



**PRIORITY SCHOOLS BUREAU**  
District Support Guide

# **CREATING CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS**





# INTRODUCTION

William Edwards Deming, a well-known statistician and educator, once said, “Every organization is perfectly designed to produce the results it is getting.” Meaning, if you are not satisfied with your organization’s results, or performance outcomes, you must rethink and redesign your systems. In their book, *Leaders of Learning: How District, School, and Classroom Leaders Improve Student Achievement* (2011), Marzano and Dufour make a similar assertion, “The challenge confronting public education is not recruiting more people to an ineffective system, but rather creating powerful systems that allow ordinary people to achieve success.” In today’s educational environment, district leaders must ensure they have the requisite systems that allow every principal and teacher to succeed, including the new and inexperienced.

To achieve this daunting objective, district leaders must proactively push through the bureaucratic structures that can interrupt real change and growth within their school communities while simultaneously providing the requisite systems, support, and accountability to grow their school leaders and teachers. Additionally, when district leaders embed inclusive and equitable practices in their district systems, they provide quality programming and opportunities for ALL schools, not just those with leaders and teachers who can do it independently.

As a committed partner in this work, the New Mexico Priority Schools Bureau (NM PSB) created this guide to assist district leaders in identifying, creating, and improving the essential district conditions required to grow, support, and engage school leaders, teachers, students, and community stakeholders. PSB identified these essential district conditions through numerous interviews with successful district leaders, school leaders, and educators throughout the state of New Mexico.

Once identified, each condition was aligned to one of the five PSB Leadership domains;

1. Equity & Culture
2. Leadership
3. Instructional Infrastructure
4. Talent Management
5. Support & Accountability.

The Priority Schools Bureau is committed to building support relationships with district and school leaders in New Mexico. As stated in the PSB motto, “*We believe passionately in ideas, individuality, bold leaders, big dreams, broadened horizons, and education as a path to strong societies.*” At its root, the PSB believes that building the capacity of educational leaders results in improved outcomes for all students. To this end, the information in this guide is offered as a starting point for our district partners who wish to improve their system design and improve results for all students.

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# EQUITY & CULTURE

## EQUITY

The word equity has become popularized without a fundamental understanding of its implications, unfortunately, to the extent where everything in education seeks the label of “equitable.” For example, equitable curriculum, equitable assessment, equitable instructional strategies, and so on. Many district leaders claim to be committed to providing an “equitable education” for all students. However, upon closer examination, we find many are applying a superficial approach designed to close the opportunity gap of their minority students. Furthermore, popular interpretations of equity tend to present it as an isolated element of education, which we occasionally leverage to solve the disparities among various student groups.

To improve equitable practices for all students, PSB adheres to the definition of equity provided in *Building Ranks: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective School Leaders*, defining equity as “the behaviors, systems, processes, resources, and environments that ensure that each member of the school community is provided fair, just, and individualized learning and growth opportunities.” To this end, PSB views equity as an educational component embedded and engrained in the education system to serve all students and ultimately close achievement and opportunity gaps.

District leaders need to implement a systemic approach to ensure the various educational processes and elements act together to achieve the common goal of educational equity. To do this, leaders are encouraged to begin with an equity audit to identify inequitable practices that promote differences in access, participation, and opportunities for all students; and highlight those interwoven equitable practices that transform schools and future generations.

As a starting point, the tables below contain a few examples of equitable and inequitable practices embedded in the four other leadership domains targeted by the NM PSB.

LEVER	EQUITABLE PRACTICES	INEQUITABLE PRACTICES
<p><b>Leadership</b></p>	<p>A clear mission that states the purpose, values, and commitments and prioritizes equitable beliefs and practices.</p> <p>A commitment to equitable outcomes for all students at all levels: school board, district leadership, school leaders, staff, students, and community partners.</p> <p>A district leadership team that represents the diversity of the staff, students, and community.</p>	<p>Social, emotional, and academic pockets of success.</p> <p>District leadership team lacking diversity.</p> <p>Top-down communication that illustrates the district's traditional hierarchy.</p>
<p><b>Differentiated Support and Accountability</b></p>	<p>District support differentiated for each school is based on identified problems of practice, data, and root cause analyses.</p> <p>Data-based decisions regarding the allocation of resources such as time, money, specialists, coaches, expertise, space, and technology.</p> <p>District support reviewing and analyzing data with an asset-based approach to better understand students' strengths and needs and interpret trends that can create inequalities.</p> <p>The district provides the structure for safe and effective communities of practice where leaders learn together, share successes and challenges, and engage in collaborative problem-solving.</p> <p>A coaching structure that supports the school leader's learning and growth.</p>	<p>An equal rather than equitable approach to support and allocation of resources for schools.</p> <p>District support for reviewing and interpreting data with a deficit-based thinking approach; deficit-based thinking accepts systemic issues that impact minority students.</p> <p>Traditional, informational, whole group district and school leadership meetings.</p>

LEVER	EQUITABLE PRACTICES	INEQUITABLE PRACTICES
<p><b>Instructional Infrastructure</b></p>	<p>District curriculum aligned to the New Mexico Content Standards, ensuring every teacher and student is working towards learning the content outlined in state and national standards.</p> <p>A balanced district assessment strategy that allows students to demonstrate their knowledge in multiple formats.</p> <p>A district data system that collects quantitative and qualitative data and provides access to a holistic and comprehensive profile of student inequalities and predetermined behaviors.</p>	<p>The district takes a traditional approach to instruction that does not promote multiple means of engagement, representation, action, or expression.</p> <p>Schools utilize non-inclusive or culturally irrelevant instructional materials.</p>
<p><b>Talent Management</b></p>	<p>A process to prioritize diversity in the hiring process.</p> <p>An interview process allows candidates to share their values, beliefs, and level of cultural competence.</p> <p>High-quality professional development activities are extended to all teachers.</p> <p>Thoughtful PD aligned to schools' needs, strengthening the quality of education and lessening the impact of the teacher shortage challenge.</p>	<p>Discriminatory district hiring policies that do not promote diversity in the public teacher workforce increase the "teacher diversity gap."</p> <p>Interviews that require candidates to answer textbook-type interview questions.</p> <p>Quality professional development opportunities are offered to lead/experienced teachers only.</p> <p>Professional development opportunities are made through a top-down decision-making process with no input from schools.</p> <p>A misalignment between school priorities, teacher needs, and PD opportunities.</p>

### Resources for Further Learning

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). *Building Ranks: A Comprehensive Framework for School Leaders*; 2018.

Rimmer, J. *Developing Principals as Equity-Centered Instructional Leaders*. Center for Educational Leadership, University of Washington; 2016.

## CULTURE

The school district's culture consists of the shared beliefs, values, and expectations of the people within the organization. The mission and vision statements are the collective understanding of the overarching culture the district strives to establish. To truly understand the district culture, it is critical that district leaders understand the culture and traditions of individual buildings, honor their uniqueness, and allow every school and family to contribute to the district culture as a whole.

Culture is the foundation of a district's success. Peter Drucker's phrase "culture eats strategy for breakfast" is an excellent reminder that culture is the most powerful tool for school districts to leverage when transforming schools. In his book, *Leading High-Reliability Schools*, Robert Marzano encourages district and school leaders not to "leave the culture up to chance or happenstance. Rather, strive to ensure the organization fosters shared beliefs, behaviors, and norms relative to at least three areas: (1) safety, (2) support, and (3) collaboration." A school district that promotes a safe, supportive, and collaborative culture is an organization where school leaders, staff, and students feel welcome and cared about, diversity is recognized and valued, ideas and feedback are heard, collaboration structures are in place, and the district's primary goal and focus are creating the conditions necessary to increase student performance.

Many practices can be implemented to establish a district's positive and effective performance culture. Below are a few strategies that can serve as critical success factors while creating, revising, or evaluating your district culture:

- **Strategic Planning:** Setting goals, aligning resources and developing action steps with staff, parents, and community leaders is an impactful strategy when creating a collaborative district culture.
- **Communication:** District leaders relentlessly communicate their mission, vision, and values in powerful and consistent ways across multiple audiences.
- **Visibility and accessibility:** Being visible and accessible is critical to creating positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with staff, families, and the community to benefit all students.
- **Systems approach:** District leaders understand the importance of a systemic approach that creates efficient and effective processes and consistently revises them to improve teaching and learning for all students.

Once a district has established a positive culture, it is important to monitor it. An effective strategy for monitoring the culture of a district and school is through surveys. Below are three different types of surveys that can be utilized to monitor district culture:

1. *School surveys* – Surveys distributed to staff and students give school leaders a snapshot of the school's culture and identify areas for celebration and improvement.
2. *Community and family surveys* – Surveys distributed to families and community members provide the district with a sense of the communities' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the district as a whole. Areas for improvement, such as communication, opportunities for family engagement, etc., can be identified and addressed.
3. *Exit surveys* – Taking the time to survey staff leaving the district can identify potential problems that may impact employee retention.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement is the process used by an organization to engage relevant stakeholders to achieve desired outcomes. It is an essential transformation component of schools and districts across New Mexico. Any individual who may be affected by the decisions made by a school or district could be considered a stakeholder. This includes administrators, teachers, students, families, community members, community organizations, and local businesses. Keeping stakeholders informed of relevant information and engaging them in the decision-making process requires ongoing effort and commitment from district leaders. This involves planning, creating systems, and allocating attention to ensure that a broad representation of voices is at the table and that the process informs district-level decisions.

Effective stakeholder engagement ensures all stakeholder needs, concerns, and motivations are considered. In doing so, various community groups contribute to the decisions and topics that affect them, elevating their sense of satisfaction with decisions. Ideally, stakeholder engagement is embedded in all organizational processes and is a part of the day-to-day culture. The more the district includes groups affected by the decision-making process, the more likely these groups will understand the “why” and buy into the district’s decisions.

**“Stakeholder engagement is not an end in itself, but a means to build better relationships with the societies in which we operate.”**

**—Altria Corporate Services, Inc., 2004**

Stakeholder engagement consists of two distinct categories, family and community engagement, and district leaders need to be aware of and adept at nurturing and developing both. Below is a brief description of each and ideas for districts that wish to pursue improvement.

### FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Families are perhaps the most important segment of stakeholders. Families are critical to both individual student success and the overall direction of any school or district. Recent research on family engagement has shifted from events and activities towards authentic academic engagement and capacity building.

No matter which family engagement model schools and districts choose to implement, they are responsible for empowering and informing parents. Some New Mexico districts have adopted a successful approach with Academic Parent Teacher Teams. This model emphasizes building an inclusive climate, respecting parents’ expertise about their children, and seeks to leverage parents as collaborative partners.

Every New Mexico district is responsible for including parents and families through formal structures like advisory committees and equity councils. When families engage authentically, it leads to school improvement and student achievement. Therefore, it is incumbent on district leadership to model transparent, two-way dialogue between district and families.

Another goal of family engagement is to elevate the voices of traditionally underrepresented populations. To do this, districts need to address barriers that limit participation. Through creative strategies such as parent institutes that help families understand opportunities for all students or through readiness programs aimed at preparing parents to assist in their student's success, districts can develop the capacity of parents to act as partners in learning.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Much like family engagement, districts have much to gain via strategic partnerships with businesses and civic organizations. Because education is ultimately a community responsibility, districts should cultivate and strengthen community relationships to engage diverse community segments around the district's vision; help them understand district beliefs and values, and ultimately join in the mission.

Like school districts, many civic and business organizations have dedicated communication channels. Strategic partnerships can generate opportunities for expanding messaging and information gathering if organizations agree to share their modes of communication. Across New Mexico, many organizations are exploring ways that communities and schools can mutually benefit from such arrangements.

Through technology, invitation, and simply "showing up" at businesses and meetings where the community does its work, there are plenty of ways to engage with and challenge the broader community to support local educational causes. Through listening and partnering, there is the potential to multiply efforts and help the community increase its impact across schools.

Stakeholder engagement structures can be significantly enhanced by a stakeholder engagement policy. The following list from Stakeholder Engagement by Deloitte and Touche lists the key components of a typical stakeholder engagement policy:

- **Define the scope of the policy** - The stakeholder engagement policy's scope and boundary should be clearly defined, articulated, and communicated.
- **Identify the key stakeholders and stakeholder groups** - There are numerous models and methods for identifying stakeholders.
- **Develop an engagement plan, including frequency, method, and channel** - The engagement plan should include a process to ensure that current developments and changes are captured within a reasonable timeframe.
- **Facilitate the stakeholder engagement process** - Accountability of the key actions in the engagement plan should be assigned to specific people to ensure that the necessary focus and attention is placed on the engagement process. Regular feedback and updates to district leadership and stakeholders should be incorporated into the plan to create transparency.
- **Identify the legitimate concerns and interests of key stakeholders** - It is not sufficient

for the district to speak on behalf of stakeholders about what they think the legitimate concerns are. There needs to be clarity on the material issues for those stakeholders. The process must be one of careful listening and clarification by the district. Proper two-way communication and methods which achieve this are of the utmost importance.

