



CENTER FOR  
**School Turnaround  
& Improvement**

WestEd  Systemic Solutions  
for Student Success



# STRATEGIES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE FOUR DOMAINS FOR RAPID SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK



**The Center for School Turnaround and Improvement (CSTI)** at WestEd is a nationally recognized leader in the research and development of solutions that support systemic improvement for all schools. We work with you at all levels—from state education agencies to districts to individual schools—to identify and help sustain evidence-based, promising practices that ensure equity and drive systemwide change for rapid improvement.

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# Introduction

This document was developed for school leaders to use as a supplement to the Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement: A Systems Framework<sup>1</sup> and related survey system.

The strategies and suggestions are intended to guide and support school leaders as they develop improvement plans and identify action items to carry out. The guide was initially developed for schools that are using the Four Domains Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning (CALL) survey and feedback system—leadership teams can use the CALL survey results to inform their focus on the sections of this guide that might be most useful for developing and implementing a school improvement plan appropriate to their particular context.

Even if your school does not use the CALL survey, though, this guide can help focus your improvement efforts on strategies that match your school's needs. The guide is organized by the Four Domains framework, which was created by WestEd's [Center for School Turnaround and Improvement](#) (CSTI, formerly named the Center on School Turnaround) to outline the critical practices of successful school turnaround in the domains that research and experience suggest are critical to rapid and significant improvement.

The four domains and each domain's three practices for educators engaged in school and district improvement efforts are as follows:

## **Domain 1 – Turnaround Leadership**

- Practice 1.1: Prioritize improvement and communicate its urgency
- Practice 1.2: Monitor short- and long-term goals
- Practice 1.3: Customize and target support to meet needs

## **Domain 2 – Talent Development**

- Practice 2.1: Recruit, develop, retain, and sustain talent
- Practice 2.2: Target professional learning opportunities
- Practice 2.3: Set clear performance expectations

## **Domain 3 – Instructional Transformation**

- Practice 3.1: Diagnose and respond to student learning needs
- Practice 3.2: Provide rigorous evidence-based instruction
- Practice 3.3: Remove barriers and provide opportunities

## **Domain 4 – Culture Shift**

- Practice 4.1: Build a strong community intensely focused on student learning
- Practice 4.2: Solicit and act upon stakeholder input
- Practice 4.3: Engage students and families in pursuing education goals

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1 The Center on School Turnaround. (2017). *Four domains for rapid school improvement: A systems framework*. WestEd. <https://www.wested.org/resources/four-domains/>

For each of these 12 practices, organized by the four domains, this guide outlines actions that leaders can implement to support rapid improvement at the school level.

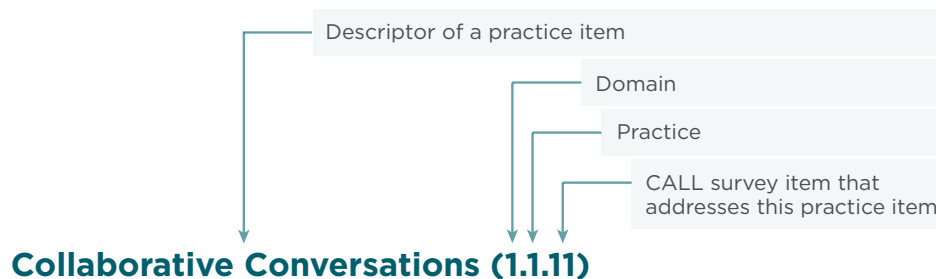
## Navigating This Guide

Following these introductory sections, the remainder of this guide is organized by the Four Domains framework, with a chapter on each of the framework's 12 practices.

Each chapter begins with a brief description of the practice and a school-based example. Then each chapter covers a number of practice items—each practice item is the topic of a CALL survey item related to the Four Domains practice. Sections on the practice items describe a desired future state and provide strategies, suggestions, and reflection questions to help guide your school's efforts toward reaching that desired state as you focus on a particular aspect of rapid school turnaround.

Each practice item section is titled with a short descriptive name and a set of numbers in parentheses. The numbering system corresponds to the Four Domains framework and the numbering of items in the CALL surveys. The practice item “Collaborative Conversations,” for example, is labeled “1.1.11.” In that label, the first number represents the domain (Domain 1) and the next indicates the practice within that domain (Practice 1). The last number (“11” in this example) represents the item number from the CALL survey that is most relevant to this practice item (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Illustration of numbering system used in this guide**



Whether you are using this guide as an individual leader of a school or district or as part of a leadership team, you may choose to work through the whole guide or choose just specific parts that are most important to your context. If your school is using the CALL survey system, you have received (or will receive) a report of survey results organized by this framework of domain, practice, and survey item numbers. Those survey results can help you find the sections of this guide that are most relevant to your school. If your school is not using the CALL survey system, simply use the descriptive labels of each practice section to determine which areas of this guide may be most useful for your context's particular needs and interests in school improvement planning.

## Strategies and Suggestions

Each Strategies and Suggestions subsection in this guide lists actions that school leaders and leadership teams can pursue to help build an effective system and a robust improvement plan. For each Four Domains practice item that you have identified as important to your school, read each strategy and suggestion and then identify possible strengths and gaps in your school's current system. After identifying strategies and suggestions to pursue, consider

how they will be implemented to boost and strengthen your school's system, then explore potential next steps in planning. The next steps might include identifying who is responsible, the actions that will take place, why the actions were selected, and when each will occur.

## Reflection Questions

The questions listed in the last subsection for each practice item should enable you or your leadership team to identify possible strengths or needs for your system and improvement efforts. The reflection questions should provoke thoughtful discourse around the current state of your school community and can assist teams in planning for a desired future state. Your team can then revisit its plans and contemplate incorporating other suggested actions or strategies.

# Domain 1 – Turnaround Leadership Practice

## Practice 1.1: Prioritize improvement and communicate its urgency

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### Practice Description

- Set the strategic direction for the turnaround and establish clear policies, structures, and expectations for constituents to work toward ambitious improvement goals.
- Articulate a commitment to turning around the lowest performing schools and advocate fiercely across audiences for these schools.
- Closely monitor, discuss, report, and act upon the progress of schools undertaking rapid improvement.

### School-Based Example

Develop and update the turnaround plan to ensure that it has clear short- and long-term goals. Monitor the progress of strategy implementation and make changes in personnel, programs, and methods as needed to keep the effort on track. Intervene swiftly if waning progress is detected.

### Collaborative Conversations (1.1.11)

#### Desired Future State

Members of the school community feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued as they surface ideas that may conflict with historical or current practices. Opportunities to surface ideas are available at least monthly.

#### Strategies and Suggestions

- Create opportunities for staff members to understand and empathize with the challenges faced by students.
- Make it clear that the school is one of only a few places that effect change for students.
- Inspire staff members to embrace the opportunity to improve student lives.
- Set the tone of urgency and the importance of substantial improvement.

#### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How often are leaders meeting with staff around the school's mission and vision?
- Are the conversations collaborative?

- What is the vision for student learning?
- How are school leaders supporting community members to feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued as they surface ideas that may conflict with historical or current practices?

## Creating a Shared Vision (1.1.11)

### Strategies and Suggestions

**Step 1:** Lead collaborative conversations to build a shared vision by setting aside time for focused discussions in which the leadership team and entire school staff have an opportunity to

- identify shared values;
- acknowledge contextual opportunities and challenges, such as school pride, demographic shifts, achievement gaps, and other challenges;
- develop and reinforce a shared vision focused on student learning with an emphasis on establishing core values that drive action;
- build improvement plans based on the vision;
- regularly assess progress toward achieving the vision; and
- revise or fine-tune improvement plans based on progress assessment.

Develop clear meeting agendas at the department, grade, or team level focused on building shared understandings of

- teaching pedagogy;
- student learning outcomes;
- student work;
- grading;
- best practices in the school, district, and field;
- vision gaps (the distance between where we are and where we want to be); and
- the work needed to move the school forward toward achieving the vision.

**Step 2:** Enact the shared vision, including by clearly defining the leadership roles (principal, assistant principal, dean, guidance counselor, coordinator, department chair, etc.) with instructional leadership role responsibilities.

Activate and support distributed instructional leadership.

- Clearly define leadership roles (principal, assistant principal, dean, guidance counselor, coordinator, department chair, etc.) with instructional leadership role responsibilities.
- Activate and support distributed instructional leadership.
- Clearly define formal and informal leadership roles in terms of how they support student learning.
- Provide professional development and support to enable distributed leadership to have the capacity to carry out the vision.



- Legitimize distributed leadership roles through clear communication of expectations with the entire school community.

Focus leadership on providing the tools to achieve the vision.

- Continually reframe “Why we can’t” to “How we can.”
- Hold all staff members, including naysayers, accountable to the shared vision.
- Clearly communicate vision-aligned actions to district staff and community members and seek resources and support to carry out plans to achieve the vision.
- Retell success stories to staff, students, and the community to provide a pathway for future success.

**Step 3:** Continually reinforce the importance and centrality of the vision; keep the vision in front of the staff at all times.

- Include a vision tagline or statement on agendas and communications with staff; use it in morning announcements.
- With staff, regularly review data on progress toward achieving the vision and remaining gaps.
- Frame the rationale for implementing new initiatives in terms of their proven ability to address the vision gaps.
- Continue problem-solving progress.

Use symbolic action to reinforce the importance and centrality of the vision.

- Refuse to get sidetracked with other topics during staff meetings, staff development sessions, and so on.
- Utilize meeting techniques such as establishing meeting agendas in advance and using parking lots to emphasize the importance of defining the focus of collaborative conversations.
- Celebrate staff and student successes that align with the school’s vision.
- Invite staff to develop creative problem-solving activities and ideas to address vision gaps and reward those who effectively fill those gaps.
- Provide training for administrators and teacher-leaders on effective meeting facilitation.
- Hold teacher-leaders accountable for instructional improvement by regularly discussing department- or grade-level progress and challenges in leadership team meetings.
- Recognize that leadership is challenging and include problem-sharing and problem-solving discussions in the leadership team and department- or grade-level discussions.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are leaders publicly advocating for the lowest performing schools and the turnaround process?
- What steps need to be established for this advocacy process, and who is accountable?

## Sharpening a Shared Vision (1.1.11)

### Desired Future State

A vision for teaching and learning that is anchored in shared values and connects with all community members is routinely shared and sharpened.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Send a clear signal to community members to demonstrate the break from business as usual.
- Clearly communicate the potential impact of the change on students' lives while recognizing the challenges students face and emphasizing that students' learning needs are the priority.
- Share and repeat the vision to motivate others.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What is the vision for teaching and learning? How have leaders in your school communicated the importance of this vision?
- How is leadership communicating from the start the sustainability of school improvement efforts?
- What are the plans for engaging parents and other community members in the turnaround process?

## Developing Instructional Leadership of Others (1.1.30)

### Desired Future State

It is clear which individuals have instructional leadership roles, and the supports are in place to facilitate their growth in these roles.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Identify strong instructional leaders and enlist them to help spread excellent instruction.
- Build instructional leadership capacity in others through expanded leadership opportunities, professional learning, leadership coaching and feedback, and the development of collaborative instructional leadership teams.
- Selectively tap into district-provided instructional supports to accelerate the work of instructional leaders.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Who are the instructional leaders in the building?
- Are instructional leadership roles such as department chair, grade-level leads, team leaders, and so on formally defined?
- How are leadership skills being developed for those staff members who are in instructional leadership roles?
- What tools, systems, and structures need to be established to give turnaround school leaders adequate decision-making authority and autonomy?

## Teacher Collaboration Around Teaching and Learning (1.1.40)

### Desired Future State

Frequent teacher collaboration processes for using student data to improve teaching practices are developed, documented, practiced, and supported.

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**Note:** For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 1.1.50 below.

## Use of Professional Collaboration Time (1.1.50)

### Desired Future State

Regular opportunities are created for teachers to talk about student goals and develop strategies, with ongoing reflection about their effectiveness.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Encourage school and district leaders to ensure that teachers have adequate time for collaboration.
- Develop, implement, and monitor a plan for training teachers in protocols for collaboration meetings.
- Continue to provide collaboration time for teachers as they strive to become a professional learning community.
- Promote a culture of learning that communicates and supports high expectations for all students, including the most underserved and vulnerable.
- Review the structure of time in the school. Examine how much time is available daily, weekly, monthly, and annually for teachers to collaborate.
- Ensure that different ways of knowing and expressing knowledge are valued, defined, and measured.
- Ensure that teachers confidently communicate that all students are capable of engaging in challenging work.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- When and where are teachers' discussions around teaching and instruction taking place?
- What are the expectations from the leadership team regarding what teachers discuss?
- Are there protocols in place to discuss student learning data? Improving teaching practices?
- What opportunities exist for team leaders to share ideas, advice, and information about the school and how could they best be moved forward?
- What accountability do individual teachers and teacher teams have for effective participation in collaborative groups?
- What do leaders do to follow up on the development of instructional strategies?
- What support or guidance do teams receive to ensure that they are focusing on the problems of teaching and learning?
- Are teachers given the opportunity for ongoing reflection?
- How can this kind of reflection be modeled in larger staff meetings?

## Function of School Leadership Team (1.1.60)

### Desired Future State

The school leadership team's function, decision-making process, and decisions are effectively communicated to the staff.

### Strategies and Suggestions

Consider the following points for planning school improvement team meetings.

- Develop a schedule for school improvement team meetings.
- Ensure that key community members who are not on the school improvement team know how to contribute thoughts and ideas to the meetings.
- Establish an agenda template or protocol with adequate time for discussion of all items.
- Ensure that relevant materials are accessible to all parties.

Consider the following points for conducting engaging school improvement team meetings.

