



CENTER FOR  
**School Turnaround  
& Improvement**

WestEd  Systemic Solutions  
for Student Success



# **STRATEGIES AND SUGGESTIONS**

for Local Education Agencies  
Using the Four Domains for Rapid  
School Improvement Framework



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# Introduction

This document was developed for local education agency (LEA) or district 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 LEA or district leaders as they develop improvement plans and identify action items to carry out. The guide was initially developed for schools and districts that are using the Four Domains Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning (CALL) survey and feedback system—a leadership team can use the CALL survey results to inform its focus on the sections of this guide that might be most useful for developing and implementing a school improvement plan appropriate to its particular context.

Even if the CALL survey is not being used in your context, though, this guide can help focus your improvement efforts on strategies that match your school's or LEA'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.

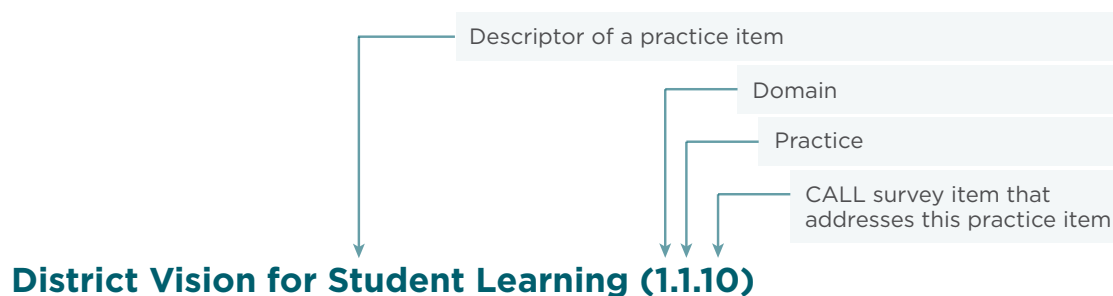
## Navigating This Guide

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 an LEA-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 or LEA'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 “District Vision for Student Learning,” for example, is labeled “1.1.10.” 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 (“10” 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 or LEA 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 or LEA. If the CALL survey system is not being used in your context, 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 LEA's system, and 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 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.

### LEA Example

The LEA identifies a senior district official to lead a team that oversees local improvement initiatives, including principal support and development, policy development, districtwide data analysis, and overall strategy direction. The superintendent and senior district official articulate the need for turnaround, connecting the state's advocacy for it to local contexts and inviting local community members to further inform implementation efforts, policy, and resource distribution.

### District Vision for Student Learning (1.1.10)

#### Desired Future State

A clear vision exists and is shared by school leaders and staff, and district programs and initiatives fully support the vision.

#### Strategies and Suggestions

- Designate a senior district leader to oversee turnaround efforts.
- Advocate relentlessly for the success of low-performing schools by sharing the urgency and importance of turnaround efforts with all stakeholders, including families, staff, and community members.
- Implement robust systems for collecting, analyzing, and sharing school performance data to track progress.
- Use data to guide resource allocation, adjust strategies, and celebrate incremental successes.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What systems or processes are in place to ensure the senior leader remains accountable for supporting turnaround efforts across all schools?
- What methods are being used to ensure that advocacy efforts are consistent and resonate with all stakeholder groups?
- What systems are in place for collecting, analyzing, and sharing school performance data, and how well do they align with school improvement goals?
- How often are performance data shared with stakeholders, and how are the data used to foster transparency and drive decision-making?
- How does the leadership team use performance data to prioritize resource allocation and adjust strategies effectively?

## District Leaders Building a Shared Vision for Student Learning (1.1.20)

### Desired Future State

During the school year, LEA leaders meet with groups of school leaders at least monthly to build a shared vision for student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Form a dedicated team to support and monitor school leaders, focusing on principal development, strategic planning, and policy alignment.
- Facilitate the collective development of a shared vision for student learning by devoting time to these and related topics:
  - » shared core values among school leaders
  - » determination of contextual opportunities and barriers that students and the community experience
  - » shared ideas for priorities that emphasize action on identified core values
  - » a collective definition of student and school success
- Develop a process by which leaders can vet the developing vision statement with essential stakeholders.
- Engage school leaders in providing specific context based on their schools to inform the LEA vision statement.
- Engage school leaders in the development of a theory of action and logic model aligned with the developing vision statement and inclusive of the shared definition of success.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Does the team have a shared vision for student learning?
- Are school leaders developing the vision with essential stakeholders?
- How will the context of your LEA and schools inform the development of a shared vision for student learning?
- Are there essential voices beyond school leaders who should be a part of this process?



## District's Process for Providing Data to Schools for School Improvement (1.1.30)

### Desired Future State

Data are formatted to help school leaders analyze them, and the district provides training on data analysis.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Implement systems for collecting, analyzing, and sharing school performance data to track progress.
- Use data to inform resource distribution, refine improvement strategies, and recognize instrumental achievements.
- Identify an LEA team that will coordinate the identification and sharing of key data with school leaders.
- Establish an LEA-wide schedule for LEA and school leaders to study student learning data to develop a shared understanding.
- Establish an LEA-wide student learning data professional learning community (PLC) to study student performance trends and identify and address challenges.
- Engage in routine dialogue with school leaders to determine their needs related to data study and analysis.
- Develop targeted professional learning and support for school leaders to increase their capacity for analyzing student learning data.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What data will be collected to measure and monitor the progress of schools toward the LEA vision and priorities for student learning?
- How will school leaders' needs be determined in order to inform professional learning for increasing data literacy and capacity?
- What systems are in place or can be developed to share data with stakeholder groups and community leaders?
- How will data be used to develop school-level performance and improvement goals?
- How will the LEA work with and support school leaders in using data to shape school plans for increasing student learning?

## Articulating a Districtwide Vision for Student Learning and School Improvement (1.1.40)

### Desired Future State

The superintendent or other district administrator uses multiple strategies to communicate the districtwide vision to internal and external stakeholders and regularly communicates progress toward identified milestones aligned with the district vision.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Collaborate with key stakeholders, including educators, families, and community members, to create a compelling vision that reflects shared values and aspirations.
- Ensure the vision emphasizes excellence and continuous improvement and is relatable and relevant to all constituents.
- Use diverse communication channels, such as community meetings, newsletters, social media, and school events, to share the vision regularly.
- Tailor messaging to resonate with different audiences, ensuring accessibility and understanding across the district.
- Highlight examples of schools or individuals making progress toward the vision, fostering a culture of recognition and motivation.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What are the core values that power the district vision statement?
- How is the district vision statement shared with internal and external stakeholders?
- How will leaders ensure that members of each stakeholder group will help share the vision statement across the community?
- What commitment can be made to communicate the vision statement and its relevance to the local community?
- How will district and school leaders support the vision statement?

### Principal Feedback: Focus on Learning (1.1.88)

(See 1.1.20)

### Evaluation: Focus on Learning (1.1.99)

(See 1.1.10)

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## 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 the incorporation and establishment of effective organizational processes, structures, and interactions that contribute to continuous organizational improvement.

## LEA Example

LEA leaders provide intensive, tiered support to principals and school leadership teams to help them develop action items, timelines, and responsibilities aligned with each school's turnaround plan. The LEA provides access to data to inform goal-directed milestones, including markers for implementation, changes in professional practice, and interim and annual student assessments. The LEA also provides schools with resources, time, and concrete feedback to support them in refining and advancing their turnaround plan.

## Impact of District Policies on Schools (1.2.10)

### Desired Future State

District policies and practices always support school-level efforts to improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Use performance data to develop short- and long-term goals aligned with the district's vision for improvement.
- Develop time-bound milestones for long-term goals with routine progress monitoring and adjustments.
- Establish a consistent schedule for reviewing data, assessing milestones, and tracking progress against goals.
- Use methods such as dashboards, reports, or scorecards to make data accessible and actionable for district leaders and school teams.
- Leverage district support and feedback to make timely adjustments to strategies, timelines, or resources aligned with desired outcomes.
- Celebrate and highlight early successes and communicate them broadly to reinforce confidence in the turnaround process.
- Routinely engage school leaders and teachers in collaboratively analyzing data and refining strategies to meet goals.
- Ensure community partners and families are kept informed and are invited to contribute to efforts that sustain progress.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How will the LEA identify and share the district-level roles in support of school improvement? What are the key identified roles and their functions?
- What process is in place to identify the unique needs of school leaders, and how will the LEA respond to those needs?

- How will the LEA differentiate professional learning for school leaders?
- What systems are in place for school leaders to identify school-specific needs to support school improvement?
- What tools, systems, and structures can the LEA offer school leaders in order to give them adequate decision-making authority to support school improvement?

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

### Desired Future State

The district provides all needed resources and works with schools to make sure improvement plans are useful.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Supply schools with detailed performance trend reports that highlight strengths, weaknesses, and gaps.
- Offer templates and guidance for schools to set goals that are aligned with the district's turnaround vision.
- Encourage schools to involve stakeholders in the goal-setting process to ensure buy-in and shared accountability.
- Organize workshops or planning sessions in which district staff support schools in analyzing data and aligning the schools' goals with evidence-based practices.
- Provide a standardized framework for schools to document timelines, tasks, and responsible parties, ensuring clarity and accountability.
- Schedule regular check-ins for school leaders to present progress updates and discuss challenges.
- Create a process for revising improvement plans based on feedback from these check-ins, enabling schools to respond to evolving needs and to maintain momentum.
- Ensure that schools have access to professional development, instructional resources, and other supports aligned with their improvement plans.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What training needs do school leaders require for developing goals and aligned strategic plans?
- How does the LEA assess and respond to school leader capacity for using data to guide school improvement planning?
- What is the LEA capacity to support school leaders with coaching and professional learning?
- What structure(s) or processes are in place to assess whether improvement efforts are successful?

## Meeting With School Leaders to Review Student Learning Data (1.2.30)

### Desired Future State

District leaders *continuously* work with school-level leaders to review student learning data, giving specific attention to students in need of extra support.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Create a districtwide schedule to have data meetings with school leaders that are focused on analyzing student performance trends and identifying students in need of additional support.
- Provide structured protocols for these meetings, emphasizing disaggregation of data by student groups.
- Train school leaders on effective methods for interpreting student data.
- Offer tools and resources that make data analysis accessible and actionable.
- Work with school leaders to design and implement targeted interventions for students needing additional help, incorporating evidence-based practices and measurable outcomes.
- Encourage cross-school collaboration to share successful strategies and resources for supporting high-need students.
- Establish systems for tracking the impact of interventions on student learning, ensuring that progress is reviewed frequently and adjustments are made as needed.
- Celebrate successful practices and replicate them while also addressing areas where interventions are not producing the desired outcomes.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What is the LEA protocol for data-review meetings with school leaders?
- What are district-level leaders' roles and functions in supporting school leaders?
- How do data-review meetings with school leaders lead to modifications or revisions in school improvement or student learning plans?
- What opportunities can the LEA create for school leaders to share what is learned from data-review meetings?

## Using Results of State Tests for School Improvement Planning (1.2.40)

### Desired Future State

District-level leaders meet with school-level leaders to review results from state tests and to discuss schools' needs for school improvement planning processes.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Use a standardized protocol for reviewing results, encouraging leaders to focus on root causes, strengths, and areas needing improvement.

- Collaborate with school leaders to prioritize needs based on test results, ensuring alignment with districtwide improvement goals.
- Offer tailored resources, such as instructional coaches, curriculum enhancements, or professional development opportunities, based on identified areas of need.
- Guide school leaders in incorporating state test findings into their school improvement plans, ensuring goals are driven by data and focused on closing achievement gaps.
- Assist in establishing specific, measurable milestones within the improvement plans that align with state and district performance benchmarks.
- Create opportunities for school leaders to share best practices and challenges with peers, fostering a districtwide community of learning and support.
- Include district specialists or external experts in meetings to provide additional insights and innovative solutions for addressing performance challenges.
- Schedule follow-up meetings to monitor progress on improvement plans, using interim assessments and additional data points to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- How does the LEA support school-level assessments aligned with state tests?
- What support does the LEA provide to school leaders in establishing benchmarks and milestones for monitoring student learning?
- What LEA-level strategies are priorities for supporting school improvement and student learning? How are these communicated to school leader and educator teams?
- What success indicators has the LEA identified to track its own efforts to support school improvement?
- How often does the LEA communicate with the state education agency's department that supports school improvement?
- In what ways are school leaders empowered to provide feedback to the LEA on the LEA's support for school improvement plans?