- **Design a process for dealing with conflicts between stakeholder concerns**  
- The likelihood of conflicts exists, and the district should have an established process to deal with conflicts between stakeholder concerns.
- **Define a mechanism to feed stakeholder concerns into strategic planning to ensure alignment** - Stakeholders are interested in the outcome of engagement and the corresponding link to the district's strategy and schools' 90-day plans. Districts should present a balanced view to stakeholders, clearly showing how stakeholder engagement has informed how decisions are made or protocols implemented.
- **Provide feedback to stakeholder groups** - The engagement plan should incorporate feedback on the outcome of the engagement process to stakeholders with whom the district has engaged.

Perhaps the most important consideration is that districts must commit to an ongoing and intentional effort to seek out the voices of those affected by district decisions and ensure that they are heard. This means more than going through the motions of scheduling focus groups or informational meetings to meet policy requirements. Instead, districts must honor the wisdom and experiences that others bring to a conversation to ensure they are responsive to the goals and desires the community has for their children.

### **Resources for Further Learning**

Deloitte and Touche. *Stakeholder Engagement*, 2014

[https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/za/Documents/governance-risk-compliance/ZA\\_StakeholderEngagement\\_04042014.pdf](https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/za/Documents/governance-risk-compliance/ZA_StakeholderEngagement_04042014.pdf)



# LEADERSHIP

## VISION AND MISSION

The district vision is the shared understanding of where the district is headed - its desired future. The district mission describes “what” the district does or the district’s overall purpose. If everyone in the organization executes with a high level of excellence on the mission, the district will achieve its vision. Together, the vision and the mission provide a roadmap for what needs to be accomplished on behalf of students.

The process district leaders utilize to create a vision and mission can dramatically impact the commitment of the larger stakeholder community to the end product. The district should first and foremost include all stakeholders. It is vital for all district and school community members to have a voice in the process and meaningfully connect to the work. When there is a clear and compelling vision and mission, stakeholders can advocate for and create the goals necessary to achieve the district’s desired outcomes.

Deliberate conversations about what a district wants to achieve can unify all stakeholders towards advancing the district’s goals. Without a unifying vision and mission with clear and aligned goals, programs, policies, and procedures become random acts of work disconnected from measurable outcomes.

*Development Guidelines* – Below are guidelines to keep in mind when developing a vision and mission statement for the district:

- Open communication focused on teaching and learning must be the key driver.
- Clarity about the process and what success looks like will allow others to enter into the conversation.
- Focus groups of stakeholders to gather input from community forums will contribute to a more meaningful vision and mission statement that will support the goal-setting and planning process.

There are many resources available to assist districts with developing a vision and mission statement. The following list summarizes a few key points district leaders should consider when creating or revising the vision and mission of their district.

### GETTING STARTED:

Identify and train vision and mission oversight teams.

- If there are existing vision and mission statements, review them to determine their relevance and accuracy.

- Devise a meaningful plan to involve staff in revising the existing vision and mission statements or creating new ones.
- Ask probing questions to guide staff in developing the vision and mission.
- Use data to identify areas that need improvement and establish SMART goals.
- Recruit members for a school improvement plan team.

## **Resources for Further Learning:**

ASCD - Developing a Vision and Mission

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/107042/chapters/developing-a-vision-and-a-mission.aspx>

Bambrick-Santoyo, Paul. *Leverage Leadership: a Practical Guide to Building Exceptional Schools*. Jossey-Bass, 2012.

NM PED: Priority School Bureau, NM DASH

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/priority-schools/nm-dash/#:~:text=All%20LEAs%20and%20schools%20in,place%20for%20the%20school%20year.>

Senge, P.M. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art And Practice Of The Learning Organization*; 1990

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning defines and creates detailed actions for achieving the school district's mission, vision, and goals. It is essential to set direction and outline measurable goals. Strategic planning is a tool for guiding day-to-day decisions, evaluating progress, and determining the need for course adjustments along the way. It defines for the team what is important and what will be monitored. When the district strategic plan is thoughtfully created based on data-based needs, clearly articulated to all stakeholders, and consistently monitored and adjusted, it can provide district leaders and stakeholders with a powerful tool for transforming the district.

The fundamental actions of the strategic planning process are expressed in measurable goals. Measurable goals set specific and concrete objectives defined in outcomes and timelines. Identifying and communicating clear goals is essential because it enables principals, teachers, and stakeholders to evaluate their progress and make course corrections when needed. Furthermore, when principals complete their 90-day plan, they must have access to and fully understand the district's strategic plan and goals to align their school's 90-day plan and goals.

When developing the strategic plan, the superintendent and other district leaders must take the time to understand the unique circumstances of their district. This can be accomplished by hosting town hall meetings, school, community, parent, and family meetings, posting surveys, or virtual opportunities for soliciting feedback and ideas for achieving district goals. Once all information is gathered and organized, district leaders will have a better understanding of the district's needs and will be better positioned to create a strategic plan that addresses the most impactful district and community priorities.

The elements that make up a strategic plan are unique to the school district, but most include:

- **Mission:** the "why" the school district exists and fundamentally conveys the purpose of the district and schools.
- **Vision:** the "what" we do - guides and drives daily activities and policies that express the purpose for those actions.
- **Values:** principles or standards of behavior for the district and community.
- **Strategy:** a plan of action to achieve an objective that is usually major, comprehensive, and long-term.
- **Goals:** Desired results or outcomes.
- **Objectives:** a strategic position to be attained or a purpose to be achieved.
- **Measures:** used to track progress towards achieving objectives and goals.

## Resources for Further Learning

Kotter, John P. *A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs from Management*. New York: Free Press, 1990.

Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.

## PRIORITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

District priorities and expectations establish order and establish the systems and structures of the district so that schools can function efficiently and effectively. Districts who have not established and explicitly communicated their priorities and expectations are more likely to encounter misaligned or competing efforts that impede the district's direction and what it wants to accomplish. Additionally, the risk of staff members engaging in individual "pet" projects or constantly pursuing "flavor of the day" initiatives that do not directly benefit students is compounded when the district does not set and monitor progress towards priorities.

In successful districts throughout New Mexico, leaders identify specific focus areas district and school leaders will target each year. Once these focus areas are identified, the district works with a cross-section of stakeholders from the district, schools, and community to determine how they will address these focus areas. This "what" is commonly referred to as the district's expectations or the systems and structures the district and schools will leverage to address the priorities.

When setting and communicating district expectations, the district defines the "tight & loose." Meaning, there are clear expectations every school must implement or follow. These expectations define the "what" each school must do and are considered the "tight." However, since every school is different, they must be flexible when implementing the expectation. This flexibility in determining the "how" the school will accomplish the expectation is referred to as the "loose." As a rule, schools that are not meeting their performance goals, or those with new leaders, must operate within a tighter district structure than their counterparts who consistently meet their yearly performance goals.

The table on the following page contains an example of common district expectations with clearly defined "tight" and "loose" structures. The University of Virginia Partnership created this example for Leaders in Education (UVA-PLE).

## EXAMPLE COMMON EXPECTATIONS WITH FLEXIBILITY

Focus Area	“Tight” Common Expectation (what) All campuses:	“Loose” Flexibility (how) Campuses decide:
<b>Interim Assessments Cycle</b>	Interim assessments administered on the same timeline (4x per year)	Individual school assessment schedule within the short district testing window
	Aggressive, transparent goals for student growth on interim assessments made before each assessment	What to adjust when goals are not met
	Clearly defined, data-driven process to monitor major tier one instruction and both reteaching and intervention commitments by each teacher utilizing teacher action plans.	Approach & format of data analysis (early release day, etc.), teacher action plans, reteaching priorities, collaboration, etc.
<b>Ongoing Intervention and Progress Monitoring</b>	Minimum 90 minutes weekly for teacher collaboration; explicit action commitments made and documented during each collaboration meeting	Timing, purpose, goals, format, facilitation, and audience of all collaboration meetings
	Utilization of formative assessments and monitoring of key school-wide goals at least monthly.	When, how, and what to assess; identification of key school goals and metrics.
	At-Risk students identified at the beginning and throughout the year	How to define and identify at-risk students and ensure the student receives a plan of success
	Explicit small-group intervention strategy that includes aligned, focused resources to support at-risk children.	Structure of interventions including individualized support, small group, extra class time, supports for behavioral challenges; Expectations, and staff involvement in interventions.
	A clearly defined process to monitor school-wide goals and intervention success, to include how leadership team and teacher collaboration is used to progress monitor.	Key metrics and data presentation format. Whether or not to include individual
<b>Understanding Teacher Performance and Needs</b>	Common walk-through protocol and ongoing feedback are provided to teachers at least once per month.	Frequency and tiering of visits; who visits and how feedback is provided and monitored
	Timely identification of struggling teachers and intervention to support and monitor improvement	Definition of struggling teachers, professional development plan, and progress monitoring approach

## Resources for Further Learning

DuFour, R., & Fullan, M. *Cultures Built to Last: Systemic PLCs at work™*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press. 2013.

Dufour, R. *In Praise of Top-Down Leadership*, *The School Administrator*. November 2007  
<https://www.allthingsplc.info/files/uploads/InPraiseofTop-DownLeadership.pdf>

Kouzes, James M, and Barry Z. Posner. *The Leadership Challenge*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007.

The University of Virginia Partnership for Leaders in Education (UVA-PLE)  
<https://www.darden.virginia.edu/darden-curry-ple>

## CHANGE MANAGEMENT

One thing every district leader in New Mexico understands is that change is a constant. Each year the district is confronted with numerous policy and regulation changes from federal and state governments. There are also many self-initiated changes created by the community and district leadership team. New assessments, content standards, evaluations, instructional models, resource adoptions, funding allocations, technology updates, district calendars, and accountability systems are just a few of the never-ending systems and structures that demand constant revision and new ways of thinking.

Successful and supportive districts understand these changes do not just happen without intentional and thoughtful planning and implementation. Leaders in these districts have learned to serve as *leaders of change*, responsible for creating the vision and motivating people, and *managers of change*, responsible for planning actions and monitoring outcomes. If your district leadership team wants to master these two roles, the first step is to understand change management principles and how they are applied in organizational change models.

Since its conception, the Priority Schools Bureau has supported district leaders with understanding and implementing change by introducing them to two well-known, researched-based change management models. Though these models have different approaches, they are far more similar than different and share many common principles. As you learn more about these models, you may recognize that the NM DASH process is tightly aligned with changing management principles. This design is intentional; the 90-day plan is a road map for addressing change and a bridge across the Knowing-Doing Gap (Pfeffer, J., Sutton, R. I., 1999).

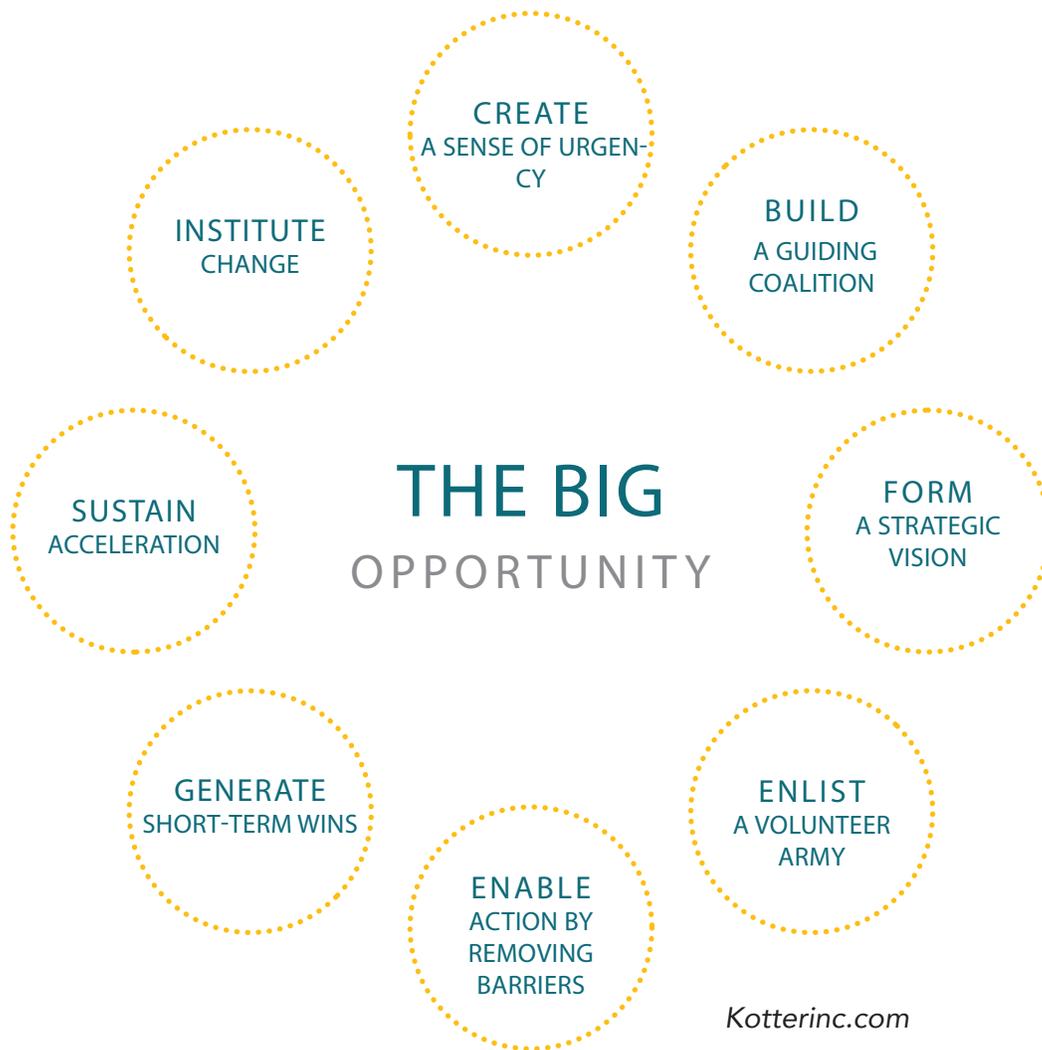
### KOTTER CHANGE MODEL

The Kotter Change Model is one of the most utilized models in the business world. This model was created by John Kotter, professor emeritus at Harvard Business School. In his book, *John Kotter on What Leaders Really Do* (1999), Kotter describes how leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary systems of action. Each has its function and characteristic activities, both necessary for success. In his 8-step process for leading change, Kotter identifies and extracts the actions of numerous individuals and organizations who have successfully implemented change and presents them in a user-friendly format for leaders who are embarking on a change journey. Included below is Kotter's 8-step process and a brief description of each step.