- Adhere to a protocol.
- Report on the progress of key strategies.
- Ensure adequate time to discuss selected guiding questions that deepen understanding.
- Make decisions and agree on any adjustments to previously agreed-on plans.
- Get clarity and commitment on the next steps around what is being done, by whom, and by what date.

Consider the following points for translating school improvement team meetings into results.

- Provide timely minutes (or communication) after each school improvement team meeting.
- Proceed with follow-up actions, paying attention to progress indicators and goals.
- Engage in self-reflection on what worked well and what needs improvement.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Does a leadership team exist?
- How often does the team meet?
- What are the functions of this team?
- What opportunities exist to broaden the representation of voices at the table?
- Do all voices at the table have a meaningful opportunity to influence decisions?
- How are school leaders making school leadership team members feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued as they confront tensions that may exist between current practices and desired practices?

## Communicating School Improvement Progress (1.1.70)

### Desired Future State

Frequent and understandable communications regarding school improvement progress are made available to the community at large.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Determine who is responsible for monitoring the school improvement plan.
- Determine how members of the school community are engaged in the process of collecting data, analyzing data, and proposing adjustments to the plan.
- Ensure that there is adequate time and trust for confronting and resolving tensions that may exist between what is in the plan and what is happening in the school.
- Make data highly visible and transparent to all members of the school community, including data showing progress toward goals and changes to proposed actions.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How is the school improvement process communicated?
- Who is responsible for ensuring the school improvement process is communicated to the school community at large?
- What processes are monitored throughout the school year to track progress on school improvement goals? Which data are collected for this purpose and by whom?
- What student outcome data are monitored throughout the school year to track progress on school improvement goals?

# Domain 1 – Turnaround Leadership Practice

## Practice 1.2: Monitor short- and long-term goals

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### Practice Description

- Develop goals informed by assessments of recent performance trends and identify practices aimed at realizing a clearly articulated turnaround vision of significantly improved student learning.
- Establish milestones for gauging progress. Continually update timelines and tasks to maintain the pace needed to accomplish meaningful goals quickly.
- Respond to regular feedback on progress toward goal-directed milestones and make timely changes in policy, programs, and personnel to get on track in achieving desired results for students.
- Capitalize on initial turnaround successes and momentum to shift the focus from the change itself to incorporating and establishing effective organizational processes, structures, and interactions that contribute to continuous organizational improvement.

### School-Based Example

Develop and update the turnaround plan to ensure that it has clear short- and long-term goals. Monitor the progress of strategy implementation and make changes in personnel, programs, and methods as needed to keep the effort on track. Intervene swiftly if waning progress is detected.

### School Improvement Plan for Improving Instruction (1.2.10)

#### Desired Future State

A school improvement plan is developed, actively used, and shown to improve instruction.

#### Strategies and Suggestions

- Write specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals that articulate clear targets, actions, and timelines aligned with the school's mission and vision.
- Provide support and coaching to grade-level and content-specific collaborative teams at every grade level to develop quarterly SMART goals for all core subject areas.
- The leadership team reviews goals and provides feedback to teams if submitted goals are out of alignment with student achievement and identified areas of student needs.

- Administrators support individual teachers in developing and monitoring individual SMART goals that support the goals of the collaborative team.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Has a school improvement plan been developed?
- What are your school turnaround goals?
- How is success defined regarding meeting school turnaround goals?
- How can the plan be used to monitor and improve student learning?

## Support to Schools to Create School Improvement Plans (1.2.20)

### Desired Future State

Data from formative assessments of student learning are used to set and evaluate progress toward meeting goals for improving student learning.

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**Note:** For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 1.2.30 below.

## Using Data to Inform School Improvement Goals (1.2.30)

### Desired Future State

Data from formative assessments of student learning are used to set and evaluate progress toward meeting goals for improving student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Work toward clarity and precision when identifying school-based goals that match the vision for success to improve student outcomes.
- Work with the staff and school community to set high-impact, ambitious, long-term goals that result in high levels of achievement.
- Use assessment data to identify areas of student need through conversations with teacher teams.
- After establishing goals, create short-term objectives that enhance student learning. Utilize these short-term objectives as progress indicators to measure change toward priority goals.
- Develop action plans aligned with the vision by analyzing data to determine the current state of low school performance, identifying root causes for that low performance and planning strategies to address root causes and achieve goals.
- Use opportunities for different ways of knowing and of expressing knowledge, as success is defined and measured in many ways.
- Ensure that all students have the opportunity to develop their higher order thinking skills.
- Use data, such as from surveys, on access and opportunities to learn in order to analyze and identify inequities.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How is progress on data-referenced goals monitored, tracked, and communicated?
- What measures are monitored to identify successes and challenges in student outcomes for school turnaround?
- How are data used to customize support for turnaround and improvement efforts?

## Monitoring the School Improvement Plan (1.2.40)

### Desired Future State

The school improvement plan is monitored frequently based on embedded milestones, and adjustments are made if necessary.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Make adjustments to the school improvement or action plans based on data; discontinue unsuccessful strategies if appropriate. As goals are achieved, include additional areas of focus.
- Clearly articulate the implementation actions required of adults and schedule implementation checks. For each strategy, there are two levels of accountability: Was the strategy implemented with fidelity and intentionality, and did the strategy improve student outcomes?
- Examine all teacher and leadership activities to identify the essential actions; focus time and effort on high-leverage actions and eliminate those actions not contributing to student growth.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Is the school action plan or improvement plan monitored frequently?
- Are adjustments being made when necessary based on progress toward goals?
- What structures or processes are in place to assess whether improvement efforts are successful?
- Who is accountable for creating timelines and updating the team regarding continuous progress?
- Who is accountable at each level to monitor and report changes in student outcomes?

## Nature of School Improvement Plan Goals (1.2.50)

### Desired Future State

All goals are growth-oriented, practice-based, and practical in nature.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Relentlessly work to build a high level of cohesion around academic culture, goals, relationship building, instructional excellence, and so on.
- Identify meaningful shifts in adult practice that are SMART.
- Articulate what school leaders, teachers, and other staff are doing differently as a result of implementing strategies aligned with effective turnaround practices.



- Include measurable indicators that show student learning and tasks are improving due to the changes in educator practice and that show the school is making progress toward meeting its annual goal for student achievement.
- Measurable indicators address academic and nonacademic areas of student success and meet the SMART determination.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- Are all goals growth-oriented?
- Are all goals based on instructional and leadership practices?
- What does success look like for classroom teachers and students at the school?
- What are high-impact, ambitious, long-term goals that could result in the school reaching high levels of student achievement?
- What are high-priority, short-term goals for targeted “early wins” to use as proof points of success?
- How are you reducing time spent on unrelated activities to ensure focus on priorities?

# Domain 1 – Turnaround Leadership

## Practice 1.3: Customize and target support to meet needs

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### Practice Description

- Provide customized, targeted, and timely support for turnaround efforts.
- Align support to ensure coherence and integration with other necessary initiatives; eliminate unnecessary initiatives.
- Regularly monitor progress to identify support needs and then act quickly and competently to address those needs.

### School-Based Example

Identify the priority needs of the school, focusing on three to five immediate priorities. Request flexibility with established policies and/or procedures as justified by the data, turnaround plan, and school capacity.

### Instructional Program Coherence (Special Education and English Language Learners) (1.3.10)

#### Desired Future State

Regular instructional programs and student support services have similar goals.

#### Strategies and Suggestions

- Build a professional learning plan to address instructional strategies to support multilingual learners.
- Ensure teachers and members of the student support services have time to collaborate with one another to develop student goals and instructional strategies to meet the needs of specialized populations.
- Have teachers use student achievement data to plan differentiated instruction for multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and all students at risk of not scoring at the proficient level.
- Provide professional development in differentiated instruction and use data to plan instruction. Monitor the implementation of effective strategies and determine if teachers need additional training.
- Offer all students many opportunities to develop cognitive skills, preparing them for advanced academic tasks.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How do the school leaders develop similar goals for all students, including for students designated as English language learners and those identified for special education? How is this communicated to all interested parties?
- How has learning for most students improved through regular instructional programs and student support services? What inconsistencies are found?
- To what extent does professional development focus on special populations, monitoring for effectiveness and results?

## Analyzing Data to Address School Improvement Needs (1.3.20)

### Desired Future State

Carefully analyzing and describing data to identify school improvement needs is a clear priority for school leaders.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Communicate the importance of using data to identify student needs by embracing needs assessment processes.
- Communicate the findings from needs assessment processes to all community members.
- Publicly commit to investing time and resources to improving areas of relative weakness identified by the needs assessment.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Who determines which interim assessments to administer and analyze?
- Who is accountable for analyzing and reporting the results of the interim assessments?
- How are the results of the interim assessments reported to everyone involved?
- How does the analysis connect to school improvement needs?

## Presence of District Consultants (1.3.30)

### Desired Future State

District consultants fully understand current problems in the school, their work is relevant to school needs, and they support the school as changes they suggest are implemented.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Engage district consultants to support student learning or professional development to expand school-level capacity.
- Share relevant data and context with district consultants so they better understand current problems.
- Ensure that the work provided by district consultants is directly relevant to school needs.
- Request that district consultants adjust support as needed to ensure that support has the intended impact.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Which district experts have been used to support student learning or professional development?
- Do the district experts have an understanding of the issues currently facing the school? How is this assessed or communicated?
- Is the work of the district experts relevant to the school's current needs?
- Do the district experts support the school as the changes they suggest are implemented?
- How are leaders selectively tapping into district-provided instructional supports to accelerate the work of turnaround efforts?
- What opportunities does the district provide to support turnaround efforts, professional learning opportunities, school-to-school collaboration, curriculum resources, and incentives?

## Presence of External Consultants (1.3.40)

### Desired Future State

External consultants fully understand current problems in the school, their work is relevant to school needs, and they support the school as changes they suggest are implemented.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Engage external consultants to support student learning or professional development to expand school-level capacity.
- Share relevant data and context with external consultants so they better understand current problems.
- Ensure that the work provided by external consultants is directly relevant to school needs.
- Request that external consultants adjust support as needed to ensure that supports have the intended impact during implementation.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Which external experts have been used to support student learning or professional development?
- Do the external experts have an understanding of the issues currently facing the school? How is this assessed or communicated?
- Is the work of the external experts relevant to the school's current needs?
- Do the external experts support the school as changes they suggest are implemented?
- How are leaders selectively tapping into consultant expertise to accelerate the work of turnaround efforts?
- Is the work of the external consultants aligned with the vision, mission, and goals of the school?
- Do the external consultants provide job-embedded coaching to support the improvement efforts?

## Characteristics of the School's Needs Assessment (1.3.50)

### Desired Future State

School leaders use multiple sources of data, engage various interested parties, and lead a collaborative analysis of findings that results in the development of an action plan.

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**Note:** For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 1.3.53 below.

## Using Multiple Sources of Data (1.3.51)

### Desired Future State

To identify a school's needs, school leaders use multiple sources of data a great deal as part of the needs assessment.

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**Note:** For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 1.3.53 below.

## Engaging Various Interested Parties (1.3.52)

### Desired Future State

To identify a school's needs, school leaders engage multiple interested parties a great deal as part of the needs assessment.

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**Note:** For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 1.3.53 below.

## Developing a Collaborative Analysis of Findings (1.3.53)

### Desired Future State

To identify a school's needs, school leaders use a collaborative analysis of findings a great deal as part of the needs assessment.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Use a needs assessment as a point-in-time snapshot that may be comprehensive or segmented.
- Consider using a comprehensive needs assessment to examine all aspects of the school and its context. A comprehensive needs assessment provides information about organizational direction, including goals and strategies; systematic functions; and long-range plans.
- Consider using a segmented needs assessment to examine only one or a few aspects of the school and its context. A segmented needs assessment provides information about improvements to targeted functions or aspects of the school; incremental change; and short-term plans (typically less than a year).
- Revisit and update the needs assessment regularly to ensure its alignment with the school improvement plan and to check for progress against the original findings.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Which data are used as part of the school's needs assessment? Are there multiple sources of data?
- Did the needs assessment engage various interested parties? Which interested parties participated?
- Has there been a collaborative analysis of the findings?
- How are the findings from the needs assessment informing the creation of the school improvement plan?
- How are the results from the needs assessment informing immediate next steps for the school?
- What early actions are taken as a result of the needs assessment?

## Domain 2 – Talent Development

### Practice 2.1: Recruit, develop, retain, and sustain talent

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#### Practice Description

- Proactively plan to recruit and develop talent with turnaround-specific competencies to quickly fill vacancies that inevitably occur during the turnaround process.
- Use multiple data sources to match candidate skills and competencies to school needs, prioritizing the highest need schools.
- Institute succession-planning activities. Create in-house district preparation programs designed to foster and generate turnaround competencies to develop future turnaround leaders and teachers.

#### School-Based Example

Collaborate with the district to develop a school-specific competency model for turnaround teachers to discern which competencies are prioritized in the teacher selection process for a specific school. Utilize the district turnaround talent pool as the go-to source for hiring assistant principals and teachers. Encourage aspiring leaders to participate in turnaround preparation programs.

#### Induction Programs for New Teachers (2.1.20)

##### Desired Future State

Induction programs are developed, actively used, and shown to improve student learning.

##### Strategies and Suggestions

- Design and implement a teacher induction/acclimation program for all teachers new to the school. This program provides teachers with information about school operations and norms.
- Create a site-level induction program that includes an orientation to site operations and that articulates the cultural and academic expectations of the school culture.
- Consider creating peer support in the form of buddy teachers or grade-level teams; define the expectations and frequency of check-ins between mentors and new staff.
- Have the administration follow up with new teachers a minimum of three times throughout the school year to ensure a consistent understanding of desired expectations and provide extra support if necessary.
- Increase the number of informal visits to classrooms and focus efforts on the quality of feedback provided to teachers.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Has a program for the induction of new teachers been developed? When and how is it used?
- Does the program result in improved student learning?
- What evidence-based instructional strategies do new teachers need to learn in their first year?
- Are the climate and culture at the school supportive and nurturing for new teachers?
- Are there instructional coaches committed and eager to support new teachers?
- Is there a high degree of professional collaboration among teachers focused on sharing and improving instructional practices?