### **Principal Feedback: Focus on Student Learning Data for School Improvement (1.2.88)**

(See 1.2.40)

### **Evaluation: Focus on Student Learning Data for School Improvement (1.2.99)**

(See 1.2.40)

## 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.

### LEA Example

LEA leaders provide tailored support to each school based on deep root-cause analysis and needs assessment to inform the school's priorities. The LEA customizes each school's level of autonomy for personnel hiring, placement, and replacement and other key decisions based on school capacity.

### District Leaders Identify Schoolwide Learning Needs for School Improvement (1.3.10)

#### Desired Future State

The district assesses the learning needs of each individual school in the district and implements initiatives in each school based on those needs.

#### Strategies and Suggestions

- Identify barriers to student achievement and engagement, involving stakeholder groups in the analysis process.
- Collect and analyze a variety of data points. Supplement with surveys and focus groups for qualitative insights.
- Schedule regular walk-throughs with district leaders, school staff, and external experts to observe classroom practices, review school climate, and gather feedback directly from the field.
- Offer differentiated training and coaching tailored to the unique needs of each school.
- Collaborate with school leadership teams to create individualized action plans based on each school's needs assessment and root-cause analysis. Define clear goals, actionable steps, and metrics for progress monitoring.
- Review all the initiatives that schools are pursuing and consider whether any may be eliminated if they do not match identified needs.
- Establish forums for cross-school collaboration, where schools facing similar challenges can share best practices and resources. Encourage partnerships with local organizations to address broader community needs.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What guidance and training has LEA leadership developed to support schools in engaging in a comprehensive needs assessment and root-cause analysis as part of school improvement planning?
- Is there a schedule in place for LEA leadership to meet with school leaders to review school improvement plans, needs, and progress?
- What is the LEA capacity to support a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) and student wraparound services that may be priorities of school improvement plans?
- What goals and indicators have been identified to guide and assess the LEA's support of school improvement?
- Does the LEA create flexibility for school leaders to prioritize school improvement initiatives?

## Outside Providers Understand District Vision for Student Learning (1.3.20)

### Desired Future State

All outside providers understand the district's vision and work to support it.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Build relationships with outside providers by emphasizing the district's commitment to support schools and shared outcomes.
- Assign district liaisons to act as points of contact for each provider, fostering consistent communication.
- Create contracts or document agreements that describe deliverables, timelines, and accountability measures.
- Establish protocols for how providers will interact with schools, collect data, and report progress.
- Schedule regular meetings with providers to review progress, share feedback, and adjust strategies as needed.
- Use data and evidence to evaluate the impact of their work on student learning.
- Encourage providers to collaborate with principals, teachers, and other stakeholders to tailor their services to each school's unique learning needs.
- Promote cross-provider communication to share best practices and avoid redundancies.
- Share data and stories that illustrate the positive impact of provider partnerships on student outcomes.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Are there protocols in place for the LEA to identify and screen potential vendors and consultants to support school leaders? What are those protocols?
- What communication strategies has the LEA developed with vendors to assess their effectiveness and success in supporting schools?



- How does the LEA leadership provide vendors and consultants with a full context about the community and students and the schools' needs? What data are shared?
- What agreements does the LEA establish with consultants to ensure the relevance of services provided to schools in support of school improvement?
- How does LEA leadership work with school leaders to monitor vendor work and support?

## Specialists Supporting Student Learning and Professional Development (1.3.30)

### Desired Future State

District specialists fully understand current problems in schools, their work is relevant to schools' needs, and they support the schools as their suggested changes are being implemented.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Organize quarterly alignment sessions for district specialists to review the district's vision, goals, and school-specific priorities.
- Develop for district specialists clear roles and responsibilities that are tied to these goals.
- Assign each district specialist to a cluster of schools, fostering strong relationships with school leaders and teachers.
- Involve district specialists in school-level needs assessments to identify professional development requirements, instructional gaps, and resource needs, and use these data to develop action plans with school leaders.
- Provide access to training on instructional strategies, data analysis, and change management to keep specialists' skills up to date.
- Facilitate learning exchanges with district specialists in other districts or regions to bring in fresh perspectives.
- Develop structured processes for collecting feedback from principals and teachers about district specialists' recommendations and use the feedback to support and adapt the district's approaches.
- Highlight the impact of district specialists' work during district meetings, in newsletters, or through awards programs.
- Share success stories that showcase school improvements that the district specialists' efforts contributed to.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the LEA leadership provide district specialists with a full context of the community and students and the shared needs of schools? What data are shared?
- What training or support do district specialists receive for working with schools in improvement?
- How are outcomes for district specialists' support established?
- How does LEA leadership work with school leaders to monitor district specialists' work and support?

## Role of School Leaders in Resource Allocation (1.3.40)

### Desired Future State

School leaders have substantial power to allocate resources to support innovative practices in teaching and learning, and the district provides training to support creative resource reallocations.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Organize workshops and seminars focused on budgeting strategies, grant writing, and effective resource management.
- Include case studies of successful resource reallocation to support innovative teaching and learning practices.
- Facilitate collaborative planning sessions involving teachers, instructional coaches, and community stakeholders to identify priority areas for innovation.
- Create a decision-making framework to help school leaders assess the impact, feasibility, and sustainability of reallocating resources for innovative practices.
- Include criteria such as alignment with school improvement goals, potential for student impact, and scalability.
- Establish district-level grants or funding pools that school leaders can apply for to support innovative teaching and learning projects.
- Give awards to or publicly acknowledge schools that successfully implement impactful innovations.
- Publish a districtwide resource allocation playbook featuring examples of effective practices.
- Allow for discretionary funds in school budgets that leaders can allocate toward innovative pilot projects or emergent needs.
- Assign district specialists or coaches to support school leaders in identifying funding sources and reallocating resources.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What training does the LEA provide to school leaders in strategic budgeting for school improvement?
- How does the district school improvement coordinator or team interface with school leaders in budgeting for school improvement?
- How do school leaders communicate their specific needs for latitude in decision-making to support school improvement?
- What role does LEA leadership have in working with school leaders to review progress on school goals and strategies?
- How does the LEA support school leaders in reviewing and revising budgets that enable school improvement?

## Responsiveness for Providing Support and Resources to Schools (1.3.50)

### Desired Future State

When school leaders inform district leaders that they need support or resources, the district leaders are responsive in a timely manner.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Create an online portal for school leaders to submit resource requests to the LEA. Include fields for urgency, justification, and anticipated outcomes.
- Develop a ticketing system to track and prioritize requests based on impact and urgency.
- Assign district specialists or liaisons to each school to serve as dedicated points of contact for addressing resource and support needs.
- Allocate a portion of the district budget or resources as a contingency fund for addressing urgent or unanticipated school needs, and establish quick-access procedures for school leaders to tap into this pool when necessary.
- Introduce streamlined workflows, such as preapproved categories of common resources or fast-tracking of urgent requests.
- Hold regular district-school leadership meetings to discuss ongoing needs and challenges, ensuring open lines of communication.
- Recognize and reward district staff who excel in providing timely and effective support to schools.
- Analyze patterns in past requests to identify common challenges and proactively allocate resources or provide training.
- Develop a rapid-response team for addressing critical needs.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Who at the LEA level participates in the review of schools' strategic plans?
- What is the protocol for reviewing schools' improvement budgets and requests for support?
- What LEA goals or priorities inform the review of schools' budgets and improvement plans?
- What process has been developed for LEA and school leaders to communicate regularly about successes, challenges, and needs regarding school improvement?
- How can LEA leaders support collaboration among school leaders for developing budgets for school improvement?
- What connections to networks or state organizations can LEA leaders initiate or enhance to help schools develop creative strategies and budgeting approaches?

## Domain 2: Talent Development

### Practice 2.1: Recruit, Develop, Retain, and Sustain Talent

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#### Practice Description

- Plan for recruiting and developing talent with turnaround-specific competencies to quickly fill the vacancies that will inevitably occur during the turnaround process.
- Use multiple sources of data to match candidate skills and competencies to a school's needs, prioritizing the highest need schools.
- Institute succession planning activities by creating in-house district preparation programs designed to foster and generate turnaround competencies to develop future turnaround leaders and teachers.

#### LEA Example

The LEA designs a model for selecting and placing teachers and leaders with turnaround competencies, prioritizing turnaround schools' access to top candidates. LEA leaders challenge and support human resources to create programs that identify and develop potential turnaround leaders and teachers. Multiple measures and data sources, such as extended candidate observations in various settings, are used to assess readiness and potential.

#### Recognizing Principals for Innovation, Risk-Taking, and Experimentation (2.1.10)

##### Desired Future State

District leaders almost always recognize principals who take risks for innovation.

##### Strategies and Suggestions

- Encourage a culture of innovation by publicly celebrating and rewarding innovative practices.
- Establish opportunities that allow principals to test new strategies with district support.
- Create forums for principals to share innovative practices, discuss challenges, and receive peer and district feedback.
- Allow principals to design school improvement strategies that align with broader district goals while permitting creative solutions.
- Highlight case studies of successful innovations led by principals.
- Facilitate workshops for principals to analyze and reflect on their innovations.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are district leaders actively recognizing and supporting innovation among principals?
- How are innovative efforts evaluated and communicated to ensure alignment with district goals?
- What resources or structures are needed to enable more frequent and impactful principal-led innovation?
- How do district leaders ensure that principals are supported when innovations do not yield immediate success?

## Process for Developing Teacher Leadership (2.1.20)

### Desired Future State

The development of teacher leadership is based on schoolwide needs and a formal district strategy for school improvement.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Conduct comprehensive needs assessments at both the school and district levels to identify priorities and ensure teacher leadership development aligns with overarching district goals for school improvement.
- Develop a districtwide framework for teacher leadership roles that specifies expectations, responsibilities, and pathways for professional growth in alignment with district improvement strategies.
- Provide district-led professional development sessions focused on building leadership competencies, including data analysis, instructional coaching, and collaborative problem-solving.
- Facilitate regular district- and school-level forums in which teacher leaders share strategies, successes, and challenges, fostering a collaborative improvement culture.
- Establish district-supported coaching and mentorship programs to guide teacher leaders in implementing evidence-based practices that address schoolwide improvement needs.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district ensure that its strategy for teacher leadership development aligns with school improvement goals?
- What resources does the district provide to support teacher leaders in their roles?
- How does the district facilitate communication and collaboration between school leaders and teacher leaders?
- What processes are in place for the district to evaluate and adjust its teacher leadership development strategy?
- How does the district ensure that teacher leaders are empowered to make meaningful contributions to instructional transformation and student success?

## Using Shared Definition of Good Teaching for Selecting New Teachers (2.1.30)

### Desired Future State

Most administrators agree on a shared definition of good teaching and consistently use it to inform recruitment and selection of new teachers.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Leverage the vision for student learning to guide administrators during the recruitment and selection of new teachers.
- Direct school and district leaders to attract, select, and retain teachers and staff who demonstrate a deep interest in and capacity to serve the mission and vision of the district and school.
- Convene stakeholders to develop or refine comprehensive teacher and principal evaluation models and use them to support recruitment efforts.
- Create a professional learning and coaching model to ensure new faculty and staff know and understand professional expectations and cultural needs.
- Conduct routine site visits hosted by school leaders, with classroom observations to align instructional practices with district goals.
- Create structures for district personnel to meet quarterly with stakeholders to review strengths and identify areas for improvement within the system.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Does the principal work with teachers and families to develop a shared understanding of high-quality teaching?
- How is good teaching defined?
- What are ways administrators use the common definition and understanding of high-quality teaching as recruitment and selection talking points?
- Are regular meetings held for teams screening or interviewing applicants to ensure alignment among team members and readiness to select diverse, skilled candidates committed to student success?

## Process for Hiring New Principals (2.1.40)

### Desired Future State

District leaders work with multiconstituent teams to review data and identify school needs before principal candidates go through a rigorous hiring process. There is a basic district protocol for hiring to ensure that practices that promote appropriate assessment of candidates are consistently used, with flexibility to enhance the protocol to meet individual school needs.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Create a team of teachers, specialists, support staff, and school leaders at every school who review school data to determine school needs before the hiring process begins.

- Incorporate knowledge of school needs during interviews and selection to ensure appropriate candidate assessment.
- Provide teams with opportunities to craft targeted questions and gather evidence of candidates' relevant skills and expertise.
- Develop scenarios based on school needs to assess candidates' leadership skills.
- Apply an assets-based approach to evaluate candidates' abilities to address identified needs effectively.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Are teams that include educators, school leaders, parents, and community members trained in data analysis to identify gaps that might indicate needs that can be addressed by filling specific vacancies?
- Are there diverse protocols for screening and interviewing applicants? Have relevant teams been trained in these protocols?
- How are scenarios used during the interview process to give applicants an opportunity to exhibit problem-solving skills?