#### Kotter's 8-Step Process

- 1. Create a Sense of Urgency** - Help others see the need for change through a bold, aspirational opportunity statement that immediately communicates the importance of acting.
- 2. Build a Guiding Coalition** – A volunteer army needs a coalition of effective people – born of its own ranks – to guide it, coordinate it, and communicate its activities.
- 3. Form a Strategic Vision and Initiatives** - Clarify how the future will be different from the past and how you can make that future a reality through initiatives linked directly to the vision.
- 4. Enlist a Volunteer Army** - Large-scale change can only occur when massive numbers of people rally around a common opportunity.

5. **Enable Action by Removing Barriers** – Removing barriers such as inefficient processes and hierarchies provides the freedom necessary to work across silos and generate real impact.
6. **Generate Short-Term Wins** - Wins are the molecules of results. Early and often, they must be recognized, collected, and communicated to track progress and energize volunteers to persist.
7. **Sustain Acceleration** - Press harder after the first success. Your increasing credibility can improve systems, structures, and policies. Be relentless with initiating change after change until the vision is a reality.
8. **Institute Change** - Articulate the connections between the new behaviors and organizational success, ensuring they continue until they become strong enough to replace old habits.



## EXPERIENCEPOINT CHANGE MODEL

Another change model employed by the Priority Schools Bureau is the ExperiencePoint Change Model. This model is closely aligned to Kotter's 8-Step Process with one key difference; the ExperiencePoint model does not presuppose members of the organization have a good understanding of the problem. It first encourages a shared analysis of the situation among key stakeholders to create the alignment and urgency required to set the project up for success.

The ExperiencePoint Model is divided into two parts:

1. *Aligning Key Stakeholders – Planning*
2. *Engaging the Organization - Implementation*

District leaders in the NM RISE program participate in a computer-based simulation that delivers a year of change experienced in one day. During this session, district leaders tackle a realistic change project. The experience offers the essentials of a year-long change journey enabling leaders to engage with the behaviors, tools, and skillsets that make change happen. Below you will find the steps in the ExperiencePoint Change Model and a brief description of each.

### ExperiencePoint Change Model – 7 Steps

#### *Aligning Key Stakeholders – Planning*

1. **Understand the Need for Change** – This is the rationale “Why.” Accomplished through continuous environmental scanning, data analysis, and organizational diagnosis.
2. **Enlist a Core Team** – Create and support a core team of stakeholders tasked with working on a solution and scaling it.
3. **Develop a Vision & Strategy** – Envisage the opportunities and implications of the new solution on the organization. Your vision should be tangible, feasible & flexible, focused, simple, participative, rigorous, and open.

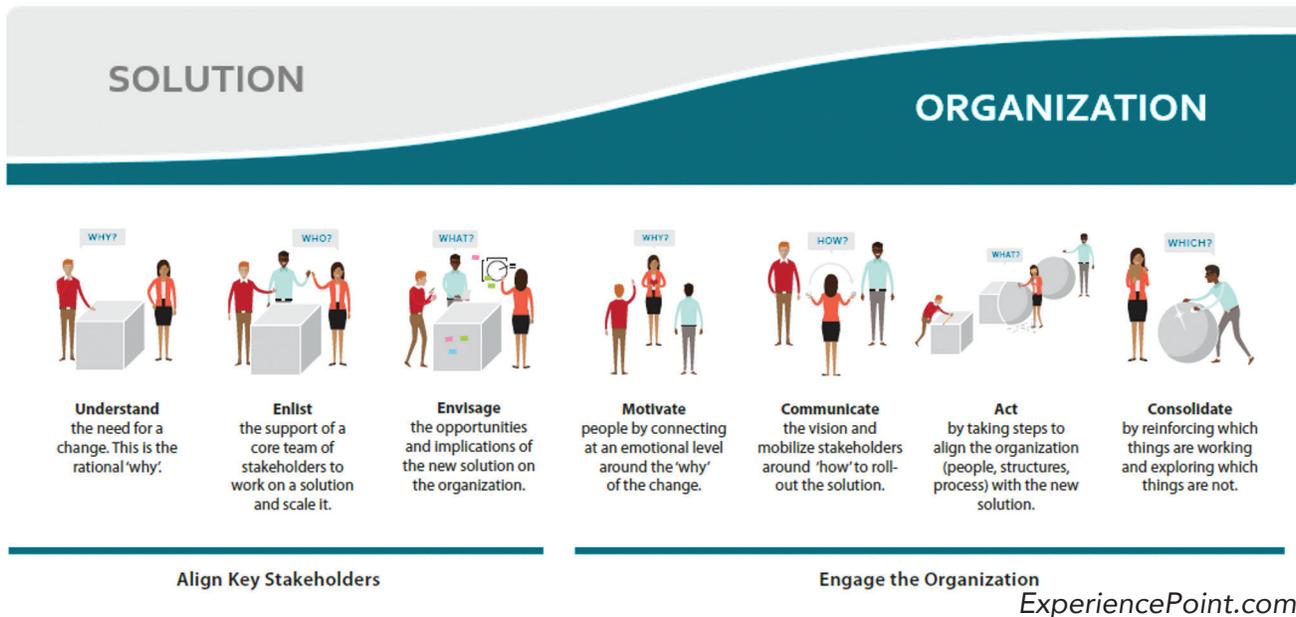
#### *Engaging the Organization – Implementation*

4. **Create a Sense of Urgency** – Motivate people by connecting around the ‘why’ of the change at an emotional level. You must make this effort in earnest. Most change programs fail at the outset because of a failure to effectively communicate the urgency of circumstances.
5. **Communicate the Vision** - Communicate the vision and mobilize stakeholders around “how” to roll out the solution. When communicating the vision, ensure repetition, consistency in message, consistency across channels, and connectivity.
6. **Take Action** – Act by aligning the organization (people, structures, process) with the new solution. Align systems with the new vision and strategy. Critical systems to target include recruitment systems, training systems, performance appraisal, and reward systems. In aligning structures with the new vision and strategy, also consider:

- Filling key positions with the right people
- Shifting power between units – addressing resistors

**7. Consolidate Gains** - Consolidate by reinforcing which things are working and exploring which things are not. At this stage, you must work hard to maintain the momentum of the change effort through proper pacing.

- Plan for quick wins
- Follow quick wins with new targets.



When implementing change, there is no single right way to guarantee success. Context is everything. The key is to consider each unique situation, create the appropriate model/framework for planning, and then implement, monitor, adjust and celebrate quick wins until the change becomes a part of your organizational culture.

## Resources for Further Learning

ExperiencePoint Website

<https://www.experiencepoint.com/>

Kotter, J. *John Kotter on What Leaders Really Do*. Harvard Business Press; 1999

Kotter Inc. Website

<https://www.kotterinc.com/8-steps-process-for-leading-change/>

Pfeffer, J., Sutton, R. I. *The Knowing-Doing Gap: How Smart Companies Turn Knowledge Into Action*. United States: Harvard Business Review Press; 1999

# COMMUNICATION

Leadership exists only through communication. Leaders are increasingly important as creators of culture, decision-makers, and change agents. These roles require the use of communication to develop shared meanings, search and use information effectively, and create and communicate visions to enhance an organization's future and guide it through eras of change (Kowalski, 2015)

It is the responsibility of district leaders to develop and implement robust communication systems that appropriately inform all stakeholders. To accomplish this, two types of communication are important to a district organization: internal communication and external communication. A thoughtful communication plan that includes effective internal and external communication structures will increase transparency and provide consistent and regular messaging informing and communicating the district's ideas, beliefs, and goals. Additionally, the plan should include a process to encourage bottom-up collaboration, establish trust, and eliminate misconceptions. Communication and appropriate information should be easily accessible, provide input and output opportunities, and prioritize collaboration between the district and community.

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The best method for developing a cohesive, flexible, and powerful district team is to ensure each team member feels like a valuable part of the district as a whole. As district employees increase their understanding of the goals and strategies of the district, they naturally become confident spokespeople within the community. Therefore, it is critical to reflect on internal communication as part of the district's overall communication strategy.

Internal communication strategies include a clear delineation of responsibility for delivering and receiving information. Knowing "who" is responsible for "what" is critical to guaranteeing the district's communication strategy is aligned and coherent. School leaders also need to know which types of media conversations need to be referred to the district leadership, which ones need to convey consistent messages, and which ones they can address individually in a manner suitable to their community. Whether shared or assigned to individuals, district leadership can use communication plans to designate tasks such as media relations, electronic messaging, community outreach, or information gathering to the appropriate individuals.

The onslaught of daily responsibilities and the overwhelming needs of parents, staff, and students may cause school leaders to lose sight of district goals. To overcome this challenge and keep district goals and expectations front and center, successful New Mexico districts go beyond the usual top-down communication methods and provide a robust internal system that promotes and encourages two-way communication. Weekly emails that encourage feedback, regular bulletins co-created by district and school leaders, frequent face-to-face visits, and periodic phone calls are all two-way communication methods that can informally monitor progress and support the advancement of district goals. District leaders must take the time to listen to their building constituents, both concerns and celebrations. They must ensure school leaders have a voice, a mentor, a coach, and a colleague who cares about their insights, school culture, and traditions. The value of effective, consistent, and meaningful two-way communication from within cannot be understated. It is at the core of every collaborative and effective team.

## EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

**“With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed.”**

**—Abraham Lincoln**

Conveying the district’s vision, mission, goals, and important activities to external stakeholders are essential. Since there is no such thing as “over-communicating,” every district should continuously seek to leverage opportunities that enhance organizational awareness to all stakeholders. At the most impactful levels, effective communication is a powerful tool that can improve the education of all students by harnessing the collective energy of the entire community. Knowing communities are diverse and that families receive and convey information differently, districts need to commit to a dynamic approach to communication. By monitoring results, reflecting on what works for whom and when, and adapting to new technologies, districts will increase transparency and clarity within and outside of the organization.

In the spirit of improving transparency and facilitating community and staff engagement, districts should create a definable communication structure to deliver on their responsibility for regular and purposeful sharing and gathering of information. A few New Mexico districts have utilized non-traditional forms of outreach as part of a comprehensive external communication plan to accomplish this task. They have created former employee and alumni databases for ‘insider’ news or hosted events to honor and celebrate volunteers and partners. Some districts have gone even further and adopted the strategy of “telling their own story” as a means of advancing their mission and vision and as a way of holding a positive space in the community’s consciousness.

As districts develop their external communication strategy, they should not overlook the importance of using words to inspire. Community members like optimism, and there are thousands of reasons to be optimistic every day in education. One of the keys to developing followers, is to be enthusiastic and spread positivity. Crisis communication or the occasional bad news need not be the norm. A deliberate commitment to messages of hope, resilience, and opportunity serves to enhance the district’s reputation. It can also support teachers and volunteers as ambassadors of the organization. Vision, structure, listening, and inspiration are integral to communication in that they are the foundations of a culture that can deliver on the promise of student success. Gathering and spreading the appropriate information through effective internal and external communication structures can go a long way towards achieving this goal.

Sample goals within an external communication plan might include:

- Improving community relations through transparency
- Managing district image through media
- Growing collaboration between schools and potential business partners
- Understanding community perception around issues and initiatives
- Increasing the flow of information between the district and the community

## **Resources for Further Learning**

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. *Leadership in Turbulent Times*. First Simon & Schuster hardcover edition. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018.

Kowalski, Theodore. *Effective Communication for District and School Administrators*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015.

## SCHOOL BOARDS

School boards represent the communities within which the schools reside. They have governing power, enable local decision-making, and carry out many other responsibilities as local community representatives. In New Mexico, the proper functions of the School Board of Education are as follows:

- Develops educational policies for the school district.
- Employs a superintendent of schools for the school district.
- Determines the superintendent's salary and conducts annual reviews.
- Approves the district budget.
- Acquires, leases, and disposes of property.
- Has the capacity to sue and be sued.
- Acquires property by eminent domain as pursuant to the procedures provided in the Eminent Domain Code.
- Issues general obligation bonds of the school district.
- Provides for the repair and maintenance of all property belonging to the school district.
- For good cause, and upon order of the district court, can subpoena witnesses and documents in connection with a hearing concerning any powers or duties of the local school board except for expenditures for salaries.
- Contracts for the expenditure of money according to the provisions of the Procurement Code.
- Adopt rules pertaining to the administration of all powers or duties of the local school board.
- Accepts or rejects any charitable gift or grant.
- Offer and, upon compliance with the conditions of such offer, to pay rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction, or other appropriate disciplinary disposition by the courts or juvenile authorities, of offenders in case of theft, defacement, or destruction of local school district property.
- Gives prior approval for any educational program in a public school in the school district that is to be conducted, sponsored, carried on, or caused to be carried on by a private organization or agency to hire the Superintendent and approve the district budget.