## Prioritizing the Hiring or Training of Instructional Specialists (2.1.30)

### Desired Future State

Prioritizing the hiring or training of instructional specialists is a high priority.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Write a clear description of the roles of an instructional specialist in supporting a cadre of highly qualified, highly effective teachers.
- Provide leadership training and coaching for all instructional specialists (e.g., reading coach, mathematics coach, reading specialist).
- Inspire instructional specialists with regular and timely feedback from their colleagues and administration and have their performance evaluated (using multiple measures) against their SMART goals.
- Provide consistent, high-quality feedback at the school leadership level, allowing valuable data to ensure a highly effective instructional program.
- If the capacity does not currently exist at the district level, encourage the district to consider investing in outside coaches to regularly support the work of instructional specialists.
- Allow district and site leadership to evaluate the current instructional coaching system to determine the coaches' most efficient and effective use and make changes as appropriate.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are specialists who provide guidance on instruction trained? Who is responsible for this training?
- What is the focus of their training?
- Does the training meet the instructional needs of the school and students?
- How do efforts to prioritize or hire instructional specialists take into account equitable access and inclusion for historically underrepresented groups?



## Basis for Staff Teaching Assignments: Match to Student Needs (2.1.40)

### Desired Future State

Teachers are assigned because their teaching skills match the needs of the students in the class or program.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Create a matrix of teacher skill sets and certifications prior to creating the school master schedule. Consult the matrix prior to assigning teachers to specific programs and/or classes.
- Provide opportunities for individual teachers to share their perceived skill set.
- Establish a system to support the appropriate connection between teacher skill set, student need, and program or class.
- Clearly articulate to teachers which skill set determines they are the best fit for a particular program or class. This step could support the expectation that a teacher will use a particular skill set to meet the needs of students.
- Create opportunities to build capacity in various teaching skills that will support the needs of your students in a specific program or class.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How do you determine student learning needs? Are student needs officially recorded in a document that can be accessed by those who create student schedules?
- How do you determine teacher skill sets?
- What are the prerequisite skills needed for teachers to be successful in teaching specific programs and/or classes?
- Who is accountable for ensuring that teacher skills match the needs of the students in the class or program?
- What opportunities do you provide for teachers to expand their skill set for a specific class or program?

## Process for Hiring New Teachers (2.1.60)

### Desired Future State

School leaders work with teachers, parents, and community members to develop a shared definition of “good teaching” and review data to identify school needs before teacher candidates go through a rigorous process to be hired.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Direct school and district officials to attract, select, and retain highly committed educators and staff who fit well with the mission and vision of the school.
- Encourage interested parties at the school to create selection criteria matching the school’s mission, vision, and identified needs of the grade level in which a new hire works.

- Instruct district officials to have candidates teach demonstration lessons for hiring committees to make thoughtful decisions about the people they want to join their team.
- Invite school leaders to share the criteria considered by the hiring team with the school community and communicate how the successful candidate or candidates demonstrated the standards in practice and through their experience.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Does the school leader work with all interested parties to develop a shared understanding of “good teaching”?
- How is “good teaching” defined?
- What are the school’s instructional needs related to hiring new teaching staff?
- How is the team creating a consensus and understanding of teacher placements and assignments? What is used to match school needs with teacher and leader competencies?

## Develop Teacher Leadership (2.1.70)

### Desired Future State

Teacher-leaders are selected and developed based on the school’s primary needs and the teachers’ fit to support school initiatives.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Consider multiple factors when selecting teacher-leaders, including instructional skills, curriculum knowledge, understanding of the school’s mission, willingness to learn, and the ability to positively influence staff development.
- Outline and share the responsibilities of teacher-leaders regarding school-based initiatives.
- Provide leadership training and coaching for all teacher-leaders (e.g., grade-level leads, department chairs, assistant principals, counselors).
- Schedule regular meetings with team leaders to discuss vertical alignment with curriculum, professional learning, schoolwide goals, and upcoming initiatives.
- Train teacher leadership teams in group protocols that use “problems of practice” during leadership and professional learning community (PLC) or grade-level team meetings.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What are the school’s primary needs related to teacher-leaders?
- Are teacher-leaders aware of school-based initiatives? How is this awareness made visible to interested parties?
- What are teacher-leaders’ responsibilities regarding supporting and advancing those initiatives?

- How do teacher-leaders engage with constituencies to share progress toward the initiatives and to make adjustments? How do the initiatives affect the actions of staff members and have the desired impacts on students?
- How are skills and aptitudes needed for teacher-leaders identified if the school is currently not using competencies? What resources are available?

## Retaining Teachers and Support Staff (2.1.80)

### Desired Future State

Retaining teachers and support staff is extremely important to school leaders.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Ensure that work conditions sufficiently meet the staff's needs so they can deliver quality instruction and receive support. Important working conditions for teachers include appropriate work assignments, sufficient curriculum guidelines, efficient discipline systems, opportunities for reflection, and the ability to share ideas and resources with colleagues.
- Provide instructional leadership and foster collegiality and collaborative relationships that cultivate a positive school climate in which teachers are valued and feel supported in their work.
- Welcome new teachers and help them build their teaching skills through reflection and continued emphasis on improving their teaching practices.
- Design mentoring programs to enable new and veteran teachers to foster discussion about effective teaching practices, including sharing ideas among colleagues in a collaborative setting and learning from other teachers.
- Use data to highlight ways in which teachers' instructional work has positive effects on academic achievement.
- Provide frequent and consistent feedback to teachers and staff on areas of strength as well as on areas of potential improvement to support positive morale and school climate, which consequently strengthens teacher retention and productivity.
- Provide opportunities for growth through professional learning and leadership opportunities.
- Create opportunities for support staff to collaborate with teachers and for teachers and support staff to discuss alignment in resources, ideas, and tools.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How have leaders prioritized retaining teachers and staff?
- Which data are collected on staff retention? Have these data been analyzed? What are the reasons that teachers and support staff are choosing to apply and work at your school?
- What are the reasons that staff are deciding to leave? Is there a system to collect data on this issue? Is there a plan to reengage staff?
- How important is staff satisfaction? How are data collected on this topic?
- How often are staff included in decision-making processes for the school?

## Domain 2 – Talent Development

### Practice 2.2: Target professional learning opportunities

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#### Practice Description

- Offer high-quality, individualized, and responsive professional learning opportunities designed to build the capacity needed for rapid school improvement.
- Offer regular opportunities for job-embedded learning, including coaching, mentoring, and observation (including peer observations).
- Leverage and maximize the effectiveness of high-performing teachers, coaches, and leaders by using them as models and peer coaches.

#### School-Based Example

Create a cadre of instructional leaders (drawing from assistant principals, department coordinators, team leaders, and teachers with demonstrated instructional coaching capacity) who each respond to the professional learning needs of a manageable portion of the faculty, using data to identify those needs. Provide opportunities for leaders and teachers to learn side by side and share how ongoing growth impacts individual practice as instructional and organizational leaders. Ensure that learning experiences are differentiated, purposeful, targeted, employed in rapid response to identified needs, reflective of what is known about effective adult learning, and clearly connected to the school's turnaround priorities.

#### Impact of School-Based Professional Learning (2.2.10)

##### Desired Future State

School-based professional learning enables teachers to reflect on and make significant improvements to their teaching practices.

##### Strategies and Suggestions

- Utilize regular reviews of the school improvement plan to adapt and adjust to individual professional learning needs.
- Develop an “implementation check” schedule for each identified essential action. Is the work being done? Is the strategy implemented with fidelity? If not, what actions will lead to full implementation? Is additional support needed?
- Provide opportunities for leaders and teachers to learn side by side and share how ongoing growth impacts their individual practice as instructional leaders.
- Design professional learning opportunities to create relational trust by building new knowledge and skills among all teachers in the school.

- Build cycles of reflection, design, implementation, feedback, and practice into the everyday culture of the school.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- Are opportunities for teacher reflection embedded into professional development?
- What are the expectations for changes in teachers' practices?
- Is there an expectation for teachers to participate in professional learning?
- Are data and evidence used for ongoing professional development?
- Are experienced teachers interested in and capable of leading professional learning?

## **Professional Development Plans for Individual Teachers (2.2.20, 2.2.60)**

### **Desired Future State**

Professional development plans are created, actively used, and shown to improve student learning.

### **Strategies and Suggestions**

- Develop ongoing coaching for teachers to assist them with instructional strategies and ensure they receive regular feedback on their practice.
- Prioritize observations based on teacher needs and student achievement goals.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- Do formal plans exist for professional development for individual teachers?
- Are improvements in student learning monitored as part of these plans?
- Is there a supportive instructional leader available to individual teachers? What is the system for this support?
- What evidence-based instructional model is in place at the school? How do individual teachers receive coaching and support for the model?
- To what extent is the instructional staff committed and eager to continuously improve their instruction to foster student outcomes?

## **Process for Designing Schoolwide Professional Development (2.2.30)**

### **Desired Future State**

Schoolwide professional development activities are differentiated to address the various learning needs of teachers and are delivered using the expertise of teachers.

### **Strategies and Suggestions**

- Ensure that school leaders, in collaboration with staff members, develop plans for ongoing, formative support for all school employees. Include ongoing coaching and capacity-building opportunities to assist teachers with instructional strategies. Ensure teachers receive regular feedback about their practice.

- Ensure that school leaders prioritize observations based on teacher needs and student achievement goals.
- Ensure that school leaders measure and monitor the implementation of priority initiatives for levels of use and develop a system of support for groups of teachers.
- Provide site leaders with training on effective professional learning practices, including systems of ongoing coaching with regular feedback that supports implementation.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What are the professional learning needs of turnaround leadership and staff? What steps need to be taken to fulfill those needs?
- How are professional learning activities differentiated?
- Do the professional learning activities address the various learning needs of teachers?
- Is professional learning delivered using the expertise of teachers? How is teacher expertise encouraged and incorporated into professional learning activities?
- Who is responsible for providing and leading the professional learning opportunities and experiences for turnaround leadership and staff? How are leaders ensuring that professional learning is rapid, responsive, and customized?

## Utilizing Teacher Expertise (2.2.40)

### Desired Future State

School leaders encourage teachers to try new practices in their classrooms; the leaders also assign responsibility and provide resources for teachers and staff to help shape the teaching practices of others.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop a system to share knowledge gained and next steps with the whole staff after training.
- Provide mentors to support the instructional needs of new teachers.
- Advise teachers who have expertise in using particular instructional strategies to take leadership roles in staff development and teacher-to-teacher support.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are high-performing teachers leveraged to expand their positive influence outside their classrooms?
- How are teachers and staff encouraged to try new practices in their classrooms?
- How are responsibilities assigned to teachers to help shape the teaching practices of others?
- Is there a high degree of professional collaboration among teachers focused on sharing and improving instructional practices?

## Principal's Participation in Schoolwide Professional Development Activities (2.2.50)

### Desired Future State

Principals regularly attend activities as active and productive participants to be in a position to provide feedback on high-priority strategies.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Ensure that the principal becomes a learning leader in the school by actively participating in schoolwide professional learning activities.
- Be present in instructional leadership activities by letting others know that this work is a priority requiring uninterrupted focus.
- Organize an administrative presence in every teacher's classroom and work individually with teachers to strengthen their teaching practice.
- Model the importance of strengthening the practice of all teachers, not just those who are chronic underperformers.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Do school leaders actively participate in schoolwide professional development as productive participants?
- What does this productive participation look like?
- How do school leaders ensure they are not overactive participants?
- How invested are school leaders in the professional learning needs of fellow teachers?
- How are you ensuring professional learning has an impact on student outcomes?
- How are teachers moved from novice to highly effective levels of instructional delivery?

## Presence of Teacher Feedback: Peer Observation Feedback (2.2.71)

### Desired Future State

Teachers experience regular peer observations with feedback, and the feedback enhances high-priority instructional strategies.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Consider providing an observation protocol for teachers to use when observing one another.
- Consider providing classroom coverage for teachers to observe one another or encourage the use of videos so that coverage is not an issue.
- Provide opportunities and time for teachers to debrief, discuss, and offer feedback after observations.
- Consider connecting observations, teaching rubrics, schoolwide goals, professional learning focus, and so on.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Do teachers have opportunities to participate in peer observation?
- What is the school's structure for peer observation?
- Has the school developed a vision and purpose around peer observation?
- How is the impact of peer observation monitored and measured?
- Is feedback collected from teachers regarding the impact of peer observation?
- How do school leaders create a culture in which teachers may confront the most challenging aspects of their work when seeking advice and guidance from peers?

## Presence of Teacher Feedback: Administrator Walk-Throughs (2.2.72)

### Desired Future State

Teachers experience regular walk-throughs with feedback, and the feedback enhances high-priority instructional strategies.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop a classroom walk-through schedule for the principal and assistant principal so teachers have a common understanding of when walk-throughs take place and how long visits last on average.
- Consider having face-to-face debriefs with teachers as a result of data collected in walk-throughs to provide them with high-quality instructional coaching support.
- Provide the administration with training on tools and skills that facilitate meaningful feedback to teachers to increase quality instructional feedback schoolwide.
- Spend time in the classroom or virtual classroom with teachers and students to observe and provide relevant and timely feedback.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Do teachers have the opportunity to receive formative feedback through the walk-through process?
- Has the school developed a vision and purpose for the use of walk-through observations as formative feedback?
- How is the impact of walk-through observations monitored and measured?
- Is feedback collected from teachers regarding the impact of observations?
- How are school leaders creating a culture in which teachers may confront the most challenging aspects of their work when seeking advice and guidance from administrators?
- Is feedback immediate or delayed? If delayed, how long does it take?
- How does the information teachers receive help them grow and learn?
- How involved is the teacher in the feedback process?