## District Role in Process of Poor Teaching Performance (2.1.50)

### Desired Future State

District leaders, as part of their supervision and evaluation of school leaders, ensure that teachers with a record of poor performance are identified and supported to become successful before they are recommended for dismissal from the district.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Create or enhance a process for principal evaluation by engaging principals and a diverse team of stakeholders in defining key leadership attributes.
- Periodically meet with each principal to understand their concerns about teachers who may need to improve their practice. Find out what types of support the teachers have been offered.
- Eliminate barriers to efficient human resources operations and promote effective performance management conversations based on the defined evaluation process.
- Use an assets-based approach when considering teaching performance to consider whether a different placement or role in the school might capitalize on the teacher's strengths and support them to be successful in facilitating high student achievement.
- Establish professional learning communities (PLCs) for principals to enhance supervision and accountability practices aligned with performance standards.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Are there district protocols for supporting teachers, other educators, or school leaders to improve performance?
- Does the evaluation of teachers, other educators, or school leaders include an evidence-based framework?

- Do teachers, other educators, support staff, and school leaders understand the performance standards for their roles? Are they provided with professional learning about meeting the standards?
- Are teachers, other educators, support staff, and school leaders provided time with a coach to identify areas to work on and models of proficiency; does the coach have planning and reflection conferences with them based on agreed-upon observations of their practice?
- Are school leaders prepared for how to deal with possible reactions from some colleagues if a teacher, other educator, support staff, or school leader is not recommended for rehire?

## School Leadership Succession Plans (2.1.60)

### Desired Future State

School and district leadership succession plans are developed, actively used, and proven to be effective in preparing and guiding skillful school and district leaders to successfully fulfill leadership roles and provide continuity of the district and school missions.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Require district leaders and principals to develop formal succession plans that prepare aspiring and experienced educators to assume specific leadership roles in their schools and district.
- Conduct a comprehensive leadership assessment by systematically identifying critical skills, traits, and organizational needs while strategically mapping current leadership strengths to future requirements.
- Create peer support programs for role-alike positions across the district, create special groups for one-of-a-kind positions, and provide professional learning experiences to advance understanding and implementation of evidence-based practices for transformational leadership.
- Create professional learning communities (PLCs) for identified leaders and educators who are committed to school transformation.
- Plan professional learning about change theory and how to understand and address the needs of school personnel who are not yet committed to school transformation.
- Provide opportunities for shadowing and coaching and provide additional leadership roles in the district to promote skills development and goal setting.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What will the succession plan's structure be? Who will develop the plan and how? Will its development be a collaborative effort involving many people or just a few trusted colleagues?
- How will teachers, other educators, coaches, and leaders have information about and be considered for possible inclusion in the succession planning?
- Will there be leadership training and coaching for all teacher leaders that include group protocols for "problems of practice" and discussions in PLCs or other collaborative groups?



## Principal Feedback: Developing Teacher Leadership (2.1.88)

(See 2.1.60)

## Evaluation: Developing Teacher Leadership (2.1.99)

(See 2.1.60)

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# 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/peer observation.
- Leverage and maximize the effectiveness of high-performing teachers, coaches, and leaders by using them as models and peer coaches.

## LEA Example

The LEA creates timelines and other accountability systems that remind principals to regularly examine teacher performance and to rapidly adjust professional learning plans based on identified needs. LEA leaders provide district staff with job-embedded professional learning and opportunities to learn side by side with school leaders. District-offered professional learning experiences are differentiated, purposeful, targeted, and reflective of what is known about successful adult learning and the turnaround endeavor.

## Formal Plans for Teacher Professional Learning Opportunities (2.2.10)

### Desired Future State

Formal district and school plans for differentiated professional development opportunities are developed by school leaders and other educators, are actively used, and improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Create inclusive district and school professional development committees to survey colleagues and make recommendations for professional development priorities.
- Provide direct, targeted professional learning and resources about formative assessment.

- Design professional learning opportunities to build relational trust by building new knowledge and skills among all educators in the district and schools.
- Create opportunities for leaders and teachers to learn side by side and share how ongoing growth impacts their individual practice as instructional leaders.
- Model high-quality professional learning opportunities that are responsive to principals' and other school leaders' needs about how to lead high-level change and sustain improvement.
- Schedule time to observe teachers to assess the successful implementation of professional learning, ensuring it results in improved student achievement for all students.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Do district and school professional learning communities (PLCs) solicit input from colleagues about their learning needs and make recommendations for priorities for the upcoming year? How are student and school data used to determine priorities for the upcoming year?
- What professional development and training are currently provided to principals and school leaders to implement or enhance PLCs or other collaborative learning structures such as grade-level teams or subject area departments?
- How does the district ensure that principals understand and implement the districtwide PLC framework consistently across schools?
- In what ways does the district offer coaching or mentorship to principals, other school leaders, and instructional and support personnel to support their ongoing development and goals for improving student achievement?
- How do PLCs and other collaborative learning structures collaborate across schools in the district, and what strategies are in place to encourage cross-school learning and sharing of best practices?
- What data are used to assess the overall effectiveness of PLCs and other collaborative structures at the district and school levels, and are there correlations between these collaborative professional learning groups and improved student achievement?

## Identifying Teacher Professional Development Needs (2.2.20)

### Desired Future State

The district works with school staff and leadership to determine teachers' needs for professional development by looking at data on student learning and considering information from teacher evaluations or classroom walk-throughs.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide professional learning for school staff and leadership on how to analyze student achievement data and determine gaps.
- Make goals to address possible causes of the gaps between different student groups.
- Identify what professional learning is needed for educators and school leaders to better be able to analyze student data and address the goals.

- Establish a process for monitoring progress on the goals and ensuring that the goals are responsive to student needs.
- Use walk-throughs, achievement data, professional learning community (PLC) anecdotal data, and other data points to monitor the implementation of the goals and to determine professional learning needs.
- Collaborate with educational associations/unions to identify ways to use available time for structured professional learning on evidence-based practices to increase student learning and achievement. Identify ways to structure school days and calendars for the benefit of students and staff.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What data teams currently exist within the district and schools? What is their effectiveness?
- Do educators and leaders regularly write goals? If so, have many goals been successfully implemented, or do some educators and leaders need professional learning or coaching to build their capacity to use goals?
- Is there a districtwide protocol for school walk-throughs? If so, is there alignment throughout the district?
- Is there a history of the teachers' association collaborating on the number and use of days in the contract for teacher and leader professional learning experiences?
- Would teacher work days (when students are not in school) support increased teacher engagement in professional learning?
- Has there been clear and consistent communication about the correlation between enhancement of staff capacity and impacts on student achievement?

## Coaching Programs for Teachers (2.2.30)

### Desired Future State

Coaching programs for teachers are developed, actively used, and shown to improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop districtwide plans for having school-based coaches and instructional specialists.
- Establish criteria and an application process for these roles, including ways for applicants to provide evidence of their skills and disposition to meet role expectations.
- Clarify that coaches are not evaluators: They are guides in promoting educators' capacity to impact students' learning and academic achievement.
- Introduce or reinforce to all educators information about the responsibilities of coaches and instructional specialists.
- Align professional learning with district and school priorities based on student achievement data. Use and compensate skilled internal staff to deliver training, supplementing with external experts as needed.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are potential coaches and instructional specialists recruited, interviewed, and selected? How are they trained and retained?
- How are the roles and responsibilities of coaches and instructional specialists conveyed to staff? How are they assured that interactions are confidential and nonevaluative?
- What are ways to measure the impact of coaches and instructional specialists on educators? How could the impact of their work be correlated with student achievement?
- What barriers get in the way of teachers working with instructional specialists, and how are these barriers addressed?
- What systems or structures exist for coaches to collaborate across content areas, buildings, and so on?

## District Leaders Encourage Principals to Engage in Professional Development (2.2.50)

### Desired Future State

District leaders encourage principals to engage in professional development, and leaders work with the principals to provide opportunities that are tailored to individual principals and others that are designed for groups.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Invite principals individually, in groups, and anonymously to identify and share their professional learning needs. Use input to select differentiated and relevant district offerings.
- Require each principal to engage in growth mindset professional learning with multiple tailored opportunities to improve their practice.
- Promote principals' self-reflection in a variety of ways and settings, including at group meetings and in observation cycles that are done as part of their evaluation.
- Engage with principals about how they can measure their leadership effectiveness in increasing students' academic achievement.
- Collect evidence from principals that exhibits participation in professional learning and coaching opportunities to improve or enrich their leadership performance.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What structures establish a safe environment for groups of principals to discuss their professional learning and coaching needs?
- Are there coaches specifically for principals? If so, what are the required credentials to apply for such positions, and how is the effectiveness of these coaches measured?
- How could principals demonstrate their growth mindset and the results of their participation in professional learning and coaching?
- What are ways to include reflection about data on student achievement as part of a continuous cycle of supervision and evaluation of principals?

## Prioritizing Principal Leadership Development (2.2.60)

### Desired Future State

District leadership greatly prioritizes principal leadership development.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Demonstrate that principal leadership development is a top priority by devoting significant time to addressing it in multiple ways.
- Solicit input from principals on how district leaders could demonstrate their commitment to principals' leadership.
- Demonstrate commitment to principal leadership development during supervision and evaluation, school walk-throughs, and examination of student wellness and achievement data.
- Use a growth mindset for each principal, and tailor their supervision and evaluation accordingly.
- Schedule meetings with principals to discuss ways in which the district is working on its goals and to solicit feedback and ideas.
- Celebrate principals' successes and risk-taking.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What is the process for determining professional learning experiences for principals?
- How are principals encouraged to share different points of view?
- What are structures to promote discussion about leadership among principals and district leaders?
- Are principals celebrated for trying something even when they did not have confidence in being successful?
- How is the impact of professional learning for principals measured?

## Coaching Programs for Principals (2.2.70)

### Desired Future State

Coaching programs for principals are developed, are actively used, and improve leadership practice.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Build principals' skills through coaching.
- Provide regular high-quality, job-embedded coaching to assist principals in thinking through their problems of practice and using evidence-based practices to address them.
- Ensure that principals have access to data as needed.
- Build the capacity of principals and school leadership teams to conduct effective one-on-one conversations with teachers to drive evidence-based instruction.
- Deepen principals' ability to delineate and anticipate their budget needs based on school goals for student achievement.

- Build leadership capacity to engage families and the community in the success of every student.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- What is the role of principal coach, and how are individuals chosen for this role?
- Are there coaches for principals who work with them individually in a confidential and nonevaluative way?
- How are topics for coaching determined? Are principals encouraged to bring topics to their coaches that were part of their evaluation?
- How is the impact of coaching on principals' leadership practices measured?
- Is there evidence that correlates learning from coaches with improved student achievement?

## **Frequency of Principal Collaboration (2.2.80)**

### **Desired Future State**

Principals discuss ideas about instruction, student learning, and school improvement with other principals in the district.

### **Strategies and Suggestions**

- Ask principals what structures would be helpful to them for discussing instruction, student learning, and school improvement, and ask how the usefulness of the structures would be assessed.
- Schedule frequent meetings with principals for them to reflect on instruction, student learning, and school improvement.
- Feature discussion about instruction, student learning, and school improvement as part of already scheduled meetings of administrators.
- Pair principals with peers or critical friends for support and to generate new thinking about how to motivate teachers to maintain commitment to transforming the school.
- Invite principals to share promising practices they have heard about and discuss the relevance of the ideas in their schools.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- How are principal meetings structured to discuss instruction, student learning, and school improvement?
- Is a meeting protocol predetermined or do principals establish it themselves? Do principals take turns facilitating the meetings?
- Are the meetings helpful or are they attended because they are required?
- Is there any record of successful practices or identified challenges?
- Would books or excerpts from books be helpful to ignite meaningful conversation?

## 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, flexibility to rapidly respond to professional learning needs, and opportunities to revise milestones as needed.

### LEA Example

LEA leaders identify which district-level roles will contribute to school improvement efforts. Leaders review and refine job expectations and descriptions to reflect realistic and high-leverage responsibilities to support rapid school improvement.

### District Leaders Hold Teachers and Staff Accountable for Student Learning (2.3.10)

#### Desired Future State

District leaders analyze continuous student learning data to hold teachers and school staff accountable; district leaders also provide ongoing guidance for improvement.