State and local policies guide the work of the Board. The following list includes typical items included in a Board policy manual:

- Employment procedures
- Work from home policies
- Organization culture
- Employee benefits
- Communication policies
- Payment procedures
- Workplace guidelines
- Employee code of conduct

## **Communication**

Superintendent and Board communication are essential as the Superintendent teaches and leads the Board to understand and advocate of the District's goals and priorities. The complexity of leading a school district cannot be overstated. Establishing an effective communication system between the Superintendent and the Board is one of the most important tasks of the Superintendent. The following is a list of suggested actions for the Superintendent to promote and maintain communication.

The Superintendent:

- Meets with individual Board members on a scheduled basis to ask questions.
- Prepares a weekly email to the Board summarizing any matters of importance that occurred during the week
- Establishes committees where Board members are allowed to participate to better understand operational issues or budget issues as they arise.
- Schedules staff presentations related to programs and services that address district priorities
- Schedules periodic Board workshops to address topics such as budget and strategic planning
- Schedules celebrations at Board meetings to highlight District successes

According to the National School Boards Association, "communication between the superintendent and board members must be timely, consistent and focused on the needs and expectations of both with mutual respect. A culture of transparency and collaborative leadership to build upon success is necessary." There may be times when a school board may be divided on an issue. The role of the Superintendent is to maintain transparency and treat all Board Members equally. Referring to data that anchors decisions or understanding why decisions are made is especially important in maintaining a process for two-way communication and rational decision-making.

## Working as a Team

Deliberately building the Board as a team and addressing individual needs while building a coalition for the work of the District will lead to productive relationships. The following list of characteristics of an effective school board can serve as a road map for the Superintendent and the Board President as they plan Board development activities that promote teamwork and cohesion among the Board members.

### EIGHT CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD

1. Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.
2. Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.
3. Effective school boards are accountability-driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
4. Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
5. Effective boards are data-savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
6. Effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
7. Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
8. Effective school boards take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values, and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Source: Center for Public Education, *Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards*, 2019

## Resources for Further Learning

Clear Board and Superintendent Roles, Association of Alaska School Boards

<https://aasb.org/clear-board-and-superintendent-roles/>

Dervarics, C and O'Brien, E., *Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards*, Center for Public Education, 2019

New Mexico School Boards Association Website

<https://www.nmsba.org/>

National School Boards Association Website

<https://www.nsba.org/>

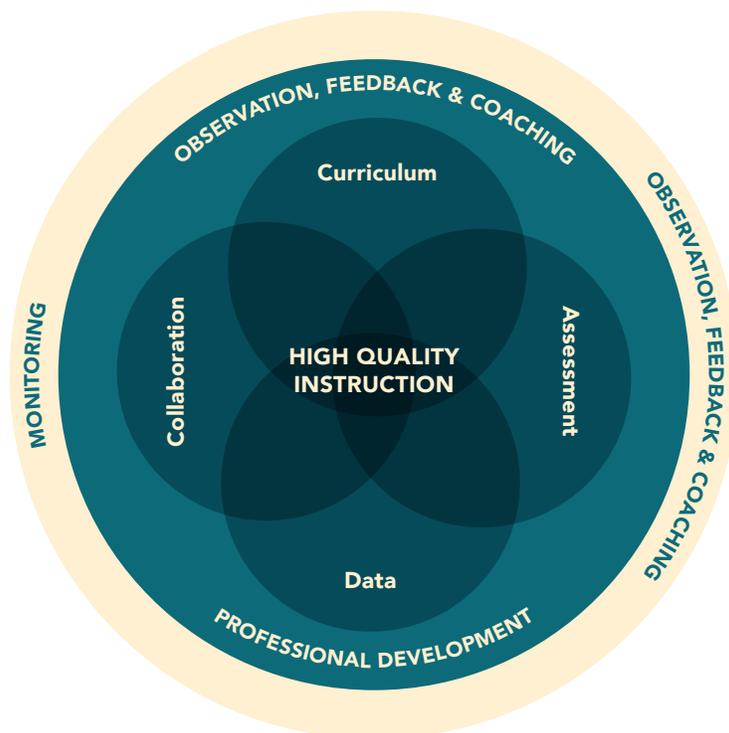


# INSTRUCTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

## INSTRUCTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

A comprehensive instructional infrastructure contains the instructional components teachers require to build their instructional skills and deliver quality instruction in the classroom. Teachers need access to a comprehensive curriculum aligned to New Mexico’s content standards, aligned assessments to measure the effectiveness of their teaching, data systems and structures that provide the information necessary to adjust instruction, and collaboration structures that allow them to work together to improve their practice.

To guarantee equity, students enrolled in classrooms with inexperienced or ineffective teachers or struggling schools should have the same access to a quality comprehensive instructional infrastructure as those in the district’s highest performing schools and classrooms. In the graphic below, adapted from the University of Virginia Partnership for Leaders in Education (UVA-PLE), district leaders will find the instructional infrastructure systems school leaders, coaches, and teachers need to build their instructional skills and deliver high-quality instruction in every classroom.



**Curriculum:** A comprehensive curriculum consists of a clearly stated scope and sequence of K-12 learning objectives aligned with district, state, and national expectations. Scope indicates the depth to which the standards should be taught, and sequence suggests the order. Together, the scope and sequence of learning bring order to content delivery, maximizing sustained opportunities for student learning.

**Assessment:** A comprehensive assessment strategy provides the foundation for identifying effective instruction and promising practices within the district and school. Effective assessment strategies include assessments that provide data on foundational skill development, student growth, and real-time feedback on the effectiveness of teaching and learning in every classroom. Assessment data assists leaders and coaches in identifying instructional trends, school-level supports, and teachers' short and long-term professional development needs.

**Data:** Effective data-informed decision-making requires real-time, cross-sectional, longitudinal school, teacher, and student data. Along with ensuring easy access to robust district and school-level data systems, district and school leaders must provide technical support, data literacy training, and the conditions necessary for leaders and teachers to analyze and use data effectively.

**Collaboration:** Common structured collaboration meetings allow teams of teachers uninterrupted time to reflect on practice, develop expertise, share promising practices, plan rigorous instruction, analyze and discuss data, increase instructional efficiency, and ensure instructional equity. These meetings provide teachers and leaders an opportunity to improve school-level practices and enrich teaching and learning opportunities through an ongoing review of data, the unpacking of standards, collaborative instructional planning, and reflection on the delivery of instruction.

**Observation, Feedback, & Coaching (OFC):** Effective OFC is a professional development process that, when implemented well, encourages teachers to analyze, critique, practice, reflect, and revise their instructional practices. Additionally, leaders and coaches who provide this support are responsible for identifying common challenges that may indicate deficiencies or misalignment within the district or school instructional infrastructure system.

**Professional Development:** Professional development encompasses a wide range of individualized training, education, and learning to help leaders, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, skill, and effectiveness. District and school leaders should identify and provide individualized, small group, and whole-group professional development opportunities based on needs identified during observations, coaching sessions, and student and teacher performance data.

**Monitoring:** Effective monitoring systems ensure consistent expectations throughout the district and school, increase opportunities to identify misalignments, improve access and equity, and provide ongoing feedback on progress towards short- and long-term goals.

**Continuous Revisions:** Curriculum, assessment, data, collaboration, and professional development elements require continuous revisions to meet the needs of an ever-changing society and the differentiated needs of students and teachers. Districts and schools should have a well-defined process for identifying gaps or misalignments within their systems and clear procedures and timelines for making improvements.

**“Without a solid foundation,  
you’ll have trouble creating  
anything of value.”**

**—Erika Oppenheimer**

The UVA-PLE created the design frameworks on the following pages to support school districts with the design and implementation of these systems. These frameworks provide a roadmap for district leaders to develop or improve their district-level curriculum, assessment strategy, data systems and structures, and collaboration structures. Each design document begins with the foundational components districts should provide and then lists the intermediate and advanced components that should be added as the district improves upon each system.

In districts that do not provide these requisite instructional infrastructure systems, individual schools and teachers must create their curriculum, design their assessments, collect their data, and work without the support of their colleagues. In these districts, the quality of instruction each student receives is based on the school they attend, the knowledge base of the individual principal, or the teacher they are assigned to each year. If a district is genuinely striving to ensure access and equity for every student, district leaders must make every effort to ensure every student, teacher, and school has access to quality instructional infrastructure.

## Instructional Infrastructure District Design Frameworks Adapted from UVA\_PLE

Curriculum consists of a clearly stated scope and sequence of K-12 learning objectives aligned to district, state, and national expectations. Scope indicates the depth to which the standards should be taught, and sequence suggests the order. Together, the scope and sequence of learning bring order to content delivery, maximizing sustained opportunities for student learning.			
Curriculum Components	Foundational Execution	Intermediate Execution	Comprehensive Execution
<b>Level</b>	<p>Curriculum team with specific meeting dates.</p> <p>Curriculum rationale developed and communicated to stakeholders.</p> <p>Clear expectations for implementation that have been communicated and are monitored.</p> <p>State standards are arranged in sequential order indicating suggested time for teaching, assessing, analyzing results, and reteaching.</p> <p>Vertical alignment documents at least one grade level above and below.</p> <p>Standards are grouped, classified, and bundled conceptually.</p> <p>Priority, content, process, and, if included, value standards identified.</p> <p>Gap analysis protocol completed ensuring all standards are included.</p> <p>Documents are accessible and user-friendly.</p>	<p>Depth of Knowledge identified.</p> <p>Know, Understand, Do identified.</p> <p>Grade-level text resources are identified and include suggestions for differentiated needs.</p> <p>Essential Questions/Understandings identified.</p> <p>Academic vocabulary included.</p> <p>Common errors and misconceptions identified.</p> <p>Sample formative assessment questions, performance tasks, and grading rubrics.</p> <p>Internal and external resources aligned to district curriculum and state standards identified.</p> <p>Strategies for ELL, advanced and special needs students included.</p> <p>Example exemplar lessons and student work.</p> <p>Appropriate text-level resources were identified.</p>	<p>Technology integration lessons/activities included or linked to each standard.</p> <p>Enrichment and reteaching resources are identified and updated regularly.</p> <p>Suggested instructional strategies for differentiation identified for each standard.</p> <p>Cross-curricular connections and suggestions for implementing included.</p> <p>Exemplars or ideal student responses to performance tasks included.</p> <p>Strategies and suggested resources that support culturally responsive pedagogy.</p> <p>Suggested topics for subject-based and cross-curricular collaboration meetings.</p> <p>Written protocol for annual review and update includes data-based feedback and opportunities for stakeholder input.</p>
<b>Design (District)</b>	<p>Teachers analyze standards to identify essential understandings, vocabulary, concepts, principles, misconceptions, and skills students must master.</p> <p>Teachers utilize the foundational backward design planning model to create lessons aligned to rigorous assessments.</p> <p>Vertical alignment documents are utilized to create daily lesson plans and formative assessments that are scaffolded to address prior and future learning.</p> <p>Lesson plans include data-based learning objectives, specific instructional strategies, whole group reteaching, and aligned assessments.</p>	<p>Teachers identify strategies for reteaching, enrichment, and specific methods for addressing the needs of advanced, ELL, and special needs students.</p> <p>Cross-curricular teams work together to plan long-term instruction and identify curriculum connections and integrated writing opportunities.</p> <p>Teachers create and share exemplars or ideal student responses before teaching and assessing.</p> <p>Lesson plans include essential questions, vocabulary, and strategies for ELL, advanced, and special needs students, whole/small group reteaching, and aligned assessments with formative questions and performance tasks.</p>	<p>Project-based learning opportunities are designed to increase rigor and promote cross-curricular learning opportunities.</p> <p>Flexible, integrated, multi-faceted intervention and enrichment strategies for small groups and individual students implemented.</p> <p>Lesson plans include differentiated &amp; culturally responsive instructional strategies for specific groups and individual students, cross-curricular and integrated writing activities, opportunities for self-directed learning, and aligned assessments that have formative questions and performance tasks.</p>
<b>Implementation (School)</b>			

## Instructional Infrastructure District Design Frameworks Adapted from UVA\_PLE

### Assessment Strategy

The district assessment strategy provides the foundation for identifying effective instruction and promising practices within the district and school. A comprehensive assessment strategy should include assessments that provide data on foundational skill development, student growth, and real-time feedback on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. The district assessment strategy should also assist district leaders in identifying instructional trends, school-level supports, and teachers' short and long-term professional development needs.