## Instructional Coaching Programs for Teachers (2.2.80)

### Desired Future State

Instructional coaching programs are developed, actively used, and shown to improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Use flexibility in budgeting processes to allocate resources to one or more instructional coaches.
- If there are insufficient resources, seek funding opportunities from the district, the community, or grant sources to fund instructional coaching positions.
- Select coaches with strong instructional skills and expertise in the content area they are coaching to work with and teach adult learners.
- Hold coaches accountable for working strategically to improve instructional practice in the school and for dedicating a significant portion of their time to working with teachers in classrooms.
- Support all teachers in shifting their planning and pedagogy to fully adapt to the state standards through planning, assessment, and instructional execution.
- Provide regular coaching and individual support to all teachers while implementing district and school expectations.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Is there a formal plan for instructional coaching to improve student learning?
- How is instructional coaching developed and used to improve student learning in your school?
- To what extent is the instructional coaching monitored for improvement outcomes and instructional effectiveness of teachers?
- What systems are in place to support effective instructional coaching? Are coaching observations and feedback taking place for the instructional coach?
- To what extent are side-by-side coaching, modeling, planning sessions, classroom observations, and other coaching models taking place?

## Identifying Areas for Professional Development (2.2.90)

### Desired Future State

School leaders work with school staff to determine the professional development needs by looking at data on student learning and evidence from classroom observations and subsequent conversations.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Form a professional learning committee to create, monitor, and adjust a yearlong professional learning calendar that targets the specific needs of the staff. The calendar should define the roles and expected outcomes of all district, contracted, and site-based support services and should include specific procedures for communicating feedback to all providers.

- Prioritize staff development needs on the basis of teacher feedback, student data, and administrative observations and analyses.
- Establish a professional development plan that focuses on student achievement or acceleration, new learning for staff, consistent schoolwide implementation, and a collaborative system for teachers to plan instruction.
- Design a system for eliciting teacher feedback about professional development opportunities to determine whether current opportunities are effective or further professional development is required.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are professional development needs determined and by whom? Have school leaders worked with school staff to determine those needs?
- To what extent are student data and observation data used in selecting professional learning support?
- After professional learning is completed, how often are new strategies implemented and monitored? Who is responsible for implementation and monitoring?
- How are professional learning opportunities differentiated for classroom teachers?
- To what extent is professional learning tiered to support individual teachers' learning needs?
- What impacts has professional learning had? Which data are used to determine the need for professional learning, and to what extent are the data revisited?
- How often do teachers have opportunities to engage in reflection and refinement of practice?

## Professional Learning: Delivering Content Connected to Students' Own Experiences (2.2.91)

### Desired Future State

Professional learning opportunities include, but are not limited to, schoolwide professional development activities, instructional coaching sessions, and formal and informal conversations with school leaders, and these opportunities emphasize delivering content that has connections to students' own experiences.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide professional learning that focuses on what students are experiencing through the learning environment and through the teacher's instruction.
- Provide professional learning that embraces the advantages of each student's culture and its richness and helps students connect ideas. Shifting to this focus may require an intentional reorientation to the craft of teaching.
- Ensure that teachers have collaborative time to discuss and create specific strategies that motivate and encourage interest and engagement.
- Have teachers provide both context and relevance to subject content to support students in making connections to what they are learning.

- Provide professional learning that builds on students' prior knowledge and that includes various ways of assessing knowing as an instructional strategy.
- Ensure that teachers have time to give authentic and meaningful feedback to each student.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How have students' learning needs been factored into decisions on professional learning?
- To what extent are teachers able to connect content and relevance for students?
- How motivated are students to engage in all areas of the content?

## Professional Learning: Viewing Students' Cultures and Community Identities as Assets (2.2.92)

### Desired Future State

Professional learning opportunities—including, but not limited to, schoolwide professional development activities, instructional coaching sessions, and formal and informal conversations with school leaders—emphasize viewing students' cultures and community identities as assets.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Promote teachers' use of effective instructional techniques that support connections to students' prior experiences. Effective instruction for any student requires that the teacher respect and leverage the students' social and cultural backgrounds.
- Provide professional learning that examines the advantages of each student's social construct and cultural identity and helps them connect ideas. This shift may require an intentional reorientation of the craft of teaching.
- Provide training and support for all staff to understand their own and their students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds; avoid stereotyping of students based on assumptions about their family and cultural backgrounds; encourage a growth mindset that promotes academic growth and success for all students through effort, self-regulation, and persistence to mastery; and help integrate cultural and linguistic material into the curriculum.
- Provide professional learning that builds on students' prior knowledge as an instructional strategy.
- Provide professional learning focused on collaboration between schools and communities to improve family engagement and connection between home and school cultures.
- Create opportunities for staff, students, and families to connect; provide all staff with opportunities to view students' cultures as sources of valuable skills, attitudes, and experiences.
- Encourage a school climate in which teachers intentionally foster a sense of community among students in the classroom and with their families.
- Provide professional learning on how culturally responsive educators can learn about, value, and center students' identities by supporting students' cultural pride, linguistic structures, cultural nuances, and discourse features.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What practices are in place to ensure that student diversity and culture are viewed as positive assets by the school community?
- Has viewing students' cultures and communities as assets been included in professional learning sessions with teachers? How has this focus been demonstrated?
- How are students' cultures and communities included in curriculum, instruction, and school environment?
- What connections has the school made to link instruction and practices to students' cultures?
- How has the school worked to build a robust instructional network for students and families?

## Domain 2 – Talent Development

### Practice 2.3: Set clear performance expectations

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#### Practice Description

- Create and share expectations for a level of professional performance in every role in the system.
- Develop and implement performance-management processes that include clear means for monitoring progress, the flexibility to rapidly respond to professional learning needs, and opportunities to revise milestones as needed.

#### School-Based Example

Define expectations for teachers, clearly and realistically considering how to effectively leverage teacher time and effort. Develop daily and weekly schedules that reflect this priority of effective use of teacher time. When asking more of a teacher, consider removing another responsibility.

#### Accountability for Teaching and Learning (2.3.10)

##### Desired Future State

Holding teachers and others accountable for achieving high levels of teaching and learning is extremely important to school leaders.

##### Strategies and Suggestions

- Clearly articulate the most critical teacher actions in the school. Continue to communicate their importance throughout the school year through multiple methods.
- Work with staff to identify teacher actions leading to and focusing on improvement in student outcomes.
- Clearly articulate how classroom walk-throughs are scheduled and which teacher actions are the focus of walk-through observations.
- After classroom walk-throughs, provide feedback that is aligned with the prioritized teacher practices.
- Clearly articulate the implementation actions required of adults and schedule implementation checks. Remember, for each strategy, there are two levels of accountability: Was the strategy implemented with fidelity and intentionality, and did the strategy lead to improvement in student outcomes?

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Who is accountable for setting clear performance expectations for staff? How do they determine those expectations? How is staff assessed or held accountable for achieving those performance expectations?
- What tools, systems, and structures need to be established for leaders to maintain a balance of support with accountability at all levels? Do the tools, systems, and structures need to vary depending on the level (state, district, or school)?

## Student Achievement (2.3.21)

### Desired Future State

School leaders schedule time to discuss student achievement data at least monthly.

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Note: For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 2.3.24 below.

## Student Work (2.3.22)

### Desired Future State

School leaders schedule time for teachers to discuss student work at least monthly.

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Note: For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 2.3.24 below.

## Strategies for Instruction (2.3.23)

### Desired Future State

School leaders schedule time to discuss strategies for instruction at least monthly.

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Note: For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 2.3.24 below.

## Formative Assessment (2.3.24)

### Desired Future State

School leaders schedule time to discuss formative assessment of students at least monthly.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Give teachers regular opportunities to work with their peers in reviewing student work and discussing its implications for instructional design, academic rigor, and learner outcomes.
- Facilitate discussions regarding the number of students improving their performance levels and those not improving. Use interventions as short-term rather than long-term strategies.
- Examine lesson plans and provide teachers with feedback on the quality of their planning.
- Build professional relationships with the teachers based on knowledge of the standards, curriculum, assessment, and instructional system.
- As leaders, attend or lead all professional learning sessions to become the principal learners in the school.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How much time is spent with grade-level teams to discuss student learning and strategies for instruction?
- How much time is spent with grade-level teams to review formative and summative data and student work?
- How is the purpose of these meetings communicated?
- What are the expected outcomes from the meetings?
- Is the time spent sufficient to reach the intended outcomes?
- Are grade-level teams maximizing the amount of time for these discussions? If not, what support needs to be provided to ensure that these discussions result in better outcomes for students?

## Presence of Formative Feedback for Teachers (2.3.30)

### Desired Future State

Formative feedback is provided to teachers. It includes specific, critical examples from teaching practices and provides meaningful suggestions on how to improve.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Build a shared definition of effective teaching practice as a reference for ongoing conversations about improving teaching and learning.
- Establish regular opportunities for teachers to receive feedback on their teaching practices.
- Structure opportunities for ongoing conversations among teachers to continually define and redefine effective practice, review student work, and participate in peer observation and feedback.
- Connect resources and support to concrete feedback, enabling teachers to act on feedback to improve teaching practice.
- Examine school leader role expectations and assign formal responsibility for formative evaluation and feedback.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What percentage of the leader's time is spent on teaching and learning activities in a given school day? What system helps protect this time?
- How often do visits to each classroom occur?
- How often do teachers receive formative feedback?
- Is there time regularly scheduled for talking with teachers about classroom practice?
- What types of support do teachers receive to improve student learning?
- Is the feedback that is given to teachers specific, and does it include examples of how to improve?

## Type of Formative Feedback on Teaching (2.3.30)

### Desired Future State

Formative feedback is provided to teachers. It includes meaningful suggestions on how to improve and specific, critical examples from teaching practices.

### Strategies and Suggestions

Formative feedback given to teachers helps to inform and improve practice and creates opportunities that allow teachers to reflect.

#### Instructional coaching

- Design training to build the capacity of the school by providing personalized support.
- Have instructional coaches model effective practices and conversations about student work and learning data.

#### Walk-throughs

- Target visits to multiple classrooms to get a sense of current teaching practices.
- Focus on prioritized aspects of the instructional process and take notice of the degree to which the intended practice is visible in the classroom.

#### Peer observation visits and instructional rounds

- Focus on providing feedback and building a culture of inquiry around particular improvement goals.
- Organize visits to collect data on how goals are addressed from shared problems of practice.
- Keep the focus on specific topics for instructional rounds that support schoolwide practices.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Is the work of the instructional coach focused and clearly defined?
- Is the majority of the coach's time spent on formative feedback and continuous improvement for teachers?
- Are walk-throughs used to make ongoing connections to conversations and goals around school improvement?
- Are peer visits used to support the work of schoolwide practices that allow for further discourse?
- Are resources and means available to support teachers' practices and individual improvement?

## Impact of Formal Teacher Evaluations (2.3.40)

### Desired Future State

Almost all teachers in the school believe that the formal evaluation process for teachers significantly improves teaching practices.

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**Note:** For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 2.3.53 below.



## Pre-Observation Conference to Establish Goals (2.3.51) / Classroom or Site Visit (2.3.52)

### Desired Future State

Teachers report that meeting with school leaders to talk about goals for the evaluation process significantly improves their teaching.

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Note: For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 2.3.53 below.

## Post-Observation Conference (2.3.53)

### Desired Future State

Teachers report that meeting with school leaders to talk about teaching after a visit to their classroom or work site significantly improves their teaching.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Engage in leadership work to create a learning community that includes formal evaluations as part of a comprehensive system for improving the capacity of schools to act on information that improves teaching and learning.
- Use formal teacher observation data to set goals for both individual and schoolwide teacher practices.
- Invest time for leaders to review the collective impact of all formal teacher evaluations to determine which teacher practices need the most improvement. These data may inform ongoing professional learning needs for the staff and targeted professional learning for groups of teachers. The feedback may allow educators to connect the impact with student outcomes.
- Build teacher evaluation processes that use formal teacher observations (or similar) to emphasize school improvement priorities.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How is the impact of formal observations measured? Has it been measured to show improvements in teaching?
- To what extent does the school leadership believe in formal evaluations affecting and improving teaching? What evidence supports this impact? What resulting actions are taking place?
- What messaging is shared with teachers about the purpose and potential of the process?
- How are formal evaluations used in conjunction with informal observations to improve teacher practices? Describe this process.

## Domain 3 – Instructional Transformation

### Practice 3.1: Diagnose and respond to student learning needs

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#### Practice Description

- Diagnose student learning needs and use identified needs to drive all instructional decisions.
- Incorporate effective student supports and instructional interventions.
- Use fluid, rapid assessment and adjustment of instructional grouping and delivery to adapt to student learning needs.

#### School-Based Example

Regularly examine individual student data in team meetings, PLCs, or other planning sessions as part of teachers' regular work and expectations. Creatively use fluid instructional groupings rather than yearlong assignments that may not meet students' (or teachers') needs. For example, when students struggle with a certain concept, they could be assigned temporarily to a teacher whose data demonstrate that they teach it well or differently from the students' current teacher(s), placed in a small group for reteaching, or given individualized instruction. Teachers are given time within the school day to conduct such analyses and develop plans to address identified needs. Teachers are also held accountable for doing so and for carrying out the plans they develop for students.

#### Presence of Response to Intervention or Multi-Tiered System of Supports Program Impact (3.1.20)

##### Desired Future State

Our school has a Response to Intervention (RtI) system and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) program that impact instruction for students.

##### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop an RtI system that includes tiers of academic and behavioral intervention that are fluid and accessible for all students in need. The system must have clearly articulated entry and exit criteria into and out of the different tiers of intervention and the support that each tier is expected to provide. Distribute this information to all teachers, students, and parents to empower them to take the necessary steps to move from one tier to another. All student placement decisions must be transparent, data-based, and objective to appropriately meet the learning needs of all students.

- Train educators to use disaggregated student data from screening as standards-aligned formative and diagnostic assessments to determine student learning and adult teaching priorities, monitor student progress, and help sustain continuous school improvement needs.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What do you currently know about RtI and MTSS?
- What adjustments could be made so that the RtI and MTSS processes increase the impact of classroom instruction?
- How do teachers diagnose each student's learning needs? What tools, systems, and structures need to be established?
- How could fluid grouping of students be implemented and supported?
- How is the school proactive in preventing student failure?
- Do classroom teachers take ownership of the learning of all students?
- Do all students receive differentiated instruction in the regular classroom?
- Do classroom teachers, instructional specialists, and special needs teachers collaborate to develop instruction for all students?
- Are historically underrepresented students provided with opportunities to access academic and behavioral support as needed?

## Frequency of Formative Assessments (3.1.21)

### Desired Future State

In order to adapt and form strategies for instruction, teachers assess student understanding in their classrooms more than once a week as a regular feature of classroom instruction.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Build pedagogical capacity in the area of creating high-quality formative assessments and using data results to drive instruction.
- Regularly examine individual student data in team meetings or PLCs as part of teachers' regular work and expectations.
- Give teachers time during the school day to conduct such analysis and to develop plans to address identified needs. Also, hold teachers accountable for conducting the analysis and for carrying out the plans they develop for students.
- Creatively use fluid instructional groupings. For example, temporarily assign students who struggle with a certain concept to a teacher whose data demonstrate greater success when using alternative teaching methods; place students in a small group for reteaching; or provide individualized instruction.
- Make data highly visible and transparent to all members of the school community.
- Give teachers regular opportunities to work with their peers in reviewing student work and discussing its implications for instructional design, academic rigor, and learner outcomes.
- Facilitate discussions regarding the number of students who are improving their work.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How often do teachers assess student understanding?
- What is the current requirement for the frequency of formative assessments? Is it being monitored?
- How is student learning measured in the school?
- How do teachers collect and share information on student learning?
- Does the school have a system to assess, collect, and use formative data to guide student learning?
- Are school formative assessments aligned to state standards in content, complexity, and rigor?
- Is the format of the formative assessment familiar to students?
- Are the questions, tasks, and prompts free from cultural bias?
- Does the assessment include appropriate scaffolds for multilingual and special needs students?
- Is the assessment used to inform instruction? How?
- How are students who are unable to meet mastery supported?

## Effectiveness of Support Services (3.1.30)

### Desired Future State

Student support services, including support for special education and English language learners, improve learning outcomes for all students.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Create a system to monitor and identify improved learning outcomes through effective support services.
- Use student learning data and instructional strategy data within the school leadership team to design fluid instructional groupings that respond to student needs.
- Provide staff with training in identifying the need for and how to engage in effective differentiated instruction that addresses student needs.
- Use data reviews to identify whether particular subgroups of students are under- or over-identified. Create a plan with steps for concerns around misidentification.
- Create systems in which special education, student support, and regular education teachers collaborate around the instructional needs of students.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Who is included in the special education designation? Should additional groups be represented?
- How do you measure who has improved learning outcomes due to the impact of student support services?
- What types of early warning systems identify students who may be falling behind?
- Who is accountable for establishing those early warning systems?

- Are there particular subgroups of students that staff feel are under- or over-identified?
- Does the concern around misidentification arise out of a need for better staff training in differentiated instruction?
- Is stronger collaboration needed between special education and regular education teachers to support student learning?
- Is there an effective program (such as RtI or MTSS) in place for early assessment and intervention of student learning needs?
- What steps are in place to address the misidentification concerns?

## **Responsibility for Student Learning for Learning Disabled Students (3.1.40)**

### **Desired Future State**

The special education teacher, the classroom teacher, and the support team work together to develop learning plans for students who have been identified as having a specific learning disability.

### **Strategies and Suggestions**

- Provide teachers with professional development focused on using data to plan differentiated instruction and providing interventions to make the curriculum more accessible to all students at risk of not meeting benchmark assessment targets.
- Re-envision the co-teaching professional development plan and structure it for students needing intensive pull-out services and those benefiting from push-in services. Ensure that a clear schedule for co-planning is in place for special education teachers and core teachers and clarify expectations for co-teaching.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- How do teachers know who is primarily responsible for teaching students who have been specifically identified as learning disabled?
- What adjustments could be made to encourage special education teachers, classroom teachers, and support teams to work together to develop learning plans?
- Is sufficient planning time given for special education and general education teachers to work together?
- What guidance is given to staff regarding goals and structures for planning time?
- What professional development opportunities exist for all teachers around support for special needs students and learning strategies?
- How are these opportunities expanding?

## **Responsibility for English Language Learners (3.1.50)**

### **Desired Future State**

The English language learner (ELL) teacher, the classroom teacher, and the support team work together to develop learning plans for ELL students.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Build a professional development plan to address English language instructional strategies to support ELL students.
- Provide teachers with professional development focused on using data to plan differentiated instruction and providing interventions to make the curriculum more accessible to all students at risk of not meeting benchmark assessment targets.
- All teachers use multiple strategies to gain every student's attention and ensure that every student understands directions and content. Teachers create an environment where all students feel intellectually and socially safe for learning.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How do teachers know who is primarily responsible for teaching students who have been identified as ELL students?
- What adjustments could be made to encourage ELL teachers, classroom teachers, and support teams to work together to develop learning plans?
- Is sufficient planning time given for ELL teachers and general education teachers to work together?
- What guidance is given to staff regarding goals and structures for planning time?

## Providing Guidance to Professional Learning Communities About Purpose and Structure (3.1.61)

### Desired Future State

School leaders provide a great deal of guidance to PLCs about the PLCs' purpose and structure.

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Note: For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 3.1.63 below.

## Supporting Professional Learning Communities to Help Teachers Identify Root Causes for Poor Student Performance (3.1.62)

### Desired Future State

School leaders provide a great deal of support to PLCs to help teachers identify root causes for poor student performance.

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Note: For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 3.1.63 below.

## Supporting PLCs to Help Teachers Develop Effective Instruction (3.1.63)

### Desired Future State

School leaders provide a great deal of support to PLCs to help teachers develop effective instruction to address root causes.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Strengthen PLCs by adding structures, protocols, data, and expectations to maximize the use of collaborative time. Collaborative feedback practices enable teachers to reflect on teaching practices, and these feedback practices create school cultures that value improvements in teaching practices.
- Collaborative teams review formative assessment data to make instructional adjustments and address student skill gaps in a timely manner.
- Give teachers regular opportunities to work with peers in reviewing student work and discussing its implications for instructional design, academic rigor, and learner outcomes.
- Facilitate discussions regarding the number of students whose performance levels are improving and those whose levels are not improving. Interventions are short-term rather than long-term strategies.
- Facilitate discussions regarding the number of students mastering the essential skills.
- Discuss individual students who are not improving and are therefore recommended for further intervention.
- Provide professional development to teachers on what transforms a school into a PLC (and the difference between a PLC and “having PLC meetings”).
- Include equitable practices around the use, nature, and language of formative assessments.
- Ensure that PLCs identify and address data that uncover or reinforce the existence of inequities.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How active are PLCs?
- What is the structure of the PLCs? Who attends PLC meetings?
- What adjustments could be made to PLCs to help teachers develop effective instruction?
- Why do you suppose some survey respondents participate in PLCs and others do not?
- To what extent do school leaders support the need for PLCs?
- Are all PLC members capable of explaining its purpose and established goals? If not, what steps are staff taking to make this possible?
- What are the protocols in place to help teachers identify root causes for poor student performance?
- Do the protocols enable staff to identify and plan for the use of instructional strategies necessary for improvement?

## Presence of Teacher Feedback: Collaborative Analysis of Student Work (3.1.70)

### Desired Future State

School leaders provide a great deal of formative feedback to support the collaborative analysis of student work.

### **Strategies and Suggestions**

- Adopt common schoolwide rubrics for constructed responses. Work to ensure staff has strong inter-rater reliability when scoring.
- Develop a schoolwide system for regularly collecting and analyzing common formative data (including student work samples).
- The leadership team and instructional coaches support teacher teams in developing and designing common formative and summative assessments.
- Common assessment results drive collaborative teacher team meetings to identify students who need extra support.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- To what extent are teachers getting together to apply their combined knowledge and experience to the challenges of teaching and learning by reviewing student work?
- What system or cycle is in place to ensure collaborative analysis of this work? How are the results of the analysis monitored for student success?



## Domain 3 – Instructional Transformation

### Practice 3.2: Provide rigorous evidence-based instruction

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#### Practice Description

- Set high academic standards and ensure access to rigorous standards-based curricula.
- Provide support to ensure that evidence is used in instructional planning and facilitation of student learning.
- As gaps are identified in the curriculum or the delivery of instruction, develop plans to strengthen these key components.

#### School-Based Example

Conduct a curriculum analysis and map lesson plans against standards to ensure that the plans adequately represent the standards. Determine whether adjustments and support are needed to ensure that all students have access to the curricula. In each instructional mode utilized—whether whole-class work, small-group work, independent work, technology-based work, or homework—teachers routinely utilize the best instructional practices for that mode, and school leaders support their development of those practices.

#### Impact of Collaborative Activity: Mapping Curriculum to Standards (3.2.10)

##### Desired Future State

Collaborative activities around mapping the curriculum to state or other content standards improve teaching and student learning in the school.

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**Note:** For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 3.2.60 below.

#### Alignment of School's Curricula to State Standards (3.2.40)

##### Desired Future State

Aligning the school's curricula to the state standards is extremely important to school leaders.

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**Note:** For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 3.2.60 below.

## Alignment Among Standards, Curriculum, and Assessments (3.2.50)

### Desired Future State

There is cognitive and content alignment among all three key areas for instruction: standards, curriculum, and assessment. (Cognitive alignment is defined as having consistent levels of intellectual rigor across areas. Content alignment is defined as having consistent subject matter across areas on which to assess student learning.)

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**Note:** For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 3.2.60 below.

## Process of Addressing Gaps in Alignment (3.2.60)

### Desired Future State

School leaders create effective job-embedded opportunities to identify and address gaps in alignment between standards, curriculum, and assessment.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop a common expectation for unit and lesson planning to address grade-level standards.
- Administer common formative assessments on a schedule agreed upon by all grade-level members.
- Adjustments to instruction and reteaching are determined regularly by the data collected from common formative assessments.
- Develop and implement a calendar of instruction that includes core content instruction, reteaching, and enrichment lessons to deepen the student's understanding and application of the essential standards.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Is the curriculum mapped to state or other content standards?
- How do you determine if there is cognitive and/or content alignment among standards, curriculum, and assessments?
- When gaps in cognitive and/or content alignment are identified, what steps are taken to close those gaps?
- Who creates the aligned curriculum? District teams? School teams? Individual teachers?
- Where does the aligned curriculum reside? In district curriculum guides? School curriculum guides? Other? Online or hard copy or both?
- When and how often is the aligned curriculum re-examined and revised? By whom?
- How is the aligned curriculum organized? Into subjects? Grade levels? Courses?
- How is student learning data consulted in the alignment process?

## Common Standards-Based Approach to Grading (3.2.22)

### Desired Future State

A formal plan for a common standards-based approach to student grading is developed, actively used, and shown to improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop a formal, standards-based report card for grades K–6.
- Have teachers intentionally track students' progress and achievements using common standards. This system includes a way to report students showing progress toward mastery of a standard.
- Use levels of performance such as Basic, Proficient, and Advanced to empower students to know how they are doing and in which areas they need work for continuous improvement. Allow time for teachers, students, and parents to celebrate student growth relative to schoolwide goals, grade-level goals, subject-specific goals, and the students' personal goals.
- Develop a schoolwide system for regularly collecting and analyzing common formative data around grading.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What is the current approach to student grading? Are there formal guidelines?
- What systems are in place that enable students to move toward mastery of skills or standards and, ultimately, toward ownership of their learning?
- Are teachers and leaders aware of and do they clearly understand what mastery of a standard looks like and what students' proficiency levels are? How is this information communicated to students, parents, and, during collaboration times, other educators?

## Maximizing Access to Advanced Courses and/or Coursework for *All* Students (3.2.30)

### Desired Future State

Maximizing access to advanced courses and/or coursework for *all* students is considered a great deal when assigning courses for students.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Leadership communicates and purposefully messages high expectations for every student.
- Create multiple entry points of access to gifted and talented programs and advanced courses.
- Use data to identify inequities in the assignment of classes. Review the history and criteria of who participates in these classes.
- Examine fiscal resources, time allocation, and schedules to ascertain if the school provides all students with the opportunity to access higher-level courses.
- Work with the guidance department to create multiple paths allowing underserved students access to advanced coursework.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are students made aware of advanced coursework?
- How do students elect to participate in advanced coursework?
- Under what conditions are students enrolled in advanced coursework?
- To what degree is data reviewed to identify the students who are accessing advanced courses? Is course data reflective of all students?
- What are the prerequisite skills for success in advanced courses? How can those skills be included in classes so that more students can be prepared for access to and success in advanced courses?
- Is there evidence of disproportionality of assignments to gifted and talented programs and advanced courses?
- Are historically underrepresented students provided with opportunities to access academic and behavioral support as needed?
- Does the school offer summer or after-school opportunities to meet prerequisite coursework to access advanced courses?
- Do school leaders insist that all classes prepare students for a challenging curriculum?