#### Strategies and Suggestions

- Work with principals to monitor and align teacher expectations with the improvement effort.
- Prioritize using teacher time for what matters most: teaching and developing their craft for all students to learn.
- Ensure that school schedules include significant time for allowing teachers to collaborate and for building the capacity of administrators and teacher leaders to provide ongoing guidance for data review in support of student learning.
- Provide training for principals and teachers on how to analyze data, and provide structures to help teachers plan instructional adjustments based on data.
- Provide improvement plans that include professional development for individual teachers and the monitoring of student learning.
- Develop extended-year, -week, and -day programs for students and teachers, and determine ways to sustain funding for this additional time.
- Convey to parents and the community that continuous school improvement for increased student achievement is a major focus.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What does it mean for district leaders to look at student learning data, hold teachers and school staff accountable, and provide ongoing guidance for improvement?
- Do all teachers understand what to do if they are accountable for ongoing student learning?
- Who supports teachers in their accountability for student growth?
- What can be learned from districts, school leaders, and teachers who are successful in facilitating ongoing student learning? What support do they receive to be successful?
- Do the principals and teachers have a clear understanding of which data to review for a thorough analysis to guide instructional adjustments, and do they understand how to effectively triangulate all relevant data elements?

## Effectiveness of Principal Evaluations (2.3.20)

### Desired Future State

Principal evaluations often reflect performance, identify areas for improvement, and offer strategies on how to improve.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Use observations data and objective language when reflecting on performance. If there have been any observation cycles that preceded the writing of the evaluation, use reflections from those cycles to suggest strategies for the principals to try.
- When identifying areas for improvement, refer to the competencies or standards that are the basis of the principal evaluation model used by the district.
- Plan ways to promote reflection when writing principal evaluations.
- Engage in dialogue with the principal about the evaluation with the intention of learning about the principal's understanding of the cited areas for improvement and the strategies offered.
- Set up future meetings and observations to continue the conversation with the principal, and use observational data as the foundation for the meetings.
- Suggest that principals share areas of improvement and strategies with a coach to inform growth plans.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What are the purposes of principal evaluations?
- What aspects of adult learning theory are important to consider while writing evaluations and conferencing with principals?
- How does having a growth mindset relate to the evaluation?
- How will the principal be engaged in dialogue?
- How can you ascertain whether the principal understands the evaluation and understands how to show improvement?



## Principals' Time on Instructional Leadership (2.3.30)

### Desired Future State

Principals spend almost all of their time on instructional leadership tasks.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Determine the most effective instructional leadership tasks for principals.
- Involve teachers, other educators, support staff, and other school and district leaders in discussions about instructional leadership.
- Schedule routine meetings at which principals discuss their successes and the barriers or challenges they face in spending most of their time on instructional leadership tasks.
- Consult principals on their specific needs for instructional leadership training and coaching.
- Provide professional learning and coaching opportunities for principals about how to prioritize competing responsibilities and tasks.
- Explore the possibility of extending school leadership roles to additional school staff.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Are principals able to allocate time to focus on instructional tasks?
- Is there a way to distribute leadership—for example, by having one leader focus on instruction and another focus on operations?
- What is a realistic district expectation about the average number of hours each week a principal devotes to work, including during school hours, before and after school, at school events, and at home working on reports and evaluations after observations have been completed?

## District Leaders Providing Formative Feedback to Principals (2.3.40)

### Desired Future State

The formative feedback principals receive effectively reflects performance, identifies areas for improvement, and offers strategies on how to improve.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Ensure that school leaders are aware of how often observation cycles will occur.
- In each observation cycle with a principal or school leader, include a planning conference to identify the areas of schoolwide improvement they are working on and to identify what would be helpful to observe and what data to collect.
- During the planning conference, discuss data on schoolwide improvement and invite reflection on what would be important next steps.
- During a reflection conference after an observation, review the data that were collected, ask open-ended questions to promote reflection, and use a range of indirect to direct informational coaching behaviors depending on the need at different parts of the discussion.
- At the end of a reflection conference, ask the observed person what was helpful, what was not helpful, and what should be changed or added in the next observation cycle.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How is each school leader evaluation used to promote reflection and growth?
- Who does the evaluation? Is there benefit to different district staff doing observation cycles for the same person, or is having the continuity of one evaluator preferable?
- What coaching approaches are used to engage the school leader in identifying strategies for improvement and responding to strategies suggested in the evaluation?
- Does the school leader have a coach, and how is the coach involved in supporting any plans for improvement?
- Would there be benefits to sharing the observation data prior to the reflection conference and then using the reflection conference to co-construct strategies for improvement?

## Using Data From Teacher Evaluations for School Improvement Plans (2.3.50)

### Desired Future State

Results from teacher evaluations are used by the district to set goals and evaluate progress.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Use data and discussions among district leaders to determine implications of teacher evaluations and to identify possible root causes of the areas in need of improvement identified by the evaluations.
- Create goals for district leaders and other district or school staff to support improvements in those areas identified by teacher evaluations.
- Develop timelines for periodically monitoring progress toward reaching the goals.
- Direct principals and school leaders to engage their staff in data dialogues to identify possible causes of areas in need of improvement and to discuss possible goals for improving in those areas.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What are ways to make transparent the direct link between teacher evaluation and district and school goal setting?
- What are ways to engage teachers and other school staff in discussing the teacher evaluation process and its impact on setting improvement goals? How might the teachers' union or association help?
- How could more educators be enlisted in joining with school leaders to think about the implications of teacher evaluation data and goal setting for the district?

## Principal Feedback: Providing Feedback to Teachers (2.3.88)

(See 2.3.50)

## Evaluation: Providing Feedback to Teachers (2.3.99)

(See 2.3.50)

## 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 decisions.
- Use flexible and rapid ways to check learning and adjust groupings or teaching methods to meet students' needs.

#### LEA Example

The LEA supports teachers' efforts to identify students' individual needs and helps them consider how instructional plans can be aligned with the identified needs. LEA leaders explore flexible scheduling opportunities, which may include creative ways to increase instructional time—for example, high-dosage tutoring, pullout skill drills and practice, before- or after-school learning sessions, asynchronous learning opportunities, flexible groupings and scheduling, extended learning such as longer school days or weeks or summer sessions to support each student's needs. Any additional instructional time is structured and staffed to ensure high-quality learning will occur. The LEA ensures that teachers have access to multiple data sources to conduct frequent progress-monitoring of student outcomes.

#### District Support of Formative Assessment of Student Learning (3.1.10)

##### Desired Future State

The LEA requires teachers to use specific types of formative assessments and provides them with guidance on how to use the data from them.

##### Strategies and Suggestions

- Equip teachers with formative assessments and high-quality resources aligned with curriculum standards, ensuring they address the diverse needs of all learners.
- Empower principals and school leaders to lead formative assessment initiatives by offering training on data use and fostering a data-driven culture.
- Provide targeted professional learning to build teacher capacity in interpreting and applying data from formative assessments.

- Introduce clear protocols for collecting, analyzing, and using formative assessment data.
- Support principals in organizing professional learning communities (PLCs) or other teams to foster collaboration, share best practices, and reflect on formative assessment data.
- Provide consistent, constructive feedback to teachers and principals on formative assessment practices, recognizing strengths and identifying areas for growth.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How can the district further support teachers in effectively using formative assessments to improve instruction? What professional learning opportunities are needed?
- In what ways can principals be further empowered to lead and support teachers in effectively using formative assessment data?
- What protocols are being implemented or can be improved to ensure formative assessment data are collected, analyzed, and used consistently across schools?
- How are collaborative learning communities supporting teachers in reflecting on and improving their use of formative assessment data?
- How is the feedback process structured to ensure that both teachers and principals continuously grow in their use of formative assessments?

## Formative and Summative Data Use in District (3.1.20)

### Desired Future State

The LEA uses both summative and formative assessment data to identify areas where students need improvement.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop a comprehensive assessment system that integrates both formative and summative assessments aligned with curriculum standards.
- Provide timely assessment data after each assessment is administered.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for school leaders and teachers on analyzing assessment data.
- Design interventions and adjust instruction based on analysis of assessment data.
- Implement steps and protocols for the routine review of assessment data at both the district and school levels to ensure that student learning needs are being addressed promptly.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the LEA monitor the use of formative and summative assessment data? What adjustments can be made to enhance this process?
- What professional learning opportunities are provided to support teachers and school leaders in analyzing and responding to assessment data, and how can those opportunities be further strengthened or expanded?

- What strategies and protocols are in place for regularly reviewing student assessment data, and how can these be improved to ensure timely instructional adjustments?
- How effectively are school leaders and teachers collaborating in data-driven analysis processes, and are there additional supports needed to enhance this collaboration?

## **Role of District Leaders in Developing Differentiated Instruction (3.1.30)**

### **Desired Future State**

District leaders provide guidelines and resources for differentiated instruction, and they coordinate with school leaders on professional learning and accountability to ensure that all teachers implement it across classrooms.

### **Strategies and Suggestions**

- Provide clear, districtwide guidelines and resources for differentiated instruction that align with curriculum standards and are adaptable to the diverse needs of students.
- Support principals in leading differentiated instruction by providing training on coaching teachers and setting clear expectations for consistent classroom implementation.
- Coordinate targeted professional learning for teachers in implementing differentiated instruction.
- Establish a process for monitoring and accountability in which principals and district leaders regularly review classroom practices and provide feedback.
- Foster a culture of collaboration through professional learning communities (PLCs), allowing teachers to share strategies and reflect on their differentiated instruction practices for continuous improvement.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- What guidance and resources are in place to support teachers in implementing differentiated instruction?
- In what ways are principals communicating expectations for effective differentiated instruction?
- How can the district further enhance the coordination of professional learning on differentiated instruction to ensure all staff are equipped with effective practices?
- In what ways can the district support principals in monitoring expectations for differentiated instruction to ensure consistent implementation across classrooms?
- How effectively are teachers using data to plan and implement differentiated instruction, and what additional support or training might they need?
- How can collaboration through team structures facilitate the sharing of effective strategies for differentiated instruction among teachers?

## Programs for Added Instructional Time for Students in Need of Further Support (3.1.40)

### Desired Future State

The district has developed and actively uses programs to extend instructional time for students in need of further support, such as extended school days or summer school, and these programs have been shown to improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop and implement extended learning programs such as summer school or after-school tutoring.
- Provide ongoing training and resources to teachers on effectively delivering instruction in extended learning programs, ensuring that they are equipped to meet diverse student needs.
- Establish clear criteria for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of extended learning programs, using student achievement data and feedback from teachers, students, and families.
- Facilitate regular observations of extended learning sessions to assess instructional practices and provide constructive feedback to teachers.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What extended learning programs are currently in place to support students who need additional instructional time? How does the district ensure that these programs are actively implemented to support student learning?
- How are teachers and principals supported in effectively implementing extended learning programs to maximize their impact on student achievement?
- How are the results from extended learning programs reviewed and used to adjust or refine the programs to better meet student needs? How does the district use observations of program implementation to inform adjustments?
- How does the district incorporate feedback from teachers, students, and families to improve the effectiveness of extended learning programs?

## District Implementation of Schoolwide Student Learning Intervention Program (3.1.50)

### Desired Future State

District leaders work with school leaders to implement schoolwide methods of instruction and interventions such as response to intervention (RtI) or MTSS, providing ongoing oversight and assistance in assessing the effectiveness of these approaches in improving student learning outcomes.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop and communicate a districtwide framework for implementing RtI/MTSS.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for school leaders and staff on the effective use of instructional interventions, focusing on differentiating instruction and meeting diverse student needs.

- Establish clear data collection protocols to regularly assess the progress of students receiving RtI/MTSS interventions and guide instructional adjustments.
- Foster collaboration among school leaders and instructional staff by establishing PLCs or other collaborative structures to review RtI/MTSS data and discuss strategies for improvement.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of RtI/MTSS interventions with ongoing district support to refine strategies as needed.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district communicate the framework for implementing RtI/MTSS?
- How do school leaders ensure consistent implementation of the district RtI/MTSS framework?
- What professional learning is provided to help school leaders and teachers effectively implement RtI/MTSS, and how can the district further support their learning?
- How does the district support schools in collecting and using data to monitor the progress of students receiving RtI/MTSS interventions?
- In what ways do school leaders and teachers collaborate to assess the effectiveness of RtI/MTSS interventions, and how can the district enhance these collaborative efforts?
- What systems are in place for providing feedback and coaching to school leaders on the fidelity of RtI/MTSS implementation, and how can the district expand support in this area?
- How does the district monitor the overall effectiveness of RtI/MTSS interventions, and what additional resources or supports could improve student outcomes?