Level	Foundational Execution	Intermediate Execution	Comprehensive Execution
<b>Design (District)</b>	<p>District assessment committee.</p> <p>Diagnostic BOY/EOYs, foundational assessments in K-2, and common interims aligned to pacing every 6 to 9 weeks in grades 3-12.</p> <p>The rationale for each assessment.</p> <p>Expectations for administering assessments and using assessment data.</p> <p>Protocols for administering assessments and utilizing assessment data to determine reteaching or next steps.</p> <p>Protocols for providing accommodations for special populations.</p> <p>District assessment calendar indicating administration dates and built-in time for analysis.</p> <p>Tools for generating item-analysis results (within 48 hrs.).</p>	<p>Protocol for creating, vetting, and updating interim assessments using professionally created item banks in grades 3-12.</p> <p>Process for annually revising district assessments to improve alignment &amp; reflect curriculum changes.</p> <p>District and school-level professional development calendars include flexible time for addressing interim data trends.</p> <p>Teacher-created formative assessments were administered after each lesson, and short-cycle assessments were administered every two to three weeks in core content classes.</p> <p>Process for district curriculum team to analyze assessment results, identify gaps in the curriculum, and inform the ongoing curriculum revision process.</p>	<p>Structures that allow high-performing teachers to create rigorous questions and performance tasks to supplement district item banks.</p> <p>Sample assessments were created for each state standard or district unit of study.</p> <p>District and teacher-created performance tasks aligned to units of instruction administered at least bi-weekly in all classes with calibrated rubrics.</p> <p>Exemplars that illustrate performance task rigor aligned to district calibrated rubrics.</p> <p>Assessment delivery system that allows the district to create and provide assessments similar in length, rigor, and format of the state-level assessment.</p> <p>Assessments aligned to ACT and college and career readiness standards.</p>
<b>Implementation (School)</b>	<p>Staff understand the rationale for each district and school assessment and can consistently articulate the purpose of each to students and parents.</p> <p>Teachers utilize backward design planning to collaboratively create short-cycle and formative assessments before lesson delivery.</p> <p>Schools administer district assessments with fidelity and monitor results to ensure full participation &amp; validity.</p> <p>Principals and teachers work together to analyze the results of district assessments and create remediation/enrichment plans.</p> <p>Student accommodations are provided for every assessment and updated when necessary.</p>	<p>Daily formative assessments and corresponding lesson plans are created and reviewed prior to administration to ensure alignment with standards.</p> <p>Teachers utilize daily formative assessments to inform ongoing day-to-day planning and instruction.</p> <p>Teachers use assessment data to scaffold learning and differentiate instruction for small groups of students.</p> <p>Teachers and principals collect and analyze remediation and enrichment student work samples and collaboratively plan improvements.</p> <p>Teachers vet mandated district assessments and provide feedback to the district assessment team.</p>	<p>Teachers create and administer performance assessments, calibrate rubric scoring, analyze results to determine student needs and use results to improve day-to-day instruction.</p> <p>Teachers administer multiple types of assessments to measure daily and weekly progress.</p> <p>Teachers meet at least weekly to review student work samples and to compare and calibrate rubric scoring.</p> <p>Teachers use assessment results to assist districts with improving and aligning district assessments and curriculum.</p> <p>Assessment data analyzed to determine targeted professional development needs</p>

## Instructional Infrastructure District Design Frameworks Adapted from UVA\_PLE

**Data Systems & Structures** Effective data-informed decision-making requires real-time, cross-sectional, longitudinal school, teacher, and student data. Along with ensuring easy access to robust district and school-level data systems, district and school leaders must provide technical support, data-literacy training and create the conditions necessary for leaders and teachers to analyze and use data effectively.

Level	Foundational Execution	Intermediate Execution	Comprehensive Execution
<b>Design (District)</b>	<p>Data system(s) that provide real-time, cross-sectional, and longitudinal district, school, teacher, and student data.</p> <p>School and district data teams were established.</p> <p>Clear district and school-level expectations for collecting, organizing, and using data.</p> <p>District protocols for analyzing and acting on data.</p> <p>Collaboration protocols include clear guidelines for data collection, analysis, and intervention.</p> <p>Technical support and ongoing data literacy professional development.</p> <p>District and school calendars include time embedded in the day for data analysis BOY and after each interim assessment.</p>	<p>District data systems are easily accessed by teachers and provide user-friendly student-level reports – one or two pages.</p> <p>Resources available for acting on data: technology, intervention/enrichment programs, sample lesson plans, differentiation resources, etc.</p> <p>District protocols for analyzing and acting on student data every six, eight, or nine weeks.</p> <p>District and school professional development calendars aligned to data-based needs.</p> <p>Data coaches or instructional data support available to new and struggling teachers.</p>	<p>All district data systems are interoperable and provide user-friendly, color-coded, concise one- or two-page reports.</p> <p>The system includes the longitudinal district, school, teacher and student academic, program, demographic, and perception data.</p> <p>Data system integrates resources: instructional materials, lesson plans, and assessment results linked to frameworks and curriculum guides.</p> <p>The system provides basic analytics, i.e., identifying “at-risk” populations and individual students based on district-specific historical data trends.</p> <p>Data literacy coaches are available to all leaders and teachers.</p>
<b>Implementation (School)</b>	<p>Longitudinal assessment, program, demographic, and perception data were collected and analyzed to determine possible cause(s) for district &amp; campus challenges and to set short/long-term goals.</p> <p>Interim/benchmark assessment data is collected and analyzed every 6, 8, or 9 weeks and used to develop remediation/enrichment plans and inform school-level decisions.</p> <p>Weekly collaboration discussions include a review of real-time data and progress indicators.</p> <p>School-level data meeting cycle includes a calendar of meetings, protocols, relevant data, and outcomes.</p> <p>Process for sharing data within collaborative teams.</p>	<p>Multiple data points, or categories of data, are analyzed to determine the correlation and possible root cause(s) of performance.</p> <p>Staff use data to design lesson plans, assessments, interventions, determine resources and monitor the effectiveness of current school-level strategies.</p> <p>Administrators and teachers participate in a cyclical process for sharing and acting on the district, school, grade, subject, and individual teacher assessment data (plan, do, assess, reflect).</p> <p>School-level process for using data to make staff, program, and resource allocation decisions.</p> <p>Process for sharing within the entire school.</p>	<p>Permanent data structures and processes in place: data teams, data coaches, time for analysis, technology, data retreats, and ongoing PD.</p> <p>Students and parents can access real-time and longitudinal data to determine personal goals, contribute to learning, and support parent conferences.</p> <p>School, subject area, grade-level, and specialized data reports are available and shared with all stakeholders.</p> <p>Data patterns that indicate progress or lack of are identified.</p> <p>Process for sharing data with all stakeholders.</p>

## Instructional Infrastructure District Design Frameworks Adapted from UVA\_PLE

**Common structured meeting time allows teams of teachers uninterrupted time to reflect on practice, develop expertise, share promising practices, plan rigorous instruction, analyze and discuss data, increase instructional efficiency, and ensure instructional equity. These meetings provide teachers and leaders an opportunity to work together to improve school-level practices, teaching, and learning opportunities through an ongoing review of data, to unpack curriculum and improve instructional planning and delivery.**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Foundational Execution</b>	<b>Intermediate Execution</b>	<b>Comprehensive Execution</b>
<p><b>Design (District)</b></p>	<p>Master schedules with time built-in (minimum 60 minutes once a week) for teachers to share promising practices, unpack standards, develop lesson plans, and create assessments.</p> <p>Core teachers organized into meaningful collaborative teams.</p> <p>Protocol to ensure meetings are facilitated and supported by the principal or designee.</p> <p>Protocols were created to ensure meetings have a clear purpose and measurable outcomes.</p> <p>Protocols for norms, agendas, and minutes.</p> <p>Collaboration calendar that includes dates and purpose of collaborative meetings.</p> <p>District and school training on the development of teams, roles, and collaborative practices.</p>	<p>Master schedules with built-in time (minimum 90 minutes at least once a week) for teachers to create and discuss exemplars, share effective instructional strategies, review student work samples, and plan differentiated instruction.</p> <p>Collaboration calendar aligned to district interim assessment cycle.</p> <p>Protocols to ensure meetings are co-facilitated by lead teachers and principal/designee.</p> <p>Protocols were created to ensure meetings are focused on improving teaching and learning through data-informed decision-making.</p> <p>PD calendar includes data-based PD opportunities for the whole school and individual teams based on need.</p>	<p>Master schedule with built-in time (minimum 90 uninterrupted minutes at least once a week) for ALL teachers that includes vertical and cross-curricular collaboration meeting times.</p> <p>Protocols to ensure meetings are co-facilitated by lead teachers and meeting participants.</p> <p>Protocols for teams to work collaboratively to assess the effectiveness of policies, programs, procedures, and instructional practices based on their impact on student learning.</p> <p>Collaboration and professional development calendars are individualized and fluid.</p> <p>System to allow highly effective teams to support fewer effective teams.</p>
<p><b>Implementation (School)</b></p>	<p>Longitudinal student assessment, program, perception, and demographic data were collected and analyzed by meeting participants.</p> <p>Teachers share and commit to implementing promising instructional and classroom management practices.</p> <p>Short and long-term Instructional Action Plans are created or embedded in daily and unit lesson plans.</p> <p>Teachers share implementation results of commitments – student work samples, exit tickets, formative assessments, and interim assessment data.</p> <p>Collaborative teams create plans for whole group reteach.</p> <p>Administrators and lead teachers co-determine meeting purposes and monitor commitments.</p>	<p>Meeting protocols require teachers to collaboratively analyze student learning by reviewing work samples, exit tickets, short cycle, formative, and interim assessments.</p> <p>Exemplars created, shared, and vetted by collaborative team members.</p> <p>Assessment data and student work evidence aligned to previous outcomes shared and analyzed by collaborative team members.</p> <p>Short and long-term SMART goals are set, revised, and continuously monitored.</p> <p>The focus of meetings includes strategies for differentiated instruction for small groups.</p> <p>Lead teachers and meeting participants co-determine meeting purpose and monitor commitments.</p>	<p>Meeting protocols require teachers to actively participate in vertical and cross-curricular teams to reflect on and adapt instruction and assessment to meet the needs of all students.</p> <p>Leadership works with collaborative teams to improve district and school-level systems, processes, and structures that impact student learning.</p> <p>Collaborative team members co-determine the purpose of meetings based on new learning and evidence-based needs.</p> <p>The focus of meetings includes strategies for individualized instruction.</p> <p>Team members design strategies for embedding reteaching and enrichment in tier I instructional planning and delivery strategies.</p>

## **DISTRICT CURRICULUM**

To support districts with developing their curriculum and increasing equity and access statewide, the NMPED created the New Mexico Instructional Scope (Nm Is). This resource ensures every teacher and student in the state of New Mexico has access to a foundational, guaranteed, viable, and equitable curriculum.

### **Nm Is is designed to:**

- Meet districts where they are, with tools to support district-wide horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment, and provide guidance on sequencing standards at the local level.
- Foster programmatic planning at the district and school level and provide a rich foundation for aligned, collaborative conversations about teaching and learning.
- Support teachers in their individual and collaborative instructional planning and in utilizing strategies, including formative classroom assessment, to guide all students in attaining grade-level proficiency or above.

### **Nm Is is used to:**

- Support lesson planning.
- Guide teams to discuss, plan, model, and reflect on practice.
- Scaffold planning and focused conversations with colleagues during professional learning community discussions, supporting the use of high-quality instruction that meets the needs of all learners.
- Consider how to address learning needs and where targeted scaffolds may be needed to assist students in accessing grade-level core instruction.
- Use side by side with high-quality instructional materials.
- Provide teaching support that contributes to equitable classroom structures and lesson planning.
- Assist in designing classroom learning environments that minimize barriers and optimize learning.
- Monitor students' progress on grade-appropriate assignments.

# Unpacking the New Mexico Content Standards

Nm Is provides districts with unpacked standards that have been broken down to clarify what the standard means and define student performance outcomes. There are also embedded formative assessments offered that align with clusters of literature and informational text standards. Below is an at-a-glance sample of the information included in each standard document and the embedded formative assessment tasks provided.