## Alignment of School's Curricula to State Standards (3.2.40)

### Desired Future State

Aligning a school's curricula to the state standards is extremely important to school leaders.

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Note: For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 3.2.60 below.

## Alignment Among Standards, Curricula, and Assessments (3.2.50)

### Desired Future State

There is cognitive and content alignment among all three key areas for instruction: standards, curriculum, and assessment. (Cognitive alignment is defined as having consistent levels of intellectual rigor across areas. Content alignment is defined as having consistent subject matter across areas on which to assess student learning.)

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Note: For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 3.2.60 below.

## Process of Addressing Gaps in Alignment (3.2.60)

### Desired Future State

School leaders create effective job-embedded opportunities to identify and address gaps.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop a formal, standards-based report card for grades K-6.

- Have teachers intentionally track students' progress and achievements using common standards. This system includes a way to report students showing progress toward mastery of a standard.
- Use levels of mastery such as Basic, Proficient, and Advanced to empower students to know how they are doing and in which areas they need work for continuous improvement. Allow time for teachers, students, and parents to celebrate student growth relative to schoolwide goals, grade-level goals, subject-specific goals, and students' personal goals.
- Develop a schoolwide system for regularly collecting and analyzing common formative data around grading.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Is the curriculum mapped to state or other content standards?
- How do you determine if there is cognitive and/or content alignment among standards, curriculum, and assessments?
- When gaps in cognitive and/or content alignment are identified, what steps are taken to close those gaps?
- Who creates the aligned curriculum? District teams? School teams? Individual teachers?
- Where does the aligned curriculum reside? In district curriculum guides? School curriculum guides? Other? Online or hard copy or both?
- When and how often is the aligned curriculum re-examined and revised? By whom?
- How is the aligned curriculum organized? Into subjects? Grade levels? Courses?
- How is student learning data consulted in the alignment process?

## Routine Use of Instructional Practices (3.2.71)

### Desired Future State

School leaders support teachers a great deal in the development of routine use of instructional practices.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Build ongoing and intensive job-embedded professional learning that provides effective and relevant tools and knowledge and continuously pushes teachers to reflect on their instructional practices.
- Help teachers vary their repertoires for explaining content, new concepts, and new information. To ensure that students understand concepts, teachers should use multiple methods such as models, representation, flash tools, diagrams, videos, text, mental imagery, exploration, research, art, music, and tactile experiences.
- Develop and expect teachers to regularly engage in the use of effective instructional practices, such as explicit instruction, cooperative learning, hands-on learning activities, scaffolding, varied group instruction, checking for understanding, and providing students with criteria for success.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are school leaders supporting teachers in the development of instructional modes and practices?
- What professional learning opportunities have been identified and used to support varied instructional practices?
- How do school leaders monitor and support classroom instruction to ensure varied modes of instruction?

## Student Engagement Strategies That Promote Student-Generated Questions and Student-to-Student Interactions (3.2.72)

### Desired Future State

School leaders support teachers a great deal in the development of integrating technology into classrooms.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide professional development for teachers on questioning and discussion techniques that produce thoughtful dialogue and on methods for increasing the use of academic language.
- Use strategies such as cooperative learning groups to have teachers support students in teaching one another, learning from one another, and assuming responsibility for one another's learning.
- During classroom observations, ensure that teachers ask open-ended questions so that all students can respond and discuss answers.
- Use supports, such as student discussion prompts, to have teachers engage in teaching students questioning techniques.
- Develop strategies, as well as clear rules and norms, to help students engage in collaborative learning, offer and receive feedback from peers and teachers, engage in questioning and examining claims, and provide encouragement and recognition of effort and progress.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Do students have time to discuss new and developing learning? How does this compare to teacher talk time?
- To what extent are strategies developed to support student discussion in the classroom?
- What tools and strategies are provided to teachers to support student use of academic language?
- What student engagement strategies have proven successful in the context of your school?

## Posing High-Level Questions That Elicit Creative Responses and Problem Solving (3.2.74)

### Desired Future State

School leaders support teachers a great deal in the development of posing high-level questions that elicit creative responses and problem solving.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide training for teachers, coaches, and administrators on questioning strategies to address critical thinking skills and depth of knowledge.
- Provide training for teachers on how students can ask and respond to questions that help them demonstrate learning (e.g., integrate knowledge, analyze, evaluate, and draw conclusions) for the purpose of monitoring student progress and adjusting instruction.
- Support teachers in designing questions and responses to students in a manner that results in thought-provoking dialogue.
- Support teachers in creating lessons that enable students to express their thinking and that make it visible.
- When appropriate, encourage teachers to ask students probing questions, which promote critical thinking and sustained dialogue, thereby deepening students' understanding of the content area and stretching the students' linguistic abilities. Questions to be posed to students can include the following:
  - » Why did you say that?
  - » What evidence do you have?
  - » How do you know that?
  - » What might someone else say?
  - » How did you solve that?
  - » What would have happened if we changed X?

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Are there opportunities for teachers to complete a self-assessment survey to help determine whether questions posed to students are high-level, rigorous questions?
- Are high-level questions planned prior to lesson delivery? What systems are in place to support this?

## School Leaders Developing Differentiated Instruction (3.2.80)

### Desired Future State

School leaders provide guidelines and resources for differentiated instruction and coordinate professional learning and accountability with staff to ensure that all teachers implement it across classrooms.

### **Strategies and Suggestions**

- Provide ongoing professional learning on the RtI framework, on effective practices for all certificated staff, including administrators, and on differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- Provide teachers with professional development focused on using data to plan differentiated instruction and providing interventions to make the curriculum more accessible to all students at risk of not meeting benchmark assessment targets.
- Determine whether professional development has been effective or whether teachers need additional training by monitoring how teachers use student achievement data, especially in the area of using data to plan differentiated instruction for English learners, students with disabilities, and students at risk.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- To what extent have school leaders provided guidelines and resources for differentiated instruction?
- To what extent is professional learning coordinated?
- How are expectations for differentiated instruction monitored to ensure implementation across all classrooms?



## Domain 3 – Instructional Transformation

### Practice 3.3: Remove barriers and provide opportunities

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#### Practice Description

- Systematically identify barriers to student learning and ways to enhance learning opportunities for students who demonstrate early mastery.
- Partner with community-based organizations, such as health and wellness organizations, youth organizations, and other service providers, to support students in overcoming obstacles and developing personal competencies that propel success in school and life.

#### School-Based Example

Track student progress and help students regain lost ground through academic supports (e.g., tutoring, co-curricular activities, tiered interventions), extended learning opportunities (e.g., summer bridge programs, after-school and supplemental educational services, Saturday academies, enrichment programs), credit-recovery programs, and virtual courses.

Give students demonstrating sufficient prior mastery access to higher level assignments and courses. Network with nearby community organizations to identify available supports—or to generate new supports—for students. Consider having medical and dental services available on-site on a regular basis. Provide on-site laundry service for families in need. Provide food for students during extended learning sessions and other periods when students are at school outside regular school hours.

#### School Plan for Addressing Student Attendance Problems (3.3.11)

##### Desired Future State

A plan for reducing the occurrence of student attendance problems is extremely effective.

##### Strategies and Suggestions

Draw from evidence-based strategies to address chronic absence, as nearly 8 million students are chronically absent nationwide. In the era of COVID-19, when students and families face even greater challenges, there is a need for higher levels of support from schools. Over the past decade, a growing body of knowledge has emerged about what works to improve attendance for groups of students with disproportionately high rates of chronic absence:

1. **Start with a team.** At the school level, use an attendance team, an MTSS team, or a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support team. Be sure to get the right people with the right skills, resources, and authority to implement the strategies. Teams can meet in person or virtually.
2. **Analyze the data before selecting strategies.** What is the prior year's rate of chronic absence? The higher the rate of chronic absence, the more investment there should be in Tier I strategies, as this lessens the need for the more costly and intensive Tier II and Tier III strategies.
3. **Consider the reasons for absences.** What are the reasons for individual students and for groups of students? Check with families and students to understand from their perspective what makes daily school attendance challenging. Assess the supports that are already in place, how well they are working, and where the gaps are.
4. **Explore possible interventions with the team.** Consider alternatives that are aligned with the reasons.
5. **Select evidence-based interventions based on capacity.** There may be more strategies than staff can implement immediately. Determine what to do first by sorting strategies into four quadrants: high impact (affecting many students), low impact (affecting a few students), high effort (requiring a lot of coordination, people power, resources, time), or low effort (requiring less coordination, people power, resources, time).
6. **Determine the steps needed to implement each strategy.** Once strategies are chosen, create a plan to implement the interventions throughout the year. Incorporate the strategies into the school improvement plan.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What was the chronic absenteeism rate in the previous school year? How many students missed more than 18 days? How many missed between 25 and 36 days of school? How many missed more than 36 days of school?
- How does the average daily attendance rate compare with the chronic absenteeism rate?
- How are positive messaging and accessible social and emotional checkpoints encouraging student engagement while in school and out of school?
- How have you assessed families' and students' perspectives to understand their attendance challenges?

## School Plan for Addressing Student Suspensions (3.3.12)

### Desired Future State

A plan for reducing student suspension problems is extremely effective.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Adopt and implement clear and consistent expectations for students. Ensure all school community groups are adequately supported to understand them. Implement measures to ensure that students, staff, and teachers comply with the expectations.
- Adopt a set of cultural norms and practices that enable teachers to interact with students positively.

- Analyze the impact the schoolwide behavior plan is having on lowering office referrals and improving student productivity.
- As part of the RtI process, establish a positive behavior support system and implement it consistently schoolwide.
- Assist staff in identifying and reducing teacher actions that decrease student motivation.
- Communicate regularly with the student body to reinforce the desired school culture and publicly celebrate individual and collective student growth.
- Work with students, parents, and staff to keep all communication channels open to provide information and to build an ongoing awareness of any school climate or safety issues affecting the campus.
- Develop a code of conduct with community input and ensure that it is communicated widely.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Are expectations for student behavior communicated? How do you know students are aware of the expectations?
- Are historical data on demographics, location, time, and reporting adults collected? To what extent are historical data analyzed to gain insight into root causes for suspensions?
- Which updates to the school's student suspension plan address emerging disciplinary issues? Does the plan outline ways to positively reinforce expectations?
- Do all staff members have a clear understanding of not only the consequences of misbehavior, but also the restorative next steps to uphold when the student returns to school or class? How is this information disseminated and reinforced?

## School Plan for Addressing Bullying (3.3.13)

### Desired Future State

A plan for reducing the occurrence of bullying is extremely effective.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Define what bullying is and how bullying is handled in all of its forms.
- Be specific about the tools and strategies teachers use to address bullying.
- Establish a “bully committee” to examine various anti-bullying curricula. Choose a program to implement schoolwide to systematically teach kids how to prevent and deal with bullying.
- Establish a conflict resolution program for all school leaders, support staff, and students.
- As part of the RtI process, establish a system of positive behavior supports and be consistent in schoolwide implementation.
- The committee members drive the process of taking inventory of current staff and student responses to bullying by identifying and addressing key focus areas.
- Develop action plans that include ongoing systematic monitoring of program implementation.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What is the current plan to address bullying? What adjustments can be made to improve the current plan?
- Is the current plan connected to other successful strategies that encourage student success?
- How is the school collecting information on students' and staff's feelings about their sense of safety in the school? Do these data show areas of strength as well as areas for improvement?
- To what degree do school leaders and teachers accurately define and identify bullying in class or on campus? How is support provided to sharpen the identification of bullying and create safety for all students?

## School Plan for Addressing Dropout Rates (3.3.14)

### Desired Future State

A plan for reducing the occurrence of each of the dropout rates is extremely effective.

A process for reviewing the school's approach for maximizing access and inclusiveness of underrepresented groups is developed, actively used, and shown to improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide parents and students with critical information about graduation requirements and college options as students enter 9th grade and throughout high school.
- Provide professional learning opportunities to ensure all teachers have the technical knowledge to provide basic information about college admittance and career and technical pathways.
- Identify early barriers to graduation. Create a system to collect and track course completion from each cohort of students starting their freshman year. Develop this system to outline the number of courses needed each year to be on track for graduation and identify barriers to course completion.
- Create early intervention plans for students identified as not on course for graduation. Those interventions include mentor support, social-emotional support, and alternate academic pathways for course completion.
- Provide career and technical education for students. Provide students with information and community opportunities to explore possible career paths.
- Collect and analyze historical student data to identify reasons for dropout rates.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How is the dropout rate calculated? Does the calculation surface an area that is determined to be most detrimental to the overall rate?
- What is the current plan to decrease the dropout rate? Is it effective?
- To what extent is the school surveying students about their career interests after high school graduation?

- To what extent is the school identifying barriers to graduation? Which data are collected to identify students' reasons for not completing high school coursework? Are these reasons connected to the economic or social-emotional needs of the students' families? What actions are taken in response to the data?
- What community partnerships are established to re-engage students?

## Programs That Add Instructional Time for Students (3.3.20)

### Desired Future State

Programs that offer additional instruction to struggling students, such as extended school days or summer school, are developed, actively used, and shown to improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Ensure proper implementation of enrichment opportunities that connect with the school's mission, vision, values, and goals.
- Work to educate partners about the school's focus before engagement in order to ensure alignment of messaging and content.
- Ensure that the extended learning curriculum supports and complements current school-day instruction.
- Monitor student improvement using achievement data disaggregated by attendance or other measures.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How is the school leveraging funds to provide additional academic support, extended learning opportunities, credit-recovery programs, and virtual courses? Are there interested parties to financially support these programs?
- Which programs are provided to add instructional time for students?
- Are access and opportunity provided equitably?
- How is student participation tracked?
- Which data are collected to determine whether the additional time is improving student learning?
- How are the data analyzed? How often? By whom? Are adjustments considered based on the data?