## Developing Professional Learning Communities in Schools (3.1.60)

### Desired Future State

The district provides principals with comprehensive training and support in developing and managing professional learning communities (PLCs) and reviews the work and effectiveness of PLCs across the district.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide principals with ongoing professional development to effectively lead PLCs, focusing on collaboration, data analysis, and instructional planning.
- Develop a districtwide PLC framework that outlines clear goals, protocols, and expectations, ensuring consistency and alignment with district priorities.
- Offer targeted coaching and mentorship for principals, pairing them with experienced leaders or instructional coaches to strengthen their ability to manage and sustain PLCs effectively.
- Establish regular check-ins and progress reviews in which district leaders meet with principals to assess PLC progress, provide feedback, and address challenges related to PLC development and management.

- Promote cross-school collaboration among PLCs, encouraging principals to share best practices and lessons learned across schools to foster a community of continuous learning.
- Review and evaluate the overall effectiveness of PLCs by analyzing student outcomes, instructional improvements, and teacher collaboration, using these data to refine support for principals and adjust PLC structures as needed.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What professional learning and development opportunities are currently provided to principals on establishing and leading PLCs?
- How is the effectiveness of principals' PLC-focused training assessed?
- How does the district ensure that principals understand and implement the districtwide PLC framework consistently across schools?
- In what ways does the district offer coaching or mentorship to principals to support the ongoing development and management of PLCs?
- How do PLCs collaborate across schools in the district, and what strategies are in place to encourage sharing of best practices?
- How does the district assess the overall effectiveness of PLCs in improving student learning outcomes, and what data are used to inform ongoing support for principals and adjustments to PLC practices?

## Principal Feedback: Quality of Formative Assessments of Student Learning (3.1.88)

### Desired Future State

District leaders provide regular, ongoing feedback to principals on improving the quality and use of formative assessments across classrooms, ensuring assessments are aligned with learning goals and drive instructional improvement.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Establish a consistent feedback loop between district leaders and principals, whereby formative assessment practices are discussed regularly.
- Implement regular walk-throughs or observation cycles that explore how formative assessments are being used to guide instruction and student progress.
- Create data-driven discussions during meetings between district leaders and principals to review the effectiveness of formative assessments and their impact on student learning.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How often do district leaders review formative assessment practices with principals?
- What processes are in place to ensure that principals implement feedback on formative assessments?
- How are the results of formative assessments used to guide instructional practices at the classroom and school levels?



## Evaluation: Quality of Formative Assessments of Student Learning (3.1.99)

### Desired Future State

Principal evaluations usually include assessing how well principals are focused on improving the quality of formative assessments of student learning in every classroom.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide principals with training on best practices for formative assessments, including strategies to support teachers in developing and implementing them effectively.
- Establish clear expectations for principals to ensure that formative assessments are aligned with instructional goals and used consistently in all classrooms.
- Incorporate formative assessment quality as a key performance indicator in principal evaluations, emphasizing its role in driving student learning outcomes.
- Facilitate ongoing professional development for principals and teachers to collaborate on refining and improving formative assessment techniques.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district currently evaluate principals' efforts in improving the use of formative assessments in classrooms?
- What professional development opportunities are provided to help principals enhance the quality of formative assessments?
- How do principals collaborate with teachers to ensure that formative assessments are aligned with curricular and instructional goals?

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## 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.

### LEA Example

LEA leaders work with schools' instructional leadership teams to refresh, update, and bolster teachers' content knowledge through ongoing professional learning opportunities on rigorous evidence-based instruction. The LEA coordinates vertical alignment such that teachers have an understanding of what their students should have learned the prior year, before entering

their classroom, and what their students will be expected to learn the following year. LEA leaders examine curricular and instructional supports to ensure the supports are grounded in evidence, rigor, and the state standards.

## Developing Relevant Practices and Curricula (3.2.10)

### Desired Future State

District leaders provide resources and collaborate with school leaders to develop curricula that are relevant to students' needs.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Form teams that include district leaders, school leaders, teachers, and community members to cocreate curriculum frameworks that ensure relevance to students' needs.
- Provide regular opportunities to solicit input from families, local cultural leaders, and students to ensure representation and authenticity in curriculum content.
- Offer training for school leaders and teachers on teaching practices that are tuned to students' needs and on integration of local histories, traditions, and languages into lesson plans.
- Review and adjust resource allocations to support diverse learning materials.
- Develop centralized libraries for sharing culturally rich instructional materials and lesson plans.
- Establish a process for reviewing the impact of curricula on student engagement and learning outcomes.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are district and school leaders identifying and incorporating relevant perspectives into curriculum development?
- What steps are taken to ensure community voices are authentically represented in the curricula?
- How is professional development supporting educators in adopting teaching practices that are responsive to students' needs?
- How do district and school leaders collaborate to ensure continuous improvement and innovation in curriculum development?

## Aligning Curricular Materials With State Standards (3.2.20)

### Desired Future State

Provide principals with comprehensive training and support for aligning curricular materials with state standards, assessments, and benchmarks, with routine opportunities to review alignment.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide comprehensive training for principals on best practices for aligning curricular materials with state standards, ensuring they have a deep understanding of the standards and their effective implementation.
- Develop a systematic process for reviewing curricular alignment, enabling principals to assess the effectiveness of materials in meeting state standards; identify areas for improvement.
- Create a resource bank of aligned curricular materials that principals can use to support teachers in implementing standards-based instruction effectively.
- Encourage a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration among principals to share successful strategies and experiences related to aligning curricula.
- Incorporate ongoing support for principals through coaching or mentorship programs.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What training and support does your district currently provide to principals for aligning curricular materials with state standards?
- How effective is the current training in preparing principals to support teachers with curricular alignment?
- What resources are available to principals to assist them in aligning curricular materials effectively?
- How do principals collaborate with each other to share best practices for aligning curricula to state standards?
- In what ways does your district monitor the alignment of curricular materials to ensure they meet state standards?
- How do principals assess the impact of aligned curricular materials on student learning outcomes?

## Selecting Curricular Materials That Are Aligned With Standards (3.2.30)

### Desired Future State

District leaders recognize the critical importance of selecting curricular materials that are aligned with state standards and prioritize this alignment to ensure all schools have access to high-quality resources that support student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Prioritize curriculum selection by creating a districtwide committee that ensures materials align with state standards and meet the needs of all learners.
- Establish a clear process for reviewing and adopting curricular materials that includes input from school leaders, teachers, and community partners.
- Monitor and assess the impact of selected materials through student learning outcomes to ensure they are improving instructional effectiveness.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district currently ensure that curricular materials are aligned with state standards?
- What is the process for involving key partners in the selection and review of curricular materials?
- How do district leaders evaluate the effectiveness of selected curricular materials in supporting student learning outcomes?

## Coordinating Vertical Alignment of the Curriculum (3.2.40)

### Desired Future State

District leaders ensure that schools are effectively coordinating vertical alignment of the curriculum from grade to grade, providing students with a cohesive and seamless learning experience as they progress through school.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Support school leaders and teachers in collaborating across grade levels to review and adjust the curriculum for vertical alignment.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for educators on vertical alignment and continuity in learning objectives across grades.
- Develop a districtwide system for regularly reviewing and improving vertical alignment to ensure progression from one grade to the next.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are district leaders supporting schools in facilitating collaboration across grade levels for vertical alignment?
- What district-level systems are in place to review and adjust vertical alignment of the curriculum regularly?
- How is professional development provided by the district to help educators understand and implement vertical alignment?

## Ensuring Teacher Content Knowledge Is Up to Date (3.2.50)

### Desired Future State

District leaders ensure that teachers receive ongoing support and professional development to keep their content knowledge current, improving instructional effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide continuous professional development opportunities for teachers to update their content knowledge and stay informed about advancements in their subject areas.
- Partner with school leaders to identify gaps in teachers' content knowledge and address them through targeted learning sessions and resources.
- Implement a monitoring system that tracks the professional growth of teachers in content areas and provides necessary support for improvement.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district ensure that teachers' content knowledge remains current and aligned with evolving educational standards?
- What processes are in place to identify and address gaps in teachers' content knowledge?
- How does the district evaluate the effectiveness of professional development in enhancing teachers' content knowledge?

## Promoting High Expectations of Student Learning (3.2.60)

### Desired Future State

District leaders actively promote a culture of high expectations for student learning throughout the district, ensuring that schools are supported in setting and maintaining these expectations across all classrooms, with ongoing district-level monitoring and feedback.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Communicate high expectations for student learning to school leaders, teachers, and students to ensure districtwide alignment.
- Provide guidance and resources for school leaders to develop initiatives that promote high expectations for all student groups.
- Conduct regular classroom walk-throughs as part of district-level monitoring efforts to assess how well schools are promoting high expectations. Use the data collected to provide constructive feedback to school leaders to support improvements in instructional practices.
- Monitor and review student performance data to ensure schools are maintaining high expectations and addressing gaps in achievement.
- Create feedback loops by holding regular meetings with school leaders to discuss findings from walk-throughs and performance data, and collaboratively develop action plans for improvement.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district communicate and reinforce the importance of promoting high expectations for student learning to all schools?
- What strategies are in place at the district level to support schools, including those serving diverse student populations, in meeting high expectations?
- How do district leaders use classroom walk-throughs to monitor how well schools maintain high expectations, and how are data from these walk-throughs used to provide targeted feedback to school leaders?
- What measures does the district use to evaluate the schools' success in promoting high expectations, and how is information from these measures communicated back to the schools?

## Condition of Curricular Materials (3.2.70)

### Desired Future State

Curricular materials are provided to schools that are up to date, are aligned with state standards, and meet grade-level rigor.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop a schedule for regular reviews and updates of curricular materials to ensure they remain current and relevant.
- Provide professional development for educators on selecting and using rigorous curricular materials effectively.
- Collaborate with school leaders to ensure all curricular materials align with state standards and promote critical thinking skills.
- Establish a review process to evaluate the rigor of curricular materials, including input from teachers, parents, and community members.
- Create a feedback loop for teachers and parents to share their experiences with curricular materials and suggest improvements.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What processes are in place to ensure that curricular materials are regularly updated?
- How does the district ensure that curricular materials align with state standards?
- What criteria are used to evaluate the rigor of curricular materials?
- How are teachers, parents, and community members involved in the selection and evaluation of curricular materials?
- What professional learning opportunities are provided to help educators effectively use curricular materials?
- Is there a timeline established for updating curricular materials, and how is it communicated to all partners?

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## 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.

## LEA Example

LEA leaders identify and remove any barriers, such as policies or practices, that stand in the way of every student having an opportunity to learn at higher levels. Leaders identify the district's most prevalent nonacademic barriers to student learning and disseminate this information to principals. Meetings with principal supervisors include continually revisiting how community resources can be leveraged creatively to meet students' basic needs.

## Vision for Improving Instruction for All Students (3.3.10)

### Desired Future State

District leaders have a clear, communicated vision for improving instruction for students with special learning needs, provide significant resources to support that vision, and actively collaborate with school leaders to ensure the vision is implemented effectively.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop and disseminate a districtwide vision for supporting students with special learning needs, ensuring all school leaders and staff are aligned with this vision.
- Provide professional learning for school leaders and teachers that is focused on evidence-based instructional strategies tailored to special learning needs.
- Allocate targeted resources to support the implementation of instructional practices that are tailored for students with special learning needs.
- Establish regular collaboration between district leaders and school leaders to monitor progress and share best practices for supporting students with special learning needs.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How is the district's vision for supporting students with special learning needs communicated to school leaders and teachers?
- What resources are allocated to ensure that students with special learning needs receive high-quality instruction?
- How does the district measure the effectiveness of the resources and strategies provided for improving instruction for students with special learning needs?
- In what ways do district leaders collaborate with school leaders to continually improve instructional practices for students with special learning needs?

## Community Organizations Provide Learning Opportunities for Students (3.3.20)

### Desired Future State

Programs provided by community-based organizations (CBOs) are actively used and shown to improve student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Conduct asset mapping to identify CBOs in the district's geographic area that offer educational programs, partnerships, and resources relevant to the district's student learning goals.