RL.3.1		
Anchor Standard: Key Ideas and Details <i>RL.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</i>	Strand and Anchor Standard	
	Grade: 3	CCSS Domain: Reading: Literature (RL)
Standard	Key Ideas and Details	Vertical Alignment
Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for answers.	Previous Grades: RL.2.1, RL.1.1, RL.K.1	Future Grades: RL.4.1, RL.5.1
Clarification Statement	Vocabulary for Teacher Development	
Students ask and answer questions to show they understand the text. They use specific textual evidence to support their answer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>explicit/explicitly:</b> stated clearly and directly, leaving no room for interpretation.</li> </ul>	
Students Who Demonstrate Understanding Can...	Essential Understandings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ask and answer questions referring explicitly to the text as the basis for answers.</li> </ul>		

ASSESSMENT GUIDE
<i>The resources provided in this Assessment Guides are meant to provide examples of formative assessments within instruction. They are not compiled for a quiz, test, or summative assessment outside of instruction.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constructed Response Assessment Task aligned to 3.1 &amp; 3.3                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of Text Complexity and Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness</li> <li>VABB Analysis with Example Questions and Exemplar Student Responses</li> <li>Example MLSS Universal Supports</li> </ul> </li> <li>Constructed Response Assessment Task aligned to 3.9</li> <li>Multiple Choice Assessment Items</li> </ul>

Grade	CCSS Domain	CCSS Strand
3	Reading: Literature (RL)	Key Ideas and Details
Sample Task #1 (Constructed Response)		
Read <i>The Sign Painter</i> by Allen Say		
How do we learn about the boy every time the author makes a point of saying, "The boy did not answer"?		
Exemplar Student Responses		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We learn that the boy is still growing into the person he wants to become. He stays sure of his answer or if he hasn't made up his mind. He does speak when he is sure when he shares that he loves painting.</li> </ul>		
RL.3.1	DOK	Blooms
RL.3.3	Level 2	Understand
Possible Aligned Language Objectives		Possible Misconceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will state a claim about why the author says, "the boy did not answer" and support their claim with evidence from the text (Argue-Writing- Expanding)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students may respond literally to explain why the boy does not answer (e.g., "he to say") without analyzing the meaning (e.g., "he is still growing to the person</li> </ul>
Evidence of Text Complexity and Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness		
<b>Text Summary and evidence of Complexity:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A boy comes into town hungry and looking for work and meets a sign painter who offers him a job painting billboards. The man and the boy travel the desert painting a woman and one word, Arrowstar, on each billboard. The reader learns of the temptation of safe choices and the uncertainties of following a personal dream.</li> <li><i>The Sign Painter</i> by Allen Say is worthy of students' time to read and also meets the expectations for text complexity at Grade 3. The Lexile level is 570 and it is a Caldecott winner.</li> </ul>		
<b>Evidence of Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who is represented in the text used to assess this cluster of standards? The man appears to be white and the boy appears to be of Asian descent, but their race/ethnicity is never explicitly mentioned in the text.</li> </ul>		

VABB Analysis	
<b>Validate</b> <i>The intentional and purposeful legitimization of the home culture and language of the student.</i>	<b>Affirm</b> <i>The intentional and purposeful effort to reverse the negative stereotypes, images, and representations of marginalized cultures and languages promoted by corporate mainstream.</i>
<p>RL.3.1</p> <p><b>VABB Analysis</b> →</p> <p>...does the author choose to refer to "the boy" and "the man"? How does this connect a reader to the story?</p> <p><b>ESR:</b> <i>The author wants the reader to see themselves in the characters. This allows the message of the text to connect to any reader.</i></p>	<p><b>Question:</b> The boy chooses to pursue his dreams and love of painting rather than stay with the man and have a steady job. Why is this a bold choice for the boy to make?</p> <p><b>ESR:</b> <i>It could be considered a bold choice because the boy is leaving a safe choice behind. But the boy could also find a job painting what he loves and still make money. He is taking a risk but it's still possible to find a job as a painter.</i></p>
<b>Layer 1: Universal Supports</b> <i>High-quality core instruction for all students</i>	
<p>In New Mexico we believe that all students deserve access to high-quality grade-level texts to <b>improve proficiency with reading</b> and comprehension as outlined in the New Mexico standards. These universal supports provide students to comprehend complex texts by providing access points and opportunities for deeper learning.</p> <p>1.) <u>Preteach</u> Tier 2 Vocabulary Words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tier 2 Vocabulary are words that are more likely to appear in text than speech. <u>Preteaching</u> these words before diving into a text allows students to better understand the text because their cognitive load can be focused more on comprehension. &lt;Link to Resource Guide on Vocabulary&gt;</li> <li>• Choose words that are <u>not</u> implicitly or explicitly defined within the text.</li> </ul> <p>2.) Annotate/Create Text-Dependent questions to push student thinking to think about themes and central ideas, knowledge of vocabulary, or syntax and structure following the steps outlined in this resource guide. &lt;Link to Resource Guide on TDCs.&gt;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Crafting and using text dependent questions throughout a complex text allows the reader to chunk the text to better focus on meaning. They also teach the reader how to think deeply about a text and use evidence from the text to support that thinking.</u></li> </ul>	
<p>← <b>MLSS Universal Supports</b></p>	

## Resources for Further Learning

New Mexico Instructional Scope resources can be found on the NMPED website using the following link:  
<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/curriculum-instruction/>

## DISTRICT ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are interconnected, and one cannot function well without the other. Ideally, the three components work in unison to produce high levels of student achievement. For example -

- **Curriculum** and standards answer the question, **"What do we teach?"**
- **Instruction** answers the question, **"How do we teach?"**
- **Assessment** answers the question, **"How well do we teach?"**

To fully understand **"How well do we teach?"** districts must have a comprehensive district assessment strategy that provides the necessary data to measure **instruction effectiveness and curriculum alignment**. To do this well, districts must have a balanced assessment strategy that:

- Aligns to the New Mexico Core Content Standards.
- Supports the district mission, core values, and philosophy of learning.
- Provides school leaders, teachers, students, and parents with valid student achievement information.
- Provides the data required to assess programs and make necessary improvements.
- Utilizes various assessment methods to determine the understandings, knowledge, and skills that students have acquired.

## Balanced Assessment Strategy

A balanced assessment strategy means districts must provide *ongoing* and varied opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding and reflect on their learning. Teachers must know what the student already knows, can do, and cannot do to design effective instruction for individual students. A balanced district assessment system can provide this information.

Balanced assessment strategies have multiple levels:

- At the district level, balance means having a continuum of assessment tools whose data correlate and measure all dimensions of learning. Assessments must provide information regarding district performance, school performance, and overall program effectiveness.
- At the school or grade level, balance means using multiple measures to gain a high-level view of the school, teacher, and student performance.
- At the classroom level, balance means using varied assessments that inform instructional groupings, identify interventions, monitor progress, determine a student's specific learning needs, and provide opportunities for students to self-assess and reflect on their learning.

## Designing a Balanced Assessment Strategy

Designing and implementing a balanced district assessment strategy takes time, input from all stakeholders, and continuous revisions. However, if done well, this instructional infrastructure component can provide the information required to make data-informed decisions, improve the district curriculum, inform instruction, and dramatically improve student outcomes. The following seven design elements should guide district leaders in developing or refining their district assessment strategy.

### 1. Purpose and Vision

- The district has developed a rationale for administering district assessments.
- The district has communicated rationale for administering district assessments, and staff and stakeholders fully understand and support using district assessments for progress monitoring.
- Staff and stakeholders are fully aware of all required assessments and understand the purpose of each.

### 2. Foundational Framework

- District curriculum is available and aligned to the state standards.
- The district has examined the curriculum for gaps, and all standards are included.
- Scope and sequence guides are available for each core content area.
- Essential knowledge and understandings have been identified.
- Pacing guides are available for each core content area.

### 3. Assessment Structures & Resources

- The district assessment team works with the curriculum team and all stakeholders to ensure the district assessment strategy is up to date, monitored, implemented with fidelity, and effective.
- The district assessment calendar is updated each year and is shared with schools for feedback.
- The district works with schools to ensure resources and time for assessment analysis are available.

- The district provides instructional materials and strategies aligned to district interims and state standards.
4. Assessment Development
    - Effective teachers, coaches, and administrators identified and provided time to work with district instructional staff to create common assessments.
    - Rigorous, aligned, and professionally created questions are used to develop district assessments.
    - Assessment developers consider universal design principles to address the needs of special populations.
    - When possible, teachers have an opportunity to review and vet assessments before administration.
    - Assessment results are transparent and owned by all stakeholders.
  5. Administration and Reporting
    - The district gives schools specific timelines and instructions for administering district assessments.
    - Assessments are scored, and results are returned to teachers within 48 hours.
    - Teachers and administrators have access to user-friendly item-analysis reports.
  6. Application and Intervention
    - Administrators and or designees conduct individual data meetings with teachers after each assessment.
    - Teachers create individual instructional action plans after each assessment.
    - Lesson plans include strategies to address instructional gaps identified in the teacher action plan.
  7. Professional Development
    - Administrators and teachers receive training on school-level assessment and reporting tools.
    - Administrators and teachers receive ongoing training on data-driven instruction, data analysis, delivering effective interventions, and the use of district instructional resources.
    - The district utilizes trend data from state assessment and district interims to identify district-wide, school level, and individual teacher professional development.

## Resources for Further Learning

Bambrick-Santoyo, Paul. *Driven by Data 2.0: A Practical Guide to Improve Instruction*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons. 2019.

NMPED Assessment Website

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/assessment-3/>

Using Multiple Measures & Formative Practice to Identify Learning Needs

[https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/NMPED\\_SupportDoc\\_FormativePracticeIdentifyLearningNeeds.pdf](https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/NMPED_SupportDoc_FormativePracticeIdentifyLearningNeeds.pdf)

## DISTRICT DATA SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

As district leaders, we cannot simply “feel good” about our principals and teachers; we must have data to prove that what they are doing is working. Data-informed decision-making is a critical component in every successful district. If district leaders want their principals to utilize data to make informed decisions, they must model this practice and provide the requisite data systems, user-friendly data reports, data meeting structures, and data literacy training to make this work possible. If principals and teachers in your district are not effectively using data to make informed decisions and improve student outcomes, ask yourself, “Have we provided the time, tools, resources, training, and data necessary to do this work well?” If your answer is “no,” the following pages may help you better understand how you can improve in this area. If your answer is a resounding “yes,” but you are still not pleased with your district’s data culture, you may want to look for the root cause by exploring other district support conditions included in this guide.

If you want to improve your district data systems and structures, the systems and structures below are a good starting point. Districts who have principals and teachers who consistently and effectively analyze and act on data:

- Have access to and utilize user-friendly data reports to conduct item and standards-level analyses on interim and summative assessment data.
- Use differentiated, real-time checks for understanding to ensure individual student progress during and after each lesson.
- Have school data system(s) that provide real-time, cross-sectional, longitudinal district, school, teacher, and student academic, program, demographic, and perception data.
- Use multiple data points, or categories of data (academic, demographic, program, perception), to determine the correlation and possible root cause(s) of student, teacher, and school performance.
- Use data from various assessments (balanced assessment strategy) to design and deliver differentiated learning experiences, assessments, enrichment opportunities, and interventions.
- Have access to a clear process for sharing and acting on school, grade, subject, and Individual teacher assessment data. (Data protocols)
- Have a clear process for assigning and monitoring students in data-based intervention/ enrichment programs.
- Provide students and parents access to real-time and longitudinal data that allows them to determine personal goals, contribute to individual learning plans, and participate in data-based parent conferences.
- Have school master schedules that allow teachers to participate in regularly scheduled collaboration meetings, focusing on improving instructional planning, delivery and assessment practices, and student performance outcomes using available data.
- Receive ongoing data literacy support and professional development.
- Have resources for acting on data: technology, intervention/enrichment programs, exemplar lesson plans, differentiation resources, etc., are available to teachers.
- Have access to data coaches.
- Conduct one-on-one or small group principal-teacher meetings to analyze and discuss student data.

If your district is just beginning this critical work, the first step to becoming a data-driven district is to identify and collect the correct data. Districts that collect and analyze assessment or academic data only look at 25% of the necessary data to make informed decisions. To get to the root cause of district and school performance challenges or teacher and student needs, district leaders must consider 100% of the data. This means collecting, organizing, and analyzing multiple data points from multiple data categories. The following table contains the various data that leaders and teachers should consider when making data-informed decisions.

## Categories of Data

### Assessment

- » Grades and G.P.A.
- » State Assessment Data
- » Diagnostic Assessments
- » Foundational Reading Assessments
- » Norm/Criterion Referenced Assessments
- » Career & College Readiness Assessments
- » District Interim Assessments
- » Short Cycle Assessments
- » Student Portfolios
- » Individual Teacher and Student Item-Level Analysis Results
- » Teacher Generated Tests/Quizzes

### Program and Processes

- » Regular, Honors, Advanced Placement, CTE Courses
- » Instructor – (tied to student scores)
- » Evaluations
- » Curriculum
- » Exceptional Education Services
- » ESL/ELL Services
- » Remediation/Intervention Courses
- » After School Tutoring or Extended Learning Programs
- » Supplemental School Programs

### Perception

- » State and District Ratings
- » Observations
- » Walkthroughs
- » Parent Surveys
- » Student Surveys
- » Teacher Surveys
- » News Articles
- » Media Coverage
- » School Rating Websites
- » Discipline Incidents

### Demographic

#### STUDENT

- » Attendance
- » Enrollment Dates
- » Drop-out Rates
- » Graduation Rates
- » Ethnicity
- » Gender
- » Disabilities
- » Economic Status
- » ESL/ELL
- » Grade Level
- » Work Habits/Conduct

#### STAFF

- » Number of staff
- » Years of experience
- » Absences
- » Gender
- » Ethnicity
- » Retirement projections
- » Types of certification
- » Student-teacher ratios
- » PD opportunities
- » Extracurricular & committees

#### SCHOOL

- » History
- » Safety/crime data
- » Turnover rate of teachers and staff
- » Community support
- » Programs offered

#### COMMUNITY

- » Location and history
- » Economic base
- » Population trends
- » Types of employers
- » Projections of growth
- » Community/business involvement
- » Support agencies

## Asking the Right Questions: Using Multiple Categories of Data

Once the appropriate data is collected and organized in a user-friendly data management system, school leaders must provide their teachers with the support and data literacy training required to analyze the data and make informed decisions. This begins by teaching them how to ask the right questions using data from multiple categories. Below are a few data analysis questions using one, two, three, and four data types. Longitudinal data, or data over time, should always be considered when making data-informed decisions.

