

School Leader's Planning Checklist

Prioritize Standards-Based Planning and Data-Driven Instructional Decisions

Use this checklist as a guide for reflection, planning, and leadership action during the school year.

1. Standards-Based Planning

- Have I ensured that every teacher has access to and understands their grade-level or course standards?
- Do our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) regularly dedicate time to understanding, unpacking standards, and defining clear learning intentions and success criteria?
- Are we reviewing lesson plans and instructional materials to ensure alignment with the cognitive demands of the standards?
- Have I helped teachers vertically align instruction within and across grade levels?
- Have I modeled or facilitated backward planning from standards-aligned assessments?

2. Data-Driven Instruction

- Do we have a consistent data cycle in place (collect, analyze, plan, act, monitor)?
- Are PLCs structured to use data protocols for analyzing formative assessments and student work?
- Have I helped teachers disaggregate data to identify trends by subgroup, skill area, or instructional strategy?
- Do I model nonevaluative, inquiry-based approaches to data analysis in meetings?

- Have we embedded time to act on data insights—through reteaching, intervention, or instructional adjustments?

3. Leadership Behaviors

- Am I present in PLCs and data meetings as a learning leader, not just a monitor?
- Do I ask questions that push teams to clarify standards, rigor, and next instructional steps?
- Have I created a culture where instructional missteps are viewed as opportunities for learning?
- Am I using walkthroughs and classroom observations to reinforce our shared expectations for standards-based teaching?
- Do I affirm and celebrate evidence of aligned planning and instructional improvement?

4. Equity and Access

- Are all students being assigned grade-level tasks and texts?
- Have we reviewed assignment samples to ensure equity in cognitive demand and expectations?
- Am I monitoring whether historically underserved students consistently access high-quality, standards-aligned instruction?
- Have I engaged teachers in reviewing TNTP's *The Opportunity Myth* or similar equity audits?

5. Continuous Improvement

- Do I revisit our instructional priorities regularly to ensure focus and coherence?
- Have we collected feedback from teachers about the effectiveness of our planning and data protocols?
- Am I continuously learning—through coaching, research, or peer collaboration—to lead this work more effectively?

Tip: Use this checklist in your leadership team meetings, coaching conversations, and midyear reviews to maintain urgency and focus. Consider turning this into a self-reflection rubric or a collaborative schoolwide goal-setting tool.