- Establish partnerships with CBOs that offer educational programs aligned with district goals to support diverse student learning needs.
- Develop clear guidelines for how schools can work with CBOs to integrate these programs into the school day or through extracurricular activities.
- Provide professional development for principals and teachers on effectively collaborating with community partners to enhance student learning experiences.
- Monitor the effectiveness of CBO programs by gathering feedback from students, staff, and community partners and by using data on student outcomes to assess the impact.
- Review and refine partnership programs regularly to ensure alignment with student learning goals and to address any challenges or gaps in implementation.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What CBOs are currently in place in your district to support student learning?
- How does your district identify and map community resources and organizations that could support student learning?
- How does your district ensure that these programs align with the district's educational goals and student learning needs?
- In what ways does the district provide training and support to school leaders and teachers for working with CBOs?
- How does the district monitor the impact of CBO programs on student learning, and how are these data used to improve implementation?
- What processes are in place for reviewing and refining community-based partnership programs to ensure they meet evolving student needs and educational priorities?

## Collecting Data for Reviews (3.3.30)

### Desired Future State

District leaders prioritize collecting data on student learning outcomes to identify varying access to school resources or learning outcomes, ensuring all students receive the same educational opportunities. This data collection includes specific focus areas such as bullying, dropout rates, attendance, and suspension rates to effectively address and eliminate gaps across schools.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Establish clear protocols for collecting data on bullying, attendance, suspension rates, and dropout rates to ensure consistency across schools.
- Provide training for school leaders on using data to identify and address gaps across different student groups, ensuring that all students have the access they need to resources and opportunities.
- Analyze data regularly to identify patterns and trends that may indicate differences in student learning outcomes across different groups, with specific attention to the aforementioned areas.
- Engage community and school partners in reviewing and addressing the results of data analyses to collaboratively develop solutions to eliminate gaps across different groups.



- Use the data to inform schoolwide or districtwide action plans to reduce bullying, improve attendance, and decrease suspension and dropout rates.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How well does the district prioritize data collection for reviews of bullying frequency, attendance rates, suspension rates, and dropout rates?
- What training and resources are available to support school leaders in collecting and analyzing data related to these areas?
- In what ways do school and district leaders use data to identify and address gaps in access to resources or learning outcomes for students?
- How do district partners support efforts to address issues related to bullying, attendance, suspension, and dropout rates?
- What changes, if any, have been implemented as a result of the district's data collection and analysis efforts, particularly for reducing dropout rates, improving attendance, and decreasing suspensions?

## Importance of Healthful Foods (3.3.31)

### Desired Future State

District leaders maintain a great deal of emphasis on ensuring that the food the district provides for students is healthful.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop districtwide nutritional guidelines aligned with health.
- Conduct regular assessments of cafeteria menus and vending machine products to evaluate their nutritional value and compliance with health policies.
- Collaborate with nutritionists and health experts to design meal plans.
- Establish clear policies restricting the availability of foods that are outside of district guidelines.
- Facilitate feedback opportunities for students, parents, and school staff to continuously provide feedback about food options.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district ensure compliance with nutritional guidelines for school food services?
- What partnerships has the district developed to source healthy ingredients for student meals?
- How are students and parents engaged in discussions about improving food quality and variety?
- What strategies does the district use to monitor and evaluate the nutritional content of cafeteria and vending machine offerings?

## Importance of Student Physical Wellness (3.3.32)

### Desired Future State

District leaders prioritize students' physical wellness by ensuring comprehensive programs and policies that promote health, fitness, and overall well-being in schools, fostering a healthy learning environment.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop and implement wellness policies that include physical activity, health screenings, and nutritional standards across all schools.
- Ensure access to quality physical education programs that encourage regular physical activity and teach lifelong fitness skills.
- Partner with local health organizations to provide resources and services such as vaccinations, health screenings, and mental health support for students.
- Create school environments that promote physical activity by providing safe playgrounds, walking tracks, and opportunities for movement throughout the school day.
- Incorporate health and wellness education into the curriculum, focusing on nutrition, physical activity, and the benefits of maintaining an active, healthy lifestyle.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district ensure that all schools have effective wellness policies that address students' physical wellness?
- What opportunities exist for students to engage in regular physical activity, and how does the district ensure access to these opportunities?
- How does the district collaborate with local health organizations to provide comprehensive health services for students?
- What systems are in place to monitor and support student physical wellness, and how are the data used to refine and improve these programs?
- How is wellness education incorporated into the school day in a way that is engaging and impactful for students?

## Importance of Student Mental Wellness (3.3.33)

### Desired Future State

District leaders prioritize students' mental wellness by implementing comprehensive programs and practices that promote mental health awareness, support systems, and resilience, fostering a safe and supportive learning environment.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Implement mental health awareness programs that educate students, staff, and families about mental health issues and promote positive mental health practices.
- Provide access to school-based mental health resources, such as counselors and psychologists, to support students' emotional and psychological needs.

- Establish partnerships with local mental health organizations to offer training for staff and services for students and families.
- Create safe spaces within schools where students can express their feelings, seek help, and engage in mindfulness or stress-relief activities.
- Integrate social and emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum, focusing on skills such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation.
- Develop protocols for identifying and supporting students at risk for mental health issues, ensuring timely intervention and support.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district ensure that all schools have effective mental health programs and resources in place to support students?
- What training is provided for staff to recognize and address mental health issues among students?
- How is a culture of openness and support around mental health fostered within the district's schools?
- What systems are in place to assess and monitor the mental wellness of students, and how does the district use these data to improve programs and services?
- How are families involved in promoting mental wellness and supporting students' mental health needs?

## District Policy Effectiveness: Eliminating Bullying (3.3.41)

### Desired Future State

The district policy is very effective at addressing issues of bullying.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop and enforce comprehensive anti-bullying policies that clearly define bullying behaviors and outline consequences.
- Implement districtwide training for staff and students on recognizing and addressing bullying behaviors.
- Create safe reporting systems for students and families to report bullying incidents.
- Establish peer mediation and conflict resolution programs.
- Foster a positive school climate through social and emotional learning (SEL).
- Regularly review bullying data to identify trends, and adjust strategies accordingly.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district ensure anti-bullying policies are enforced consistently across schools?
- What programs are in place to promote a positive and inclusive school climate?
- How are bullying incidents tracked and addressed at the district level?
- How does the district evaluate the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs?

## District Policy Effectiveness: Eliminating Low Attendance (3.3.42)

### Desired Future State

The district policy is very effective at addressing issues of low attendance.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop districtwide early warning systems to identify and monitor students with chronic absenteeism.
- Implement targeted intervention programs, including mentorship and home visits, to address barriers to attendance.
- Partner with transportation services to ensure reliable and safe transit options for students.
- Provide attendance incentives and recognition programs to encourage consistent student attendance.
- Collaborate with social services to address external factors impacting attendance.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district identify and intervene early for students with chronic absenteeism?
- What partnerships are in place to address external factors affecting student attendance?
- How are families involved in strategies to improve attendance?
- How does the district track and evaluate attendance improvement initiatives?

## District Policy Effectiveness: Decreasing Suspension Rate (3.3.43)

### Desired Future State

The district policy is very effective at addressing issues relevant to the suspension rate.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Establish restorative practices as alternatives to traditional suspensions.
- Develop clear district guidelines for consistent application of disciplinary measures.
- Provide professional development for staff on de-escalation techniques and positive behavior management.
- Implement behavior intervention plans tailored to individual student needs.
- Create data-driven systems to track suspensions and identify trends.
- Engage families in behavior improvement strategies to foster collaboration between school and home.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district promote restorative practices to reduce suspension rates?
- How are staff trained to implement positive behavior management strategies?
- What data systems are in place to track and analyze suspension rates?
- How are families involved in supporting positive student behavior and reducing suspensions?

## District Policy Effectiveness: Decreasing Dropout Rates (3.3.44)

### Desired Future State

The district policy is very effective at addressing issues relevant to dropout rates.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop mentorship and counseling programs to identify and support students.
- Implement personalized learning pathways to keep students engaged.
- Partner with community organizations to provide academic and social support services for students.
- Offer credit recovery and alternative education programs.
- Conduct regular student engagement surveys to identify factors contributing to disengagement and dropout.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How are students who are at risk of dropping out identified and supported to prevent them from dropping out?
- What partnerships support academic and social needs for students at risk of dropping out?
- How effective are current credit recovery and alternative education programs?
- How does the district monitor and address factors contributing to dropout rates?

## Supporting Principal Work on Student Scheduling (3.3.50)

### Desired Future State

The district provides principals with comprehensive training and support related to student scheduling and reviews the fidelity and consistency of student scheduling across the district.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide principals with the tools and resources needed to manage student scheduling, including scheduling software and administrative support.
- Implement targeted support programs for schools with higher needs to improve scheduling and ensure access to learning opportunities for all students.

- Conduct comprehensive training programs for principals on effective scheduling practices and resource management, equipping them to meet the diverse needs of their students.
- Facilitate regular meetings with principals to discuss scheduling strategies, share best practices, and address any challenges faced in scheduling.
- Develop a data-driven approach to monitor student access to courses and programs, ensuring that scheduling practices promote high-quality learning environments for all students.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What systems are in place to ensure that all students have access to course offerings through scheduling?
- How does the district evaluate the effectiveness of student scheduling practices?
- What additional resources or support do principals need to improve scheduling practices?

## Resourcefulness in Providing Resources to Schools (3.3.60)

### Desired Future State

District leaders are proactive and resourceful in providing schools with the necessary resources—tools, materials, and financial support—to effectively implement school initiatives and improve student outcomes.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Identify resource needs by regularly meeting with school leaders to discuss specific initiatives and ensure that district-provided resources align with their strategic goals.
- Leverage funding sources by using grants, partnerships, and other available financial resources to support school-based programs and initiatives.
- Blend funds from multiple sources, including federal, state, and local funding streams, to maximize available resources and ensure schools can sustain their initiatives over time.
- Streamline resource allocation processes to ensure schools receive necessary tools and materials promptly and without bureaucratic delays.
- Prioritize high-needs schools by providing them with additional support to reduce gaps in resources and learning opportunities.
- Regularly evaluate resource impact to ensure that resources provided by the district are being used effectively and leading to improved student outcomes.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district currently assess and respond to the resource needs of schools to support their initiatives?
- How do district leaders ensure distribution of resources to schools with varying needs?
- How could district leaders improve communication and transparency around the resource allocation process?
- What mechanisms are in place for evaluating the effectiveness of resources provided to schools?

## Principal Feedback: Resource Allocation for Student Learning (3.3.80)

### Desired Future State

Principals effectively allocate resources to improve student learning, ensuring that resources are used strategically to support instructional goals and promote positive outcomes for all students.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide training to principals on resource allocation strategies that prioritize areas with the greatest impact on student learning.
- Ensure that resource allocation decisions are aligned with student learning needs and the school's strategic goals, focusing on maximizing the effectiveness of materials, personnel, and time.
- Monitor and review resource allocation in schools, emphasizing how resources directly contribute to improving student learning outcomes.
- Establish regular feedback loops whereby principals can share how they are using resources to meet specific learning goals and address student needs.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How do principals prioritize resource allocation to improve student learning outcomes in their schools?
- What support is provided to principals to ensure they make data-informed resource allocation decisions?
- How does the district evaluate the impact of resource allocation on student learning, and what indicators are used to assess effectiveness?

## Principal Feedback: Student Access to Quality Learning Environments (3.3.88)

### Desired Future State

District leaders provide consistent, ongoing feedback to principals to ensure equal access to quality learning environments for all students.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Establish a formal structure for providing regular, data-driven feedback to principals, and implement follow-up processes to ensure principals are improving access to quality learning environments.
- Use student performance data, attendance, and other relevant indicators to provide specific, evidence-based feedback on how well principals are addressing access issues in their schools.
- Allocate time for district leaders and principals to jointly review strategies for improving learning environments, ensuring that principals receive constructive feedback in real time.
- Offer training for district leaders on best practices for giving effective feedback to principals, focusing on access to quality learning environments.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district ensure that feedback to principals is specific, actionable, and measurable in terms of contributing to quality learning environments?
- How does the district facilitate ongoing dialogue with principals about addressing barriers to student access?
- What tools or data sources do district leaders use to provide feedback on principals' efforts to improve access to quality learning for all students?
- How does the district ensure that principals are accountable for improving access to quality learning for all students, and what systems are in place to monitor progress?