### One category

- What is the current **attendance** rate? (demographic)
- What is the student **proficiency rate** in mathematics on the state test? (academic)
- What are parent, student, or staff **opinions** of the learning environment? (perception)
- How many students are enrolled in **remediation** programs? (program)

### One category – longitudinal (Should be considered with all categories when possible)

- Is the **attendance** rate improving over **time**? (demographic/longitudinal)
- Have student **scores on standardized tests** changed during the past three years? (academic/longitudinal)
- How have parent, student, and teacher **perceptions** of the learning environment changed over the last **three years**? (perception/longitudinal)
- Has student enrollment in **remediation** programs declined in the last three years? (program/longitudinal)

### Two Categories

- Does high **absenteeism** cause lower **grades**? (demographic/academic)
- Do students with **positive attitudes** score higher on **interims**? (perception/academic)
- Do **remediation** programs increase student achievement on **standardized achievement tests**? (program/academic)
- Do **ELL** students perform lower than **non-ELL** students on district **interims**? (demographic/academic)

### Three Categories

- Do **ELL** students make greater growth on **state assessments** when taught by specific teachers? (demographic/academic/program)
- Do different **ethnicities perceive** the learning environment differently, and do they score differently on **standardized achievement tests** consistent with these perceptions? (demographic/perception/academic)
- Which **reading program** is making the greatest impact on **achievement** for **at-risk students**? (program/academic/demographic)

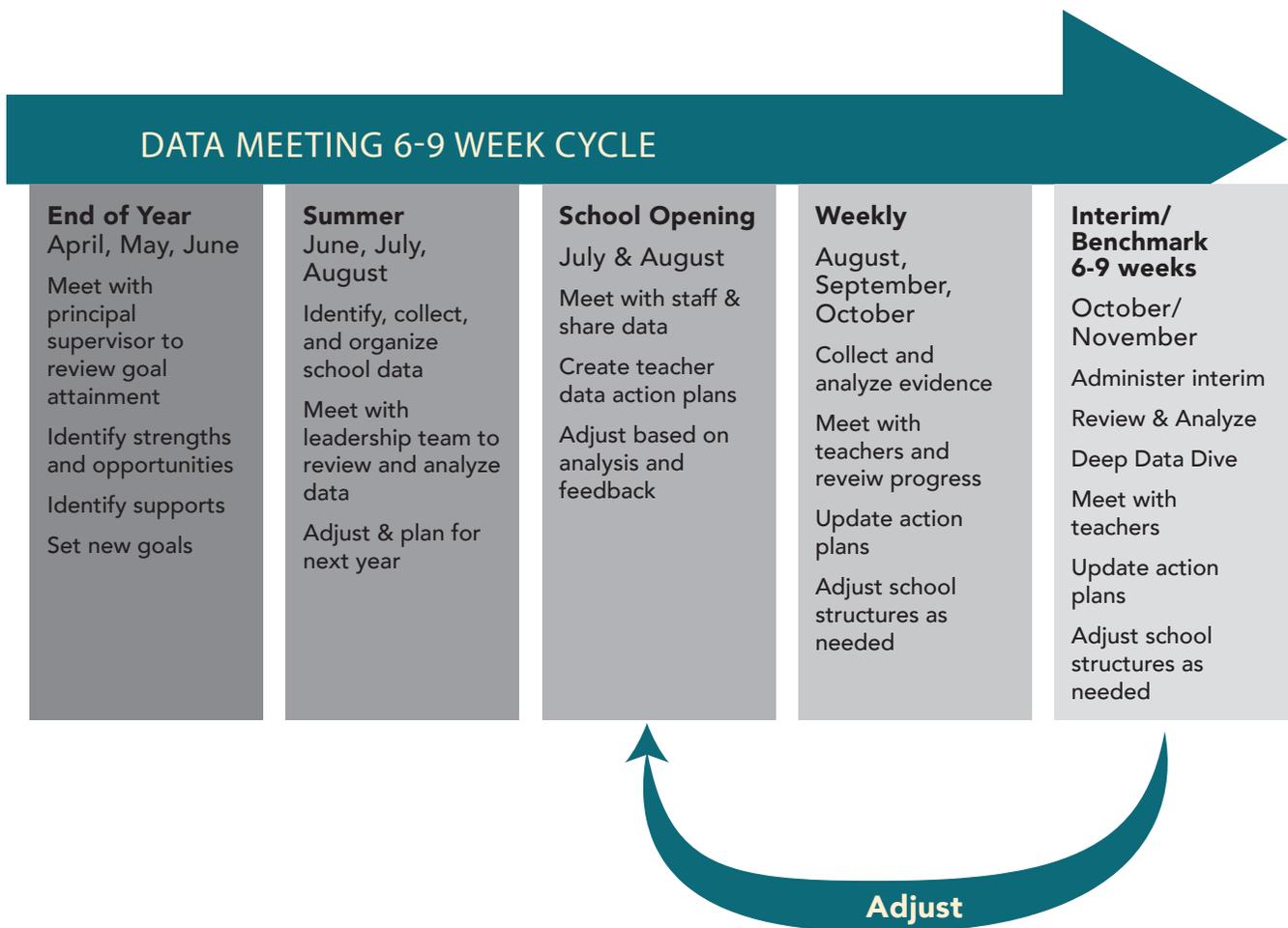
### Four Categories

- Are there differences in **interim achievement** scores for **5th-grade girls and boys** positively perceive their **teacher**? (academic/demographic/perception/program)
- Did **exceptional education students** in **inclusion classes**, with a **positive perception** of their school, make greater growth gains than their peers with **positive perceptions** in **self-contained classes** on **statewide assessments**? (demographic/program/perception/academic)

## District Data Cycle

Below is a sample 6–9-week data cycle implemented by a data-driven school district. Each rectangle in the cycle represents a data meeting conducted in schools in the district during the time indicated. If you examine each meeting, you will find a specific audience, purpose, and specific outcome. The meetings are cyclical, meaning the entire cycle of meetings happens every 6-9 weeks. Embedded in the 6–9-week cycle is a shorter, weekly cycle between the opening of school in July and August and the first six to nine week district interim or benchmark assessment. In August, September, and October, these short-cycle weekly meetings represent school-level collaboration or PLC meetings where teachers work together to develop their instructional skills and support students.

In the following section, District Collaboration Structures, we will explore the Five Principles of Collaboration to understand better how you can design and facilitate these meetings and improve your leaders' and teachers' data-informed decision-making processes.



## Resources for Further Learning

Kathryn Parker Boudett, Elizabeth A. City, Richard J. Murnane. *Data Wise: A Step-By-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Education Press. 2013.

American Association of School Administrators (AASA). Using Data to Improve Schools, What's Working [https://aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Policy\\_and\\_Advocacy/files/UsingDataToImproveSchools.pdf](https://aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Policy_and_Advocacy/files/UsingDataToImproveSchools.pdf)

## DISTRICT COLLABORATION STRUCTURES

Numerous research studies have determined that teachers who actively participate in professional learning communities have higher levels of student engagement and outperform teachers who do not have access to or participate in this school transformation process Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008). If district leaders want their school leaders and teachers to engage in and benefit from collaborative practices, they must embrace the Principle of Reciprocal Accountability. This principle asserts that district leaders must –

- Hold principals accountable for leading the collaborative process in their schools.
- Hold themselves accountable for providing principals with the training, resources, and support necessary to do the work.

Let's examine a few of the district's reciprocal accountability actions identified by Marzano and Dufour in their book, *Leaders of Learning: How District, School, and Classroom Leaders Improve Student Achievement*, 2011.

- Clarify and communicate the specific conditions the district expects principals to create in their schools and build a common vocabulary regarding essential terms in the collaboration process.
- Provide school leaders with collaboration training, have them visit schools with high functioning collaboration teams, and provide them with articles and books on the process.
- Facilitate principal meetings that are collaborative and designed to identify and resolve implementation challenges. Use these meetings to rehearse and role-play what principals are called upon to do back in their buildings. For example, before asking teams to establish a SMART goal, a principals' meeting would be devoted to helping principals articulate a rationale for SMART goals; gather the tools, templates, and resources they could use to help their teams complete this task; and rehearse a crucial conversation with a team that balks at establishing SMART goals.
- Monitor the implementation process and help principals identify and address challenges in their schools by requiring principals to explain, in a public forum, the steps they have taken to move the collaboration process forward.
- Ask each principal to present evidence to their colleagues and the central office regarding how their school has addressed the specific conditions expected to be evident in all schools. For example, each principal explains how teachers in their school have been organized into teams, how they are given time to collaborate, how leadership monitors the work of the teams, how teams are using the results of common formative assessments, and how the school is providing for systematic intervention and enrichment. Principals are also asked to provide artifacts that demonstrate the effectiveness of their teams in such tasks as creating norms, establishing a guaranteed curriculum, and developing common assessments.
- Create a process to have principals present their colleagues and the central office staff with a comprehensive analysis of the evidence of student achievement over three years. Principals are then expected to work collaboratively with their colleagues to learn from each other's successes and help resolve one another's difficulties. This process, when done well, provides the combination of pressure and support that builds capacity. The process helps foster collaboration, collective responsibility, a results orientation, and a culture of accountability by capitalizing on the subtle peer pressure that

accompanies presenting to one's peers and making evidence of student learning transparent. And, very importantly, it represents a powerful tool for increasing a principal's effectiveness in leading a PLC because it develops a stronger sense of self-efficacy among principals (Louis et al., 2010).

- Limit initiatives. In too many districts, the adage "What gets monitored gets done" has been misinterpreted as, "The more programs we monitor, the more that will get done." As a result, educators suffer from what Doug Reeves (2011) has called "initiative fatigue" as they grapple with the multitude of fragmented, disconnected, short-term projects that sap their energy. Effective districts identify a few key priorities and then pursue them relentlessly (Fullan, 2010).

Marzano and Dufour suggest that districts who wish to pursue this work complete a district communications audit using the following list of questions.

1. What systems have been put in place in our district to ensure priorities are addressed in each school?
  - Do we have systems for clarifying what students must learn?
  - Do we have systems for monitoring student learning?
  - Do we have systems for responding when students have difficulty?
  - Do we have systems for enriching and extending learning for proficient students?
  - Do we have systems for monitoring and supporting teams?
  - Do we have systems for providing each teacher and team with the timely information essential to continuous improvement?
  - Do we have systems to build the capacity of principals to lead the PLC process?
2. What do we monitor in our district?
  - How do we monitor student learning?
  - How do we monitor the work and the effectiveness of our collaborative teams?
  - How do we monitor the work and effectiveness of our building administrators?
  - How do we monitor each school's progress on the PLC journey?
  - How do we monitor the work and the effectiveness of the central office?
  - How do we monitor the work and effectiveness of the board of education?
3. What questions do we ask in our district?
  - What questions are we asking people to resolve through collective inquiry?
  - What questions drive the work of individuals and teams throughout our organizations?
  - What questions drive the work of our administrative meetings?
  - What questions drive the work of the board of education?
4. How do we allocate resources (time, money, people) in our district?
  - How do we provide time for intervention and enrichment for our students?

- How do we provide time for our collaborative teams to engage in collective inquiry?
  - Are we using our financial and human resources most effectively?
  - What are high-time/low-leverage activities that we should discontinue because they are not contributing to our goals?
5. What do we celebrate in our district?
- What process is in place to help identify schools and teams that are improving?
  - How do we acknowledge and celebrate improvement?
  - Who are the heroes in our district?
6. What are we willing to confront in our district?
- Have we recognized that confronting behavior inconsistent with our district goals and priorities is essential to our credibility?
  - Have we recognized that confronting resistance is essential to the clarity of our communication?
  - Have we been willing to address the problem of principals or staff members who continue to resist this initiative?
7. What do we model in our district?
- What evidence shows that the central office members are committed to and focused on high levels of learning for all students?
  - What evidence demonstrates that we work together collaboratively?
  - How do members of the central office gather and use evidence of results to inform and improve our practice?
  - Have we aligned district practices with district priorities and been willing to change those practices that do not reflect our priorities?

In the UVA-PLE Collaboration District Design Document, district leaders are encouraged to work with schools to provide the following systems, tools, and resources that support the effective implementation of collaboration structures in their schools. These are foundational systems and structures schools require to do this work effectively. If districts are not at least providing these, we strongly recommend beginning your work here.