## Programs That Offer Targeted Intervention (3.3.30)

### Desired Future State

Programs that offer targeted intervention periods during the school day for struggling students are developed, actively used, and shown to improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- The leadership team develops a formal RtI system for students' entry into and exit from intervention classes.
- Tiers of intervention within the system are fluid and accessible for all students in need.

- Conduct an inventory of existing core academic and behavior interventions to determine areas of strength and need. Use inventory results to drive decisions to either acquire or abandon existing interventions and behavior supports.
- Develop decision-making protocols and rules that include entry and exit criteria to support collaborative teacher teams when making student placement decisions.
- Incorporate timelines for frequent progress monitoring to measure intervention effectiveness and student response to intervention. Measure the fidelity of intervention implementation to address any instructional issues that may interfere with student progress and growth.
- Review the most current and appropriate assessment data and associated cut scores for the students to identify those who are two or more levels below their grade and in need of intensive intervention.
- Consider targeted interventions that enable all students to access advanced coursework.
- Provide teachers with professional development focused on using data to plan differentiated instruction and providing interventions to make the curriculum more accessible to all students at risk of not meeting benchmark assessment targets.
- Assess the technology needs of proposed intervention or academic support programs for use during or after school to provide to targeted groups of students and to recommend technology reallocation or purchases, if needed, to fully implement the programs.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What possible barriers exist to student learning, and how is each level of the system working to remove those academic and nonacademic barriers in turnaround schools?
- What interventions are used to help students who are falling behind?
- How might those interventions be adjusted or changed?
- Who is included in the team to adjust or change those interventions?
- Are access and opportunity provided equitably?
- Which data are collected to determine if the targeted interventions are improving student learning?
- How are the data analyzed? How often? By whom? Are adjustments considered based on the data?

## Process for Reviewing and Maximizing Access and Inclusiveness of Underrepresented Groups (3.3.40)

### Desired Future State

A process for reviewing our school's approach for maximizing access and inclusiveness of underrepresented groups is developed, actively used, and shown to improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop systems to ensure that a culture of learning, inclusive of respect and positive rapport, is present in all classroom environments and implement these systems schoolwide to ensure consistency for students and teachers.

- Develop, implement, and monitor plans, policies, structures, and systems that support equity and address lagging or problematic issues. For example:
  - » Maintain and use a data collection system focused on the program's progress in prioritizing equity.
  - » Include representatives from all community groups in the interpretation and analysis of data used to inform decision-making processes.
  - » Support teachers and leaders in addressing implicit biases that may influence how they interpret and use data for action planning.
  - » Work with program leadership to design resource allocations that prioritize equity in programs.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Has a plan been developed to review students' access and inclusiveness? Is it actively used?
- Is there a process for reviewing student access?
- What are the goals of maximizing student access? Who is underrepresented? What systems have been put in place to address this underrepresentation?
- Has the process for evaluating access been shown to improve student learning?
- How are expectations for a culture of inclusivity monitored?

## Programs for Coordinating With Community Organizations (3.3.50)

### Desired Future State

A process to coordinate with community organizations to provide learning opportunities outside the school is developed, actively used, and shown to improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Invest in and mobilize local organizations to support academic achievement and the development of social skills.
- Train community liaison(s) on interpreting achievement data, analyzing student needs, and communicating with community organizations to secure partnerships responsive to student needs.
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the community liaison or equivalent designee.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Which community organizations are currently supporting the school?
- Which community organizations would you like to connect with?
- How do you communicate the needs of the school to community organizations?
- How are the schools involving community members in offering internships, career exploration, and service-learning opportunities?
- Who is accountable for helping make these connections for the students?
- How do teachers give students authentic experiences to connect their interests with real-world applications?

## Student Access to High-Level Courses or Enrichment (3.3.60)

### Desired Future State

Ensuring student access to high-level courses or enrichment is important to school leaders.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Complete a data analysis on who is accessing high-level courses.
- Define which prerequisite skills and courses are necessary to access the advanced courses. Backward-map alternative access points that would enable additional students to participate in advanced courses. For example, find opportunities for students to complete algebra and other freshman-level courses before entering high school or offer summer courses and after-school courses not only for remediation, but also for acceleration.
- Ensure that your vision aligns with delivering rigorous coursework and high expectations for all students. Define how that vision is evidenced in classroom instruction and coursework considerations.
- Reconsider school schedules and reallocate funding to provide additional courses and multiple opportunities for students to take advanced coursework.
- Incorporate best practices that meet the needs of diverse learners and promote challenging learning.
- Confront systematic biases found through data analysis that limit access of students from marginalized communities to high-level courses.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What types of high-level assessments and courses has the school offered in the past? Are they working well to challenge gifted or advanced students? What are schools doing differently to challenge gifted or advanced students?
- How do teachers challenge students to exceed their current level of schooling? What types of programs does the school offer?
- Do parents have critical information about graduation requirements and college options?
- Are data collected and analyzed to determine if there are issues of equity and access?
- Are supports available to provide students with a pathway to take high-level courses or enrichment if they choose to participate and demonstrate readiness?



## Domain 4 – Cultural Shift

### Practice 4.1: Build a strong community intensely focused on student learning

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#### Practice Description

- Celebrate successes—starting with quick wins early in the turnaround process—of students, family, teachers, and leaders. Early success promotes an expectation for further success and engenders confidence in the competence of colleagues.
- Provide explicit expectations and support for each person’s role (expected behaviors) both in the turnaround and in students’ progress.
- Create opportunities for members of the school community to come together to discuss, explore, and reflect on student learning.
- Champion high expectations (of self and others), embed them in everyday practice and language, reinforce them through shared accountability, and follow through on strategies for dramatically improving student outcomes.

#### School-Based Example

Establish systems (i.e., structures, policies, procedures, and routines) for focused collaborative work; recognize student effort and academic mastery; and recognize job satisfaction and camaraderie among staff as essential assets in a turnaround. Maintain a positive, encouraging classroom and school culture for students, one in which they feel safe and supported to share their needs, struggles, and concerns. Recognize each incremental improvement, but keep the focus on ultimate results at the student, teacher, and school levels. Celebrate team accomplishments and offer recognition for hard work and improvement. Frequently and openly review data on turnaround progress (including implementation and leading indicators) and discuss the data with community members.

#### Recognizing Groups of Teachers Who Work Together Effectively to Improve Student Learning (4.1.10)

##### Desired Future State

Recognizing groups of teachers who work together effectively to improve student learning is important to school leaders.

##### Strategies and Suggestions

- Ensure that protocols and expectations for effective collaboration are clear and outlined.

- Build routine opportunities into faculty and grade-level meetings to share teachers' best practices for engaging in highly effective instruction and improving student learning.
- Build opportunities into teacher collaboration time to share "problems of practice." Create a system to revisit and monitor the effectiveness of newly developed strategies. Celebrate growth.
- Create an opportunity for teachers to reflect on and share their perceptions of the effectiveness of grade-level and across-school collaboration times.
- Create opportunities to celebrate all community members' contributions to students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional growth.
- Create a culture of continuous improvement that celebrates new ideas to improve academic achievement.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What are the expectations of staff collaboration? What are the expected outcomes?
- Are there protocols in place for collaboration?
- Are there groups of teachers who work together effectively to improve student learning?
- How are systems such as teacher collaboration monitored to measure improved student outcomes?

## Teacher and Staff Support for Change (4.1.20)

### Desired Future State

Teachers and staff generally work with school leaders to make significant changes.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Create leadership structures that include opportunities for staff input from lead teacher teams and decision-making committees.
- Ensure the organization of teacher teams and that all teachers understand the structure and benefits of the model to drive sustainable change.
- Create PLC opportunities for other staff groups to engage in work that supports the mission and vision of the school through collaboration and ongoing discussion, action, and monitoring of goals.
- Build regular collaboration time for teachers to use data in responsive instructional intervention plans, including targeting curricular resources and instructional strategies to support all students throughout the school year.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What routines are in place for the administration to receive feedback from teachers and staff?
- What process is in place for teachers and staff to provide feedback to the administration about significant changes?

- How are you working with turnaround school leaders and teachers to acknowledge and include their ideas in creating a culture that values effort, respect, and academic achievement?
- How are you inviting parents and community members to engage in meaningful dialogue? How are you including their ideas in the process of creating a culture that values effort, respect, and academic achievement?
- Do teachers and school leaders have structured time together to discuss the needs of the school?
- How are major decisions around instructional changes developed? Whose input is included?
- Is there a system to elicit feedback once an initiative is in place and throughout the process?

## Eliminating Disruptive Behavior (4.1.31)

### Desired Future State

School discipline policies are extremely effective at eliminating disruptive behavior.

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**Note:** For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 4.1.32 below.

## Addressing Concerns in a Timely Manner (4.1.32)

### Desired Future State

School discipline policies are extremely effective at addressing concerns in a timely manner.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Examine current policies and data on behavioral issues and patterns of discipline.
- Collaboratively build a positive behavior management system.
- Consistently enforce and emphasize designs that effectively manage behavior while keeping students in the learning environment.
- Establish a dedicated leadership team to examine student behavior and discipline and invest in the continuous improvement of the system.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What is the current discipline plan?
- What adjustments can be made so that the discipline plan has a greater impact on student behavior?
- Are the timelines associated with the current discipline plan appropriate and effective in impacting student behavior?
- Analyze the source of behavioral problems. Who is involved? What is the scope of the problem? What is the strength of positive relationships with the students involved?
- Consider how the school engages the students involved. Are there instructional interventions such as project-based learning, place-based learning, real-world applications, or innovative uses of technology that better engage these students? What is their

academic progress? How is the school better supporting academic and behavioral success? What role does the instructional program play in promoting unsafe behaviors?

- Consider those affected by safety issues. Who are these students, and how is the school working better to support the safe pursuit of quality education?

## **Prioritizing the Enforcement of Policies to Ensure a Safe Learning Environment (4.1.40)**

### **Desired Future State**

Enforcing policies to ensure a safe environment is extremely important to school leaders.

### **Strategies and Suggestions**

- Create staff, parent, and student versions of the discipline policy and expectations and distribute them to all community members.
- Keep all communication channels open to inform and build an ongoing awareness of any school climate and safety issues affecting the campus.
- Collaborate with parent and community service agencies to address behavioral issues.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- What conditions support a safe learning environment for students? Parents? Teachers and staff?
- What policies are currently in place to support a safe learning environment?
- What adjustments can be made to current safe learning environment protocols to increase their effectiveness?

## **Programs to Establish Positive Student Behavioral Expectations (4.1.50)**

### **Desired Future State**

Programs that focus on clear, positive student behavior expectations are developed, actively used, and shown to improve student learning.

### **Strategies and Suggestions**

- Prepare school culture for positive behavioral strategies.
- Provide professional learning to empower practitioners to succeed in positive behavioral strategies.
- Ensure the sustainability of positive behavioral strategies via schoolwide integration and community buy-in.
- Create opportunities for students to become active participants in positive behavioral strategies.
- Foster positive relationships among students, their families, the school, and the community.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What programs are currently in place that focus on positive behavioral expectations for students?
- Are current positive behavioral programs shown to improve learning and behavior? How do you know?
- What is the vision for the connection between positive behavior and improving learning?
- How are school leaders supporting schoolwide positive behavioral strategies?

## Safety of Classrooms, Hallways, Bathrooms, and School Grounds (4.1.61, 4.1.62, 4.1.63)

### Desired Future State

In classrooms, in hallways, in bathrooms, and on school grounds, students and staff feel extremely safe. They do not feel threatened, in danger of being bullied or intimidated, or concerned about their physical or emotional safety.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide clear and consistent expectations for student behavior, including expectations of student actions in the classroom, hallways, and common areas.
- Consistently uphold these expectations for all students.
- Survey the condition of the facility and facility-related learning goals and establish a facilities plan that advances school goals by addressing maintenance, renovation, and repair.
- Establish clear expectations with the school community to maintain a clean environment.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Is there an up-to-date safety plan? Where is it located? Who is aware of what is included in the safety plan?
- How often is the school's safety plan updated?
- How do community members communicate safety concerns regarding physical spaces at the school?
- Consider particularly problematic areas of the school. Where do the problems occur? What is the level of adult presence in these areas? How are the areas better managed (e.g., through more intensive supervision, shifts in traffic patterns, closing the area)?
- Analyze school resources and increase resources dedicated to campus security as needed. Consider if there are ways to restructure the resources for a more significant impact.
- Analyze the source of behavioral problems. Who is involved? What is the scope of the problem? What is the strength of positive relationships with students involved?
- Consider those affected by safety issues. Who are these students?

## Adult Relationships to Students (4.1.70)

### Desired Future State

Ninety-six to 100 percent of students have a meaningful personal relationship with teachers or staff, characterized by relationships that are close enough to enable teachers and staff to notice changes that occur in the student's life that could impact student engagement, safety, or learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Assess student/adult relationships and intervene to ensure that every child has a meaningful relationship with at least one adult in the building.
- Expand professional development on classroom management models, which focus on building positive relationships with students, creating a classroom community, and having positive interactions with students.
- Consider adopting interaction and relationship-building principles across the schools for all adults that address how to get compliance and ownership of decisions from students around expectations.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What practices are in place to support meaningful student/adult relationships? What additional practices could be considered?
- How do adults communicate which students they are engaging to provide meaningful support?
- What percent of students currently have a meaningful relationship with an adult?
- Are school leaders modeling the desired interactions with students?
- Are structures, activities, and time in place for staff to build meaningful personal relationships with students?
- How do the positive relationships with students tie into the mission and vision of the school?