## Evaluation: Resource Allocation for Student Learning (3.3.90)

### Desired Future State

The district evaluates principals on their ability to effectively allocate resources to improve student learning, ensuring that resources are used strategically to support instructional goals and student outcomes.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide training to principals on resource allocation strategies that prioritize areas with the greatest impact on student learning.
- Ensure that resource allocation decisions are aligned with student learning needs and the school's strategic goals, focusing on maximizing the effectiveness of materials, personnel, and time.
- Monitor and review resource allocation in schools, emphasizing how resources directly contribute to improving student learning outcomes.
- Establish regular feedback loops whereby principals can share how they are using resources to meet specific learning goals and address student needs.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How do principals prioritize resource allocation to improve student learning outcomes in their schools?
- What support is provided to principals to ensure they make data-informed resource allocation decisions?
- How does the district evaluate the impact of resource allocation on student learning, and what indicators are used to assess effectiveness?

## Evaluation: Student Access to Quality Learning Environments (3.3.99)

### Desired Future State

The district evaluates principals on their ability to ensure that all students have access to quality learning environments, focusing on availability of high-quality resources and instruction across all classrooms.



### **Strategies and Suggestions**

- Provide principals with guidelines on how to create and maintain learning environments across all classrooms, ensuring access to necessary resources, technology, and instructional materials.
- Conduct regular audits of learning environments to assess whether they meet district standards for quality and inclusivity and identify any gaps in access for students from different backgrounds.
- Support professional development for principals on fostering high-quality learning spaces, with a focus on recognizing and addressing disparities in access to resources or learning conditions.
- Establish districtwide benchmarks for what constitutes a high-quality learning environment and ensure that all schools meet these benchmarks consistently.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- How do principals ensure that all students have equal access to quality learning environments regardless of their backgrounds or needs?
- What processes are in place to regularly assess and improve the quality of learning environments across the district?
- How does the district support principals in identifying and addressing any disparities in access to learning resources or classroom conditions?

## Domain 4: Culture 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, families, 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 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.
- Embed high expectations in everyday practice and language, reinforce them through shared accountability, and follow through on strategies for dramatically improving student outcomes.

#### LEA Example

The LEA provides systems and structures to support collaborative district and school work, such as dedicated time for reflection and collaboration. Personnel evaluations are aligned with the expectations for their roles in turnaround. There are opportunities for sharing turnaround progress and successes.

#### Recognizing and Retaining Effective Teachers (4.1.10)

##### Desired Future State

Effective teachers are regularly recognized, celebrated, and provided opportunities to continue improving their teaching and leadership, resulting in high levels of satisfaction and retention among the LEA’s highest performing teachers.

##### Strategies and Suggestions

- Regularly assess and monitor student learning across the district to provide recognition opportunities for teachers based on student performance.
- Provide regular opportunities for teachers to receive feedback on their performance through formal and informal feedback processes.
- Provide effective teachers with opportunities to lead professional learning for other teachers or to lead other work that provides a challenge and recognizes their demonstrated performance.
- Identify opportunities for effective teachers to step into formal and informal leadership.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How do teacher evaluation processes currently support the identification and advancement of effective teachers?
- How often are effective teachers publicly celebrated across the district?
- How often are the district's effective teachers provided regular feedback on their instructional practices?
- How does the district recognize effective teachers?

## District Strategy to Promote Teacher Collaboration (4.1.20)

### Desired Future State

The LEA works with school leaders to develop a districtwide process to create teacher collaboration opportunities. Teacher collaboration opportunities are consistent and clear, and teachers are focused on working collaboratively to increase all students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional growth.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Ensure that protocols and expectations for effective collaboration are clear and outlined across schools.
- Provide opportunities for professional learning for school leadership.
- Regularly provide opportunities for school leaders to share best practices that promote both formal and informal teacher collaboration.
- Regularly record and publish best practices in teacher collaboration across the LEA.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Do all schools in the LEA have regularly established teacher collaboration times?
- Do school leaders and staff have regular training opportunities to learn about and practice using the district's collaborative protocols?
- How does the district identify, catalog, and promote best practices in teacher collaboration across the district?
- Do district protocols allow school leaders to collaborate to analyze school data?

## Teacher Evaluation Process in District (4.1.30)

### Desired Future State

The LEA uses the teacher evaluation process to align results with districtwide professional development needs and individual teacher professional learning needs.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Establish a teacher evaluation and continuous improvement process that allows the LEA to identify effective teachers as defined by district protocols.
- Provide an opportunity for teachers to give feedback about their professional development needs.
- Refine teacher evaluation rubrics and processes to clearly focus on student outcomes.

- Ensure that teacher evaluation and continuous improvement processes include tracking student achievement and growth.
- Ensure that teacher evaluation processes are transparent and that all teachers have opportunities to grow and change practice to meet the expectations of the teacher evaluation system.
- Provide regular professional learning opportunities to all teachers in the district, with differentiated opportunities by level, content, and skill.
- After every professional learning opportunity, provide formal opportunities for evaluation and analyze the results to ensure professional learning is meeting the needs of teachers.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- What professional learning opportunities are available to all teachers in the LEA?
- How are professional learning opportunities differentiated for teachers based on level, content, skill, or other characteristics?
- How do current teacher evaluation processes provide data to better identify areas of teacher professional development needs?
- How aligned is the district's teacher evaluation system with strong instructional practices prioritized by the LEA?
- How are teacher evaluation data analyzed to identify professional learning opportunities?

## Principal Feedback: Monitoring the Quality of Teaching (4.1.80)

### Desired Future State

The LEA provides a comprehensive teacher evaluation system used by all schools that allows for data analysis and disaggregation so that the LEA's instructional vision can be monitored.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Align the categories of the teacher evaluation system with the LEA's instructional vision.
- Use or establish a teacher evaluation tool that allows data to be captured and analyzed for trends and compared to the district's definition of quality teaching.
- Ensure that all teachers are evaluated at least annually to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with the LEA's vision of instruction.
- Use time at principal meetings at least semiannually for school leaders to analyze school-level evaluation data and create action plans addressing key areas.
- Establish professional learning plans at the LEA level based on trends in evaluation data.
- Provide regular professional learning opportunities for school instructional leaders on understanding results from the evaluation system's indicators and providing coaching based on those results.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district currently collect and analyze teacher evaluation data?
- Is the district's teacher evaluation system aligned with the district's instructional protocols?
- Is the LEA's professional learning program aligned with the evaluation system?
- Are school leaders proficient in coaching teachers toward meeting key indicators on the LEA's evaluation system?
- Are all teachers evaluated?

## Principal Feedback: Cultivating Teacher Collaboration (4.1.88)

### Desired Future State

Each school in the district has established teacher working groups with clear schedules, protocols, and objectives. These working groups provide strong connections and collegiality for teachers and help increase teaching efficacy across the district.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Identify a coherent, clear strategy for teacher collaboration across the LEA that includes a specified purpose.
- Ensure that all schools have teacher collaboration times built into their schedules.
- Ensure that protocols and expectations for effective collaboration are clear and outlined at all schools.
- Provide training to all schools' leaders to ensure that they have a deep understanding of high-quality teacher collaboration.
- Ensure that all core content teachers have access to high-quality instructional materials and aligned assessments from which to guide collaborative efforts.
- Regularly observe teacher collaboration opportunities across schools and provide feedback.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Do all schools have regular teacher collaboration times built into existing schedules?
- Has the district provided clarity around the processes, protocols, and purposes of teacher collaboration times?
- How do schools' teacher collaboration efforts compare to LEA expectations? How do district leaders know?
- What support does the district provide to ensure teachers have access to high-quality instructional resources for collaboration?
- How do LEA leaders support schools in developing and implementing teacher collaborative structures?
- How often do LEA leaders observe teacher collaboration alongside school leaders to provide feedback?

## Evaluation: Monitoring the Quality of Teaching (4.1.90)

(See 4.1.80)

## Evaluation: Cultivating Teacher Collaboration (4.1.99)

(See 4.1.88)

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# 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.
- Constructive feedback, suggestions, and criticism are acknowledged and responded to.

## LEA Example

The LEA uses a diagnostic instrument to solicit feedback from school personnel, families, students, and community members early in the turnaround process, with periodic follow-up surveys to assess perceptions of the school and the turnaround effort. The LEA provides training for school leaders on assessing stakeholder perceptions and acting on what is learned.

## District Communication With the External Community (4.2.10)

### Desired Future State

The LEA uses social media, public areas, its website, and other means to dispense information to families and community members. All families have access to regular communication and updates from the district regardless of their means and languages.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Use accounts with all major social media platforms to post weekly updates, celebrations, events, and important information.
- Ensure all external communication is posted in ways that will best reach the district's students, families, and community.

- Regularly analyze media engagement metrics to determine the best means of communication with the community.
- Provide training and resources to support schools in establishing and maintaining social media accounts to facilitate information sharing.
- Regularly share updates on the LEA's progress toward the strategic plan both internally and externally through social media.
- Ensure family liaisons and other key staff are trained in best practices of communication to be able to market the work and upcoming events at all schools.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Which social media platforms or other means of communication are used most by the community? How can social media engagement data be used to better understand how to best communicate with the community?
- Do the LEA and individual schools have the ability to post important updates to social media in multiple languages?
- Does the LEA have trained staff who regularly focus on providing responsive communication techniques to actively reach out to the community?
- How does the community most often find out information about the district and its schools?

## Using Data From Districtwide Climate Surveys (4.2.20)

### Desired Future State

The LEA has regular survey opportunities for students, staff, families, and the community to provide their perspectives on the climate of schools in the LEA. The LEA has a robust process for evaluating the data in relation to stated goals and for setting specific actions at the LEA and school levels based on results.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Use an existing or LEA-created climate survey that can easily assess the LEA and individual school climates in relation to stated and desired outcomes.
- Ensure a student, family, and community survey is translated into as many applicable languages as possible and is easily accessible via phone, email, and other common platforms.
- Administer a survey to students, staff, families, and the community and provide an easy-to-use platform with which the LEA can analyze the data.
- On an annual basis, set LEA-wide targets based on climate survey results and regularly present the data relating to goals in public meetings.
- Use social media to communicate the availability of an LEA and school climate survey and to communicate the results and planned actions based on the data.
- Regularly engage the school board in both goal setting and action planning around the climate survey.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the LEA currently collect data on school climate? Is there a school climate survey that is aligned with the LEA's priorities?
- What goals does the LEA currently set for school climate?
- How often and in what ways are principals analyzing school climate data and creating action plans?
- How do families access a climate survey?
- Do all families know how to access the climate survey or know the importance of it?

## Support for Analyzing and Acting on Climate Data (4.2.30)

### Desired Future State

Principals receive comprehensive training and support to analyze climate data and act on results. The training helps all principals correctly identify trends, celebrate gains, and target areas of improvement. Each school sets an action plan to support areas of improvement, and those plans regularly support improvement in the targeted areas.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Provide baseline training to all school leadership around the use of the LEA's various climate data sources.
- Ensure that data systems for behavior, attendance, and school climate surveys are regularly and easily accessible to principals.
- At least annually, provide an update on the LEA's expectations for principals' data use and resulting action planning.
- Use regular principal meetings or other leadership touchpoints to allow school leaders to analyze their school's data for trends, results versus goals, and other pertinent issues and to identify specific targets and action steps for the next 60–90 days.
- Identify specific LEA personnel to support principals with plan development and monitoring as necessary.
- During routine principal meetings or touchpoints, share updates on progress toward their climate plan outcomes.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Does the LEA currently use a climate survey to gauge various stakeholder group opinions?
- What data sources are currently available to school leaders to analyze school climate? How often are those data sets updated? How easy are they to access?
- How skilled are principals at using climate data to identify high-priority areas and create improvement action plans?
- How often does LEA leadership engage with schools regarding specific climate data and support key improvements?



- Does the LEA have dedicated time and resources for supporting the analysis and action planning around the school climate?
- Does the LEA provide time and opportunities for principals to share their climate data and action plans to push each other's thinking and sharpen their ideas?

## Obtaining Stakeholder Feedback (4.2.40)

### Desired Future State

Feedback from surveys is regularly obtained from all stakeholder groups. The results of those feedback surveys are reported transparently and used to guide decision-making across the LEA.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Use a survey across schools that supports the analysis of climate data from multiple stakeholder groups, including students, teachers, and families.
- Ensure surveys are accessible in all languages that are used in the LEA, to the extent feasible, and provide multiple ways to access the survey.
- Ensure that climate survey results are central to shared leadership discussions and addressed through goals in school improvement plans.
- Ensure that the LEA's strategic plan includes targeted goals for increasing positive responses in key areas on the feedback surveys of all stakeholder groups.
- Regularly provide opportunities to support school leadership in understanding how to analyze and draw conclusions from the results of climate surveys.
- Report on the results of various feedback surveys publicly at board meetings, and include open dialogue regarding the district's response to the data.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district currently collect data on school climate? Is there a school climate survey that is aligned with the district's priorities?
- What goals does the district currently set for school climate?
- How often and in what ways are principals analyzing school climate data regularly and creating action plans?
- How is the school board involved in supporting the setting of climate goals and focusing on the district's status related to established goals?
- How many families can access a climate survey in the district? Are there barriers to access that need to be addressed for particular populations such as students classified as English Language Learners or those from low socioeconomic backgrounds?
- Do all families know how to access the district's climate survey or know the importance of it?

