacher team priorities, where possible).

- Select a teacher to serve as a volunteer and select a class session for observation. Provide a rationale for the selection.
- Visit three or more similar classes (as in a walk-through or instructional round process or other brief visit) and examine samples of student work and teacher assignments to learn about instructional practice that is common in the school for the priority area.
- Conduct a pre-observation meeting with the teacher where the teacher and the candidate review pre-observation data, instructional goals for the lesson and unit of study, and the teacher's instructional strengths and areas for improvement. Identify areas of focus for the observation as defined by the candidate's analysis 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 of the classroom observations.
- Analyze the teaching observation using the district's observation guide and state teaching standards and indicators.
- Identify the teacher's instructional strengths and one or more areas for improvement. Gather information on available support for the teacher to improve instruction.
- Conduct at least one post-observation feedback session with the teacher, discuss plans for improvement, and identify possible sources for professional learning for the teacher. Prepare a continuous, unedited 15-minute video segment of the post-observation feedback session.
- Gather feedback from the teacher to assess his/her leadership skills in the pre-conference, observation, and post-conference feedback.

To help a candidate complete Task 3, a supervising practitioner needs to do the following:

- Provide information on school and district policies and practices for teacher observation and feedback.
- Help the candidate identify an instructional focus and a teacher volunteer.
- Support visitations to three or more similar classes and review of student work.
- Provide the opportunity to conduct a pre-observation, observation, and post-observation meeting with the teacher.
- Provide guidance on permission to video record the teacher observation and post-observation meeting.
- Provide guidance in developing appropriate feedback and teacher support.

We ask that you, as your candidate's supervising practitioner, support this candidate in undertaking and completing all phases of this task and provide direction on the steps required to conduct a teacher observation, including arranging for formal school or district permission if required. The candidate's work to complete this task should be beneficial to your school's improvement work by providing one teacher with substantive feedback and support around an instructional priority. The quality, relevance, and utility of the analysis and proposed strategies are key to how the candidate demonstrates skill proficiency.

Summary of the Three NCPA Assessment Tasks

Task 1: Leadership through a Vision for High Student Achievement

Focusing on two pillars of highly effective schools—the instructional program (curriculum, instruction, and assessment) and the school culture—a candidate will develop a school vision and improvement plan for one school-based priority area. The candidate will collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data on student performance, on student and teacher relationships, and on the school culture; select a priority area for focus; document existing school programs, services, and practices; and develop a set of goals, objectives, and action strategies with input from school leaders and key stakeholder groups.

Task 2: Instructional Leadership for a Professional Learning Culture

A candidate will demonstrate personal capacity to foster a professional learning culture to improve student learning by working with a small group of teachers using structured learning activities to improve the teachers' knowledge and skills. The candidate will support teachers in improving an existing curriculum, instruction, or assessment strategy while also documenting the process, teachers' teamwork, and improved practices.

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

A candidate will demonstrate instructional leadership skills to plan for a teacher observation, conduct the observation, analyze the observation and student data, provide feedback to the teacher, and plan support for that teacher. A candidate will document his or her work in the observation cycle and teacher feedback on the quality and use of the feedback.