## Collective Expectation for Student Learning (4.1.80)

### Desired Future State

All staff in the school have high expectations for students.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Design a survey to administer to students throughout the year to collect data on student perceptions of the expectations adults on campus have for them. Review the data quarterly and plan actions to increase student perceptions of adults having high expectations for all students on campus.
- Gather artifacts formally communicated to students, families, and teachers regarding expectations for students. Enlist a group to review the artifacts to determine if they are consistent in messaging and convey sufficiently high expectations. Make adjustments in future communications as warranted.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are you communicating a culture of high expectations for students?
- What strategies can be shared with teachers and staff to encourage high expectations for students?
- How are you communicating the progress of turnaround efforts?
- Who is accountable for this communication at each level?
- How is the path made clear to everyone?
- Do all adults in the school have high expectations for all students? What evidence is collected to address this?
- Which students are outliers to staff expectations? How are these students similar?
- Has the school undergone professional learning focused on adult expectations for student learning, growth mindset, and culturally responsive teaching?

## Domain 4 – Cultural Shift

### Practice 4.2: Solicit and act upon stakeholder input

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#### Practice Description

- Collective perceptions—held by school personnel, students, families, and the broader community—about the degree to which their school climate is or is not positive are gathered and used to gauge the climate-related work to be done by a school striving for turnaround.
- Community perceptions are considered when identifying priorities and improving the underlying conditions that contribute to school climate issues.
- Acknowledge and respond to constructive feedback, suggestions, and criticism.

#### School-Based Example

Learn what constituents think by conducting surveys, holding forums and focus groups, and making suggestion boxes available. Share and act on what is learned. Take constituent input into account when making program decisions. Consistently demonstrate that all voices are heard.

#### Quality of Communication Systems for Staff (4.2.20)

##### Desired Future State

There are a range of communication systems, co-created by teachers and leaders with consistent feedback loops, to give staff the information to follow through on responsibilities.

##### Strategies and Suggestions

- Meet with teacher teams to establish effective ways to communicate information that needs teacher follow-through. What times and modes are best? What are the expectations for feedback and questions?
- Develop transparent systems of communication to involve all staff in the understanding of goals, expectations, and responsibilities.
- Provide information to staff members through various modes and communicate how to expect the information. Be clear and intentional in stating expectations and needed follow-through.
- Establish a process of reserving regular blocks of time for collaboration between the leadership team and staff.
- Be intentional in including paraprofessionals and itinerant teachers in communications in a way that enables them to stay informed about decisions and provides them with opportunities to offer feedback and ask questions.



### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What systems of communication are currently in place?
- How does leadership currently communicate the responsibilities of teachers and staff?
- How are you working with turnaround school leaders and teachers to acknowledge and include their ideas in creating a culture that values effort, respect, and academic achievement?
- Has the leadership team surveyed or met with teacher teams to discuss practical ways to share information that meets the needs of the teaching staff?
- Are efforts made to ensure that there are consistent feedback loops?
- Are the communication systems currently used in schools co-created by teachers and leadership staff?
- Do the communication systems result in the desired impact and connections between staff and leadership?

## Community Forums for Listening to Parent and Family Concerns (4.2.21)

### Desired Future State

Scheduling community forums for listening to parent and family concerns is extremely important to school leaders.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Examine parent communication processes and consider how well these processes provide opportunities for meaningful communication with parents.
- Establish clear goals for parent communication.
- Identify expectations for teacher and school leadership communication with parents. Use research on parent involvement.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What opportunities exist to broaden the representation of voices?
- Do all voices have a meaningful opportunity to influence decisions?
- How are you inviting parents and community members to engage in meaningful dialogue? How are you including their ideas in the process of creating a culture that values effort, respect, and academic achievement?
- How are you including members of the community in the turnaround efforts? How are you encouraging them to participate in the turnaround process?
- Is information easily understood and used by all intended audiences? Are translation services employed as needed for parent audiences?
- How are school leaders creating a forum where families feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued when raising concerns?

## Group Meetings to Talk About School Curriculum and Testing (4.2.22)

### Desired Future State

Scheduling group meetings to talk to parents and families about school curriculum and testing is extremely important to school leaders.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Continue to support academic partnerships between the school and families by scheduling two or three times throughout the year for parents to come into the school to learn in detail about their child's courses and how to support them.
- Create a parent engagement committee that includes the school's parent liaison. The committee collects relevant data that drive planning for the format of meetings and the selection of offerings to families.
- Utilize the parent liaison for additional follow-up contact with parents who do not attend.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What consistent community forums and/or meetings are currently in place?
- What current community forums and/or meetings are consistently well attended and/or supported? Why do you think that is?
- Do parents think their voice is valued? How do you know?
- Are meetings designed so that parents are fully informed and can ask questions and discuss school curriculum and testing?
- Are meetings held at a convenient time and place for parents and in a format that works for them?
- Which families are historically attending the meetings? Is the school reaching the majority of its families? Who is not in attendance?
- Are parents made aware of the curriculum and testing programs that enable them to assist their children?

## Engaging in Challenging Conversations (4.2.30)

### Desired Future State

The school creates structures for problem solving in which teachers and school leaders engage in meaningful, challenging conversations.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Organize staff into meaningful collaborative teacher teams that take collective responsibility for student learning and work interdependently to achieve shared goals for which members hold themselves mutually accountable.
- Engage collaborative teacher teams in both vertical and horizontal conversations around student learning and instructional needs.

- Provide professional learning for all staff on “crucial conversations” as a method to strengthen staff relationships.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What systems of communication are currently in place to allow for challenging conversations?
- What is the plan for engaging in challenging conversations when the traditional path does not allow for all teachers and staff to share their thoughts?
- How are school leaders and teachers working together to problem-solve to address the school’s instructional needs and the students’ academic needs?
- How open are teachers to engaging in meaningful, challenging conversations with colleagues? With the administrative team?
- How open are school leaders to engaging in meaningful conversations with staff that result in thought-provoking dialogue?
- How are school leaders creating a forum in which community members feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued when engaging in challenging conversations?

## Obtaining Feedback From Families (4.2.50)

### Desired Future State

Feedback from parents and families is provided through surveys and other methods such as forums, focus groups, and suggestion boxes.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Conduct a survey of families and students to gauge perceptions about the school, its effectiveness, and their place in it.
- Use different formats to elicit feedback from parents, including direct and indirect outreach, such as surveys, online meeting forums, focus groups, parent meetings, and suggestion boxes.
- Build opportunities for the teaching staff, school leadership, and parents to provide feedback to each other regarding a child’s well-being and academic process.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are you soliciting input from interested parties regarding their perceptions about the schools?
- How are community members from often-underrepresented voices represented?
- Do all voices at the table have a meaningful opportunity to influence decisions?
- What tools need to be created to solicit such input?
- Who is accountable for developing and distributing those tools?
- What is needed to adjust community members’ perceptions about turnaround schools, if negative?
- How are you showing them turnaround school progress?

- Is information easily understood and used by all intended audiences? Are translation services employed as needed for parent audiences?

## Utilizing Constructive Criticism and Feedback (4.2.60)

### Desired Future State

Collecting constructive criticism and applying that feedback to the decision-making processes is extremely important to school leaders.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Collect feedback from teachers throughout the year to determine the effectiveness of the decision-making processes used by the school.
- Create a process allowing constructive feedback around the school's instructional strategies and students' and teachers' needs.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for all staff on ways to engage in challenging conversations that lead to problem solving.
- Provide teachers and paraprofessionals with constructive feedback, giving them clear goals, strategies, and support for instructional improvement.
- Structure meetings to provide opportunities for engagement in thoughtful dialogue.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Is constructive criticism valued in your school community? How do you know?
- What systems are in place to respond to constructive feedback?
- What systems are in place for collecting constructive criticism? What is the desired result of these systems?
- Does school-level leadership apply feedback to staff for the decision-making and problem-solving processes?

## Domain 4 – Cultural Shift

### Practice 4.3: Engage students and families in pursuing educational goals

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#### Practice Description

- Intentionally build students' personal competencies to pursue goals, persist with tasks, appraise progress, hone learning strategies, and direct their learning to further enhance their capacity to learn and succeed.
- Provide students with opportunities to connect their learning in school with their interests and aspirations.
- Meaningfully engage parents in their child's learning, progress, interests, and long-term goals.

#### School-Based Example

Programmatically and systematically build students' skills in setting learning goals, managing their learning, and pursuing their goals by charting progress on coursework and toward their postsecondary goals; inform and engage families in planning and supporting their children's education goals; provide students and their families with a full explanation of assessment results and interest inventories to help them make the best decisions; tap community resources and expertise to expand students' understanding of potential careers and education options.

#### Scheduling Family and Community Meetings to Review Student Work (4.3.10)

##### Desired Future State

Our school works with family and community groups to determine the best time and location for public meetings and provides transportation and childcare to increase attendance.

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**Note:** For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 4.3.30 below.

#### Parent Attendance at Parent-Teacher Conferences (4.3.20)

##### Desired Future State

At least one parent or guardian attends for every student.

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**Note:** For relevant strategies and suggestions and reflection questions, see 4.3.30 below.

## Nature of Parent-Teacher Conferences (4.3.30)

### Desired Future State

There is sufficient time, and parents and teachers have meaningful discussions to develop strategies to help students' progress.

### Strategies and Suggestions

#### Family outreach

- Support staff in building their capacity to facilitate the development of strong, trusting family relationships that lead to collaboration.
- Encourage teachers to make positive personal connections.
- As a school leader, make one positive phone call each day.
- Increase staff knowledge of ways to engage families through resources, materials, meetings, discussions, and hands-on opportunities that support student academic growth.
- Establish a system for school-to-home and home-to-school communication that occurs weekly and monthly. Provide opportunities for families to collaborate and communicate with staff.
- Connect with parents through mobile phone apps, classroom-based websites, and the student information system; provide parents with training on how to monitor their child's progress.

#### Family engagement

- Create a welcoming school climate. Provide printed information (in the parent's home language if possible) that includes school policies, school contact information, and the school calendar. Hold an open house at the beginning of the school year. Provide translators during school activities.
- Provide families with accessible and relevant resources to use at home with their child to increase engagement and improve student growth.
- Involve parents in volunteer activities. Recognize volunteers regularly.

#### Student learning goals

- Provide families with workshops and materials that engage them in grade-level learning goals. Print suggestions for parents on ways to support their children at home.
- Encourage homework assignments that require students to share their work with their families.
- Engage parents in holding their children to high expectations and supporting their success at home.
- Build level-to-level (e.g., elementary to middle school) transition strategies to prevent student struggles and help them succeed.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are parents and your school community made aware of public meetings?

- How do you keep track of parent and other family attendance during family engagement opportunities?
- Do parents and/or other family members only interact with teachers? What opportunities do they have to interact with staff and administration?
- Other than the teacher, do parents and/or other family members have an additional individual with whom they can connect for support?
- How are you sharing assessment results and explanations with families?
- What needs to be in place to ensure that all families have access to this information?
- How are you assisting families in educational planning?
- How are school leaders scheduling and planning meetings for families in such a way as to respect them as individuals and value their time?

## Perception of Classroom Visitors (4.3.40)

### Desired Future State

Family visitors are sought out by teachers and welcomed as a key asset for student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Conduct parent surveys gathering parents' perceptions as visitors in the building and classrooms. Align these data to perception data collected from teachers regarding the helpfulness and effectiveness of parent visitors in their classes.
- Create a vision statement including parents as partners. Working with the teaching staff and parents, develop guidelines to indicate what successful implementation entails.
- Communicate the school-parent involvement vision to all interested parties. Clearly outline the purpose, benefits, and responsibilities of both parent visitors and teaching staff.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Are parents and/or families allowed to observe and/or visit classrooms? Are families aware of classroom visitation opportunities?
- What efforts are made to gather parents' perceptions of the school as partners in their child's education?
- Has the school developed a system that gives parents access to the school and classroom?
- Are parents aware of the grade-level expectations for students and given ways to support their child's learning?
- Is the school aware of the parents' expertise to support student learning through volunteer work, classroom visits, or other opportunities?
- Is information easily understood and used by all intended audiences? Are translation services employed as needed for parent audiences?

## Personalized Learning Opportunities for Students (4.3.50)

### Desired Future State

A program to enhance personalized learning opportunities for students is developed, actively used, and shown to improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Adopt technology-usage learning experiences for students that promote personalized learning.
- Prioritize which learning opportunities to personalize for remediation and acceleration of student learning.
- Incorporate individual goal setting where students set short- and long-term goals around foundation grade-level skills, including opportunities to accelerate learning.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- To what extent are teachers helping students articulate their aspirations and connect their learning to the pursuit of these aspirations?
- How are school-based programs developed to enhance personalized learning opportunities? Are they shown to improve student learning?
- Do extended learning opportunities give space for students to pursue personal learning goals?
- How are personalized learning opportunities monitored and selected?
- How successful are the school's graduates in completing post-secondary work or obtaining work in their chosen careers?

## Preparing Students for College and Careers (4.3.60)

### Desired Future State

Ensuring students are prepared for college and careers is extremely important to school leaders.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Design counselor schedules so a significant amount of their time is spent on college and career counseling.
- Leaders and teachers work to build an academically motivated school culture based on college-going and career-readiness systems.
- Messaging from teachers and leaders regarding achievement recognizes and acknowledges students for both growth and achievement.
- Teachers work to connect learning to real-life applications and careers when possible.
- Hold events that build a college-going and career-readiness culture.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Are parents and/or other family members made aware of potential next steps after graduation? How do you know they are aware?



- Are students prepared for college or a career once they have graduated from high school? How are these data collected?
- Does the school have data on the college and career selections of their graduates?

If you are seeking additional information, have questions about the Four Domains CALL survey and feedback system, or would like to provide feedback on how to make it better, please contact WestEd's Center for School Turnaround and Improvement at [csti@wested.org](mailto:csti@wested.org).

If you are seeking additional support, your state education agency or local education agency will be a good place to start. For additional service offerings from WestEd, please visit <https://csti.wested.org>.