## Conducting Research-Validated Climate Surveys (4.2.50)

(See 4.2.40)

## Soliciting Feedback From School Leaders (4.2.60)

### Desired Future State

School leaders are given regular formal and informal opportunities to provide feedback to district leadership on a variety of pertinent issues. The district has a formal process for collecting and analyzing school leader feedback and regularly communicates its responses to the feedback.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Build formal opportunities into every school leader's evaluation cycle for the leader to provide candid feedback regarding district processes, structures, policies, and so on.
- End all regular school leader meetings with survey opportunities for leaders to provide input on the use of time and relevance of topics and to provide other feedback about the district.
- Regularly conduct an anonymous school leader survey that allows leaders to provide feedback on the district. Transparently report on and use the data to inform setting goals and priorities for the district.
- Establish a school leader council of highly effective leaders to regularly meet with district leadership to plan how to respond to feedback.
- Report on formal school leader survey results in public board meetings as part of reporting on broader perception survey data, and use the results to establish district goals.
- Ensure that all regular check-ins with school leaders include an opportunity for them to freely provide feedback on district operations and areas in which the school leaders could use more support. At subsequent meetings, ensure follow-up on concerns, including indicating when concerns cannot be addressed.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How is formal feedback currently gathered from school leaders?
- How do district leaders know the perception of school leaders on a variety of school issues?
- Do school leaders regularly and transparently provide constructive feedback to the district or are they more likely to use alternative, less productive routes to share their concerns?
- How often do district leaders discuss trends in school leader perception data and action plans for improving those perceptions?
- Does LEA leadership regularly check in with school leaders to support their work? Do those check-ins include regular opportunities for school leaders to provide feedback?

## Practice 4.3: Engage Students and Families in Pursuing Education Goals

### Practice Description

- Intentionally develop students' metacognition to build skills in setting goals, persisting, assessing progress, refining strategies, and taking charge of their learning to enhance their success.
- 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.

### LEA Example

The LEA provides resources for students and families on college and career planning, such as assessments, interest inventories, and career and college information. The LEA also provides templates for students to plan coursework and college and career pathways and provides line items in the school budget for resources related to family engagement that supports student learning. The LEA includes in monthly board reports information about each school's data-supported progress with family engagement. The LEA sets aside time and provides structures for parent groups focused on improved student learning.

### District Policy for School-Parent Communication (4.3.10)

#### Desired Future State

All schools within the LEA hold regular public meetings to engage families. The LEA supplies guidance and support to all schools to ensure schools have the skill and capacity to broaden and strengthen outreach efforts so that a high number of families across all demographics attend events.

#### Strategies and Suggestions

- Ensure that board policy, LEA strategic plans, and LEA policy provide specific guidance and structure for the frequency and type of family engagement opportunities schools must adhere to.
- Provide a family engagement coordinator at the LEA or school level to support schools in designing, communicating, and executing strong family engagement opportunities.
- Ensure that the LEA's strategic plan includes specific guidelines and strategies to regularly engage community members and families.
- Support schools in hosting ready-to-use family engagement meetings with prepared slide decks, talking points, flyers, and promotional materials.
- As part of an annual school improvement plan development, ensure that each school includes a family engagement calendar with key events, including public information meetings, and provide guidance and support for the planning and execution of these events.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How many schools within the LEA hold regular family engagement events?
- Does the LEA have guidance and specific requirements regarding the number and type of family engagement opportunities that schools should provide?
- Does the LEA regularly track the number of families attending different events to celebrate bright spots and support struggling schools with more engagement?
- Does the LEA provide each school with a dedicated family engagement coordinator or other family engagement support personnel?
- Does the LEA provide material support for public school meetings, such as flyers, slide decks, food, and so on?
- Does the LEA have partnerships with community organizations and other groups to provide creative spaces for public meetings that may reach more families?

## Parent Involvement in Schools (4.3.20)

### Desired Future State

The LEA has a robust family engagement and empowerment strategy that includes a parent-teacher organization (PTO) or similar body, opportunities for parents to assist in classrooms, and structured opportunities for parents to inform and provide input on the LEA's strategy.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Ensure that every school has a functioning PTO or similar organization to support family involvement and engagement.
- Use public meetings to share information about the LEA's strategy and to provide authentic opportunities for families and the community to inform the district's strategy.
- Use board meetings to highlight trends in public engagement, provide updates on the LEA's plans for improvement, and identify ways in which LEA leadership has enacted strategies based on community input.
- Provide training and support for school leaders and teachers to identify ways of engaging parents in schools.
- Provide all schools with a background check application system and an easy-to-use check-in system for parent volunteers.
- Ensure that volunteer opportunities for classrooms and parent organizations are accessible to all parents.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Does every school in the LEA have a dedicated PTO or similar organization?
- Are all relevant student demographics represented in parent and family organizations and school volunteer opportunities? If not, what barriers to information or access exist?
- Does every school in the LEA have family or community member volunteers in classrooms?
- Does the district provide multiple, meaningful opportunities for families to give substantive input about the direction of the LEA?

- How do public board meetings promote more family engagement in the LEA?
- Does the LEA provide the resources necessary to support schools with easily vetting and maintaining parent, family, and community member volunteers?

## Providing Funding for Family Engagement (4.3.30)

### Desired Future State

The LEA budgets for a sufficient amount of school-level funding that is dedicated to strong levels of family engagement in all schools.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Analyze the current level of funding set aside for family engagement activities, including the types and efficacy of those activities.
- Consider budgeting for a family liaison at all schools, or as many as possible, to lead and coordinate family engagement efforts.
- Research possible grant and other funding sources for family engagement and identify resources that fit the LEA's overall family engagement strategy.
- Present research findings on family engagement alongside the LEA's plan for improving engagement to encourage the board to allocate resources toward family engagement.
- If the LEA has a site-based budgeting strategy, work with each school to identify its family engagement strategy aligned with the LEA's overall strategy, and support the school in budgeting appropriately toward meeting its stated outcomes.
- During annual budgeting processes, ensure family engagement funding is prioritized in the initial steps of determining funding for each school.
- Provide training and guidance to finance staff within the LEA to ensure understanding of the importance and funding demands of a strong family engagement strategy across the LEA.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- To what extent are the LEA and schools allocating resources toward family engagement?
- How does the LEA engage publicly with the board on the importance of family engagement and the funding needed to support its efficacy?
- How much knowledge does the LEA's financial staff have of the need for dedicated funding for family engagement?
- Does each school have the finances needed to fund essential family engagement activities?
- Does the LEA analyze the effectiveness of various family engagement activities to determine the return on investment and allocate resources accordingly?

## Process for Parent Groups to Engage in Student Learning (4.3.40)

### Desired Future State

There is a clear process across all schools for parent groups to engage with student learning goals to provide meaningful input on the schools' next steps.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Identify assessments for monitoring student progress that include tools that can be used to engage parents in understanding and acting on the results.
- Provide resources for all schools to support parents in accessing and understanding student goals and data.
- Support schools in focusing on student goals and progress as a key component of parent-teacher conferences.
- Partner with the board to ensure that board goals incorporate a focus on student learning goals.
- Provide training to PTOs or other parent groups at each school to support understanding of student learning goals, support setting student learning goals, and get their input on how to best engage other parents with their individual student's learning goals.
- After major assessment cycles, engage relevant parent and family groups with an analysis of how the assessment results compare to student learning goals.
- Support schools in establishing routines in which teachers set goals with students around each assessment cycle, and include a communication with parents.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- Does the district have regular progress monitoring data that can be used for student goal setting?
- Do the assessments that are used across schools allow for easy, parent-friendly reporting of student results and how those results measure up to established goals?
- How does the district currently engage with parent groups around student goals?
- Do all parents know or have access to their student's learning goals?
- Does the board regularly set and discuss progress toward student learning goals?
- Does the LEA engage parent organizations as communicators of student learning goals?

## Process for Student Career and College Planning (4.3.50)

### Desired Future State

Schools across the LEA have and execute a strong process for student college and career planning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Develop an LEA strategic plan for supporting student college and career planning that includes multiple pathways and options for students and takes into account the LEA's community needs and assets.
- Use annual school improvement planning processes to support all high school-level leaders with developing a plan for increasing college and career readiness for all students.
- Support all high schools in the LEA to develop a clear, focused set of college and career pathways so all students have the opportunity to accelerate.
- Provide training to high school counselors and design job descriptions so that counselors can spend a significant portion of their time providing college and career counseling for students.
- Identify student learning goals directly tied to college and career readiness at the LEA and school levels and monitor progress toward those goals.
- Develop a process by which every student in the LEA has a personalized college or career readiness plan that is discussed and modified regularly from 6th grade through graduation, with appropriate counseling and advising support.
- Host a job fair for high school students annually to support connections between businesses and students.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How do you currently track the progress of college and career readiness at schools across the LEA?
- What goals are set for schools to ensure that all students are college or career ready?
- Does every secondary school in the LEA have multiple clear pathways for students to gain an industry certificate or significant college credit toward a postsecondary option of their choosing?
- What supports does the LEA provide to schools to both develop and implement a strong college and career readiness plan for all students?
- Does the LEA publicly identify and track progress toward college and career readiness goals?
- Does the LEA have data on the college and career selections of all of its graduates? Are those data reported publicly and used for improvement planning purposes and goal setting?

## Principal Feedback: Family Involvement in Student Learning (4.3.80)

### Desired Future State

All schools within the LEA focus a great deal on increasing family involvement in student learning.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Support schools with materials and resources that parents and families can use to understand how to best support their students.
- Provide pamphlets and flyers for schools to use in helping parents understand their students' needs at different developmental stages, including transitions from one grade level to another.
- Provide assessment and grade-level data in parent-friendly platforms to support parent understanding of student learning across the LEA.
- Support all schools by designing family-teacher or parent-teacher conferences that bolster family or parent attendance and focus on student learning.
- Regularly monitor the attendance at and effectiveness of each school's parent events that focus on student learning, and provide additional resources to schools that need support.
- 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.

### Reflection Questions for Consideration

- How does the district support schools' efforts to increase family involvement?
- How does the district track attendance at and measure the effectiveness of parent events that focus on student learning goals?
- How does the LEA support families during level-to-level transitions of students?
- What resources are available to all schools to help them support families in understanding student learning goals and how they can best support their students?
- Do LEA leaders help to train school leaders on the best ways to support families in understanding and helping with their students' learning?
- How does the LEA support schools in organizing effective parent-teacher conferences that encourage family attendance and engagement, enabling families to support the school's efforts at home?

## Principal Feedback: School and Community Connections (4.3.88)

### Desired Future State

Strong connections exist between the schools in the LEA and the overall community.

### Strategies and Suggestions

- Use communications staff within the LEA to build strong connections with local community organizations.
- Host events for local community leaders to inform them about the LEA's current state, goals, and future plans.



- Work with local business leaders to establish internship and other career opportunities for students.
- Use an annual asset and needs assessment to determine the strengths and opportunities in the community so that the LEA may prioritize needed supports.
- Identify local organizations that can supply needed wraparound services for students.
- When possible, use school resources, such as building spaces, for community purposes, especially outside of school hours.
- At least annually, survey community organizations and members about their perceptions of the LEA and use that information as part of a broader improvement planning process.

### **Reflection Questions for Consideration**

- Which community organizations exist in the community that may support students either inside or outside of school? How is the LEA currently engaging those possible partners?
- What is the community's perception of the LEA? How do LEA leaders know?
- How many schools within the LEA have robust partnerships with external organizations so students and families can access those organizations' resources from within the school building?
- How often does the LEA purposefully share its status, goals, and plans with the broader community outside of its own public board meetings?
- Does the LEA have personnel who focus on supporting schools and the LEA as a whole by reaching out and establishing partnerships within the community?
- Is there available space within schools that could be used for community resources to support students and families?
- Does the LEA complete an annual assets and needs assessment to understand the community and help plan efforts to better engage with the community?

### **Evaluation: Family Involvement in Student Learning (4.3.90)**

(See 4.3.80)

### **Evaluation: School and Community Connections (4.3.99)**

(See 4.3.88)

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>.