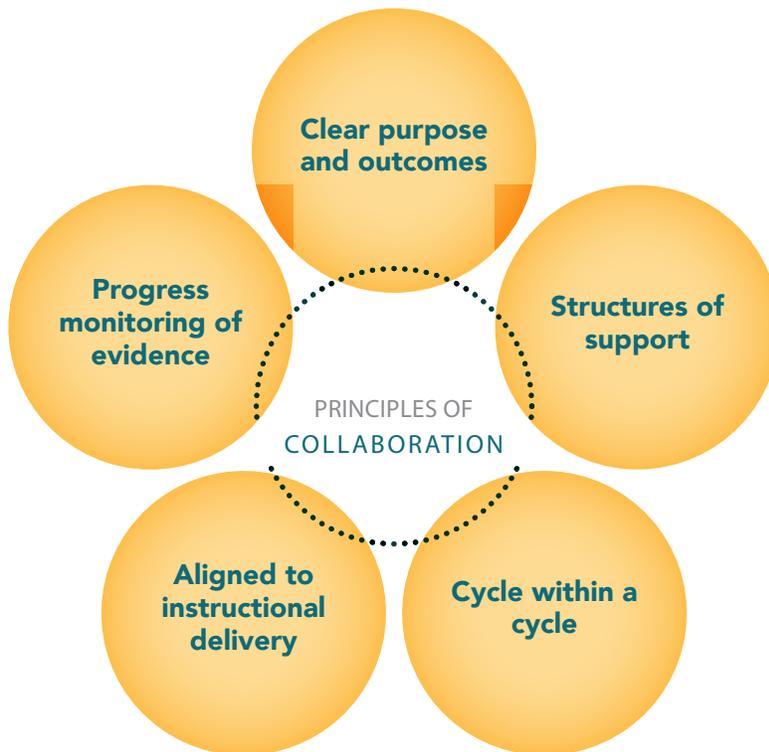
- School master schedules with time built-in (minimum 60 minutes once a week, ideally 90 minutes once a week) for teacher collaboration.
- Teachers organized into meaningful collaborative teams.
- Protocols to ensure meetings are facilitated and supported by the principal or trained designee.
- Protocols to ensure meetings have a clear purpose and measurable outcomes aligned to student performance.

- Protocols for creating norms, agendas, and minutes aligned to the purpose and outcomes of meetings.
- The collaboration calendar includes dates, expected purposes, and outcomes of collaborative meetings aligned to the district assessment cycle.
- District and school professional development on the development of teams, roles, and collaborative practices.

As the district works towards creating or improving their collaboration structures, district and school leaders can utilize the Principles of Collaboration guide located on the following page to assess their schools' collaboration structures. The Principles of Collaboration guide was not designed to be used in only one meeting. Instead, it is intended to support the development of a complete collaboration cycle in which a team works together to identify a purpose and outcome, develops a plan to achieve the outcome, implements the plan, and then shares challenges and celebrates successes. The complete process would generally require three to six meetings to accomplish.

# Five Principles of Collaboration

Developed by the UVA-PLE



## Principle #1

Meetings have a clear purpose and measurable outcomes for improving student achievement.

- Purpose and outcomes are aligned to school-level priorities and shared before meeting.
- The purpose is identified using evidenced-based metrics.
- Purpose supports increased student achievement.
- Purpose requires or is improved through collaboration.
- Outcomes can be measured and monitored.

## Principle #2

Structures are in place to support collaboration to improve student achievement.

- The master schedule includes 60-90 minutes of uninterrupted time.
- Meaningful teaming with clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Norms developed by the team and consistently observed.
- Agendas are created and shared before meetings.
- Meeting protocols created and utilized consistently.
- Appropriate materials available (work samples, data, curriculum guides, assessment banks, etc.)
- A knowledgeable facilitator or administrator present

### **Principle #3**

- Collaborative data discussions follow a cyclical process of progress monitoring through quantitative and qualitative analysis.
- The cycle is aligned to a comprehensive assessment strategy.
- The cycle begins and ends with a deep data review and the creation of action plans.
- Purpose and outcomes of previous and subsequent meetings aligned to present meeting.
- Evidence of previous outcomes was shared and discussed.
- Meetings include actionable next steps and commitments that can be monitored.

### **Principle #4**

Evidence of collaboration meeting discussions is evident in instructional planning, delivery, and assessment.

- Instructional action plans are developed after each interim to accelerate and enrich instruction, and evidence of implementation is available during walkthroughs and observations.
- Evidence of the effectiveness of implementation is maintained by collecting and reviewing authentic student work and other relevant data.
- Instructional strategies are discussed and embedded in lesson plans.
- Instructional delivery and student achievement challenges are discussed and addressed.
- Outcomes have the opportunity to improve instructional delivery.

### **Principle #5**

The collaboration cycle includes a system for progress monitoring the effectiveness of outcomes.

- Walk-throughs, teacher observations, professional development, and interventions are directly aligned to the purpose and outcomes of collaborative discussions.
- The administration monitors implementation evidence, evaluates the collaborative team for effectiveness, and acceleration/enrichment is redesigned when necessary.
- There is clear evidence of implementation and effectiveness of actions available during meetings.
- Short-term actions aligned to long-term goals are identified, implemented, and monitored.
- The next steps are documented and shared with the administration or meeting facilitator.

## **Resources for Further Learning**

DuFour, R., & Marzano, R. J. (2011). *Leaders of learning: How district, school, and classroom leaders improve student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Louis, K., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K., & Anderson, S. (2010). *Learning from leadership: Investigating the links to improved student achievement*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

DuFour, Richard. *Leaders of Learning: How District, School, and Classroom Leaders Improve Student Achievement* (p. 218). Solution Tree Press. Kindle Edition.

Reeves, D. (2011). *Finding your leadership focus: Transforming professional learning into student results, K–12*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Vescio, V., Ross, D., & Adams, A. (2008). A review of research on the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practice and student learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(1), 80–91.

## **OBSERVATION, FEEDBACK, & COACHING CYCLES (OFCC)**

Throughout numerous interviews with district and school leaders across New Mexico, OFCC was referenced by almost every interviewee. In some districts, the interviewees stated their OFCC process was primarily responsible for teacher effectiveness and student performance increases. Yet, in other districts, leaders were asking for additional support in this area. These leaders said their district had no clear process, support, or consistent expectations for OFCC, and as a leader, this made their job more difficult and frequently frustrating.

Effective OFCC is a professional development process that encourages teachers to analyze, critique, practice, reflect and revise their instructional practices. Additionally, school leaders and coaches who provide this support have the opportunity to identify common challenges that may indicate deficiencies or misalignment within the district or school instructional infrastructure systems.

Recognizing the value of this district and school transformation process, the Priority Schools Bureau has provided district leaders, school leaders, and teachers with numerous professional development opportunities, resources, and support to build their observation, feedback, and coaching skills. Below is a list of just a few of the most recent resources PSB has provided. Any of these would serve as a good starting point for improving your district and school OFCC systems.

1. Teach Like a Champion 2.0, Doug Lemov
2. Teach Like a Champion 2.0 Field Guide, Doug Lemoz
3. PSB Principal Coaching Guide, Priority Schools Bureau
4. Leverage Leadership 2.0, Paul Bambrick Santoyo
5. Get Better Faster, Paul Bambrick Santoyo
6. Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools, Glenn Singleton, and Curtis Linton
7. Unconscious Bias in Schools, Tracey Benson, and Sarah Fiarman
8. Culturally Responsive Teaching of the Brain, Zaretta Hammond

Another resource available for districts and schools in New Mexico is the Elevate NM Observation Tool and Scoring Rubric. This resource is based on the model developed by Charlotte Danielson and adapted to meet New Mexico students' unique cultural and linguistic needs.

### **Supporting Schools in Improving Observation, Feedback, Coaching**

As districts work towards improving their overall OFCC, the following information should be used to guide your team's improvement efforts. As a reminder, the Principle of Reciprocal Accountability always applies. Meaning, if district leaders are going to hold principals accountable, then those leaders have an equal responsibility to ensure principals have the support, resources, and capacity to do what they are expected to do.

As you read the following few pages, ask yourself, "How is my district supporting the principal in these areas?" "Do we need to do more?" "What is already in place to support this work?" "What are the barriers?" "How can we get better as a district when supporting our schools in this work?"

## **Launching Your Observation, Feedback, and Coaching Cycle**

While OFCCs are more informal than observations conducted in the annual evaluation system, they require strategic timing, intentional decision-making, and thorough documentation. Before schools begin their coaching cycles, they should consider these three foundational aspects.

1. The differentiated levels of support each teacher will receive.
2. The roles and responsibilities of the instructional leadership team throughout the process.
3. The communication strategy for articulating the purpose and process of OFCCs.

## **Differentiated levels of support for teachers**

Like the standard practice of differentiating support for students by tiering them based on academic and behavioral learning needs, we can do the same for teachers based on their professional learning needs. When considering the traditional Response to Intervention (RTI) triangle, 80% of our teachers should make expected progress on professional growth goals from the tier one levels of support the system offers them. Tier one support may include but is not limited to teacher certification programs, annual teacher evaluation, schoolwide professional learning opportunities, and participating in PLCs. Approximately 15% of our teachers will likely need tier two additional support or specific professional learning opportunities related to their content or pedagogical gaps. The few teachers who move into tier three will require more consistent coaching support, perhaps even weekly.

When we implement an effective OFCC, we should include coaching cycles into our tiered supports. Regardless of their performance, all teachers should be allowed the tailored support of coaching cycles. A general guideline is that coaching cycles happen for all teachers in tier one every 4-6 weeks. Teachers in tier two should receive the professional growth support of OFCCs more frequently than their tier-one colleagues. Frequency is based on their need and the capacity of the instructional leadership team, ideally every 2-3 weeks. When a teacher requires tier three support, the demand and purpose of observation and feedback coaching cycles typically intensify. At this point, the school leader may need additional guidance and support from district leadership.

## **Identify roles and responsibilities of the instructional leadership team**

Building a team with shared purpose and practice is critical to achieving high outcomes and supporting the system's sustainability. Regardless of the number of members in the school's instructional leadership team, roles and responsibilities must be clear from the launch of the OFCC. Standard practices among team members are critical as you collectively support teachers to improve their practice.

## **Clearly articulate the purpose and process of coaching cycles**

The purpose of OFCCs is, as Tim Gallwey, formerly a nationally ranked tennis player, suggests, is to unlock the potential of our teachers, maximize their performance, and help them learn. OFCCs can be the most effective form of professional learning as they are differentiated to meet the needs of each teacher. As school leaders launch their OFCCs, principals should explain to teachers that coaching cycles help them refine their practice through an iterative cycle of observation, feedback, and follow-up observation. Some key points to share:

- The observation lends the teacher a second set of "eyes" to see what they may be unable to notice from their vantage point at the front of the room.
- The immediate feedback session allows the coach (principal, assistant principal, instructional

coach, performance coach, etc.) and teacher to collaboratively discuss the data collected, key instructional moves, students' learning outcomes, and any slight adjustments if necessary.

- The follow-up observation supports the teacher in implementing adjustments and helps determine the impact on student learning.

Once the team determines and articulates a clear, common purpose and process, you can begin implementation. This starts with team calibration, ensuring all participants' "noticings" align. Calibration for OFCCs is not as extensive as annual teacher evaluation because there is no rating or formal assessment. Calibration in this context is about how the team members are looking for and seeing the declared instructional priorities and choosing the high-leverage action steps to discuss with the teacher in feedback sessions. Instructional team members can provide insight during calibration sessions based on their instructional strengths and expertise. As teacher practices improve over time, influenced by powerful coaching cycles, the instructional leadership team will need to re-calibrate.

## The Observation Cycle

As district leaders, it is critical to support school leaders in creating an OFCC system that maximizes the time and energy an instructional leader spends observing and planning feedback. Below are some steps to create an effective system before, during, and after the observation.

### Before the observation

- **Weekly Schedule**

Assist principals with creating a weekly schedule that helps with time management, prioritizes time for observations and feedback sessions, and ensures teachers are provided with adequate support. Bambrick-Santoyo suggests that instructional leaders intentionally schedule the feedback sessions with teachers in advance, leaving the observations unscheduled.

Regardless of the strategy for prioritizing observation and feedback sessions, it is best if teachers do not know when they will be observed. It is not helpful to see a choreographed version of a lesson. OFCCs have more impact when the instructional leader sees authentic planning and delivery and genuine teacher and student behavior.

- **Focus the Intention of Observation**

In general, OFCC supports teachers with implementing learning from their PD and collaboration meetings — all related to the instructional priorities articulated in the NM DASH. District leaders should ensure principals and school leaders understand what these priorities look like, sound like, and their intended impact on student learning.

- **Feedback from the initial OFCC session should be revisited in the follow-up observation.**

Before entering the room, principals should review the action step co-identified with the teacher to prime their attention for evidence of implementation. Threading each OFCC with the previous OFCC enables teachers to be accountable for progress and growth in their practice. This consistency also strengthens the coaching relationship.

- **Vary and Track Observation Times**

The day of the week, the time of the day, the class period, and the content area can shape how a lesson unfolds in various ways. A coach visiting a third-grade class every Friday during small group instruction ends up with a myopic view of that teacher's practice and content knowledge. If the purpose of the OFCCs is to garner a comprehensive

view of teacher practice, the day, time, and content for observations should vary. On the other hand, based on a school's NM DASH, the instructional team may decide that literacy instruction is their focus and thus schedule observations during that time.

- **Identify the Vantage Point for Focus Student Group(s)**

Often, educators who have experience doing observations have trained themselves to have a keen eye on everything the teacher does and says. One of the main themes of Bambrick-Santoyo's work is that student output relays a stronger message of the level of student learning. Therefore, as leaders enter the classroom, they should be clear about which student(s) or student group(s) require observational attention. Ideally, this focus should be informed by analyzing the data in NM DASH.

## **During the observation**

- **Low-Inference Data**

The skill of taking observational data can be challenging for principals initially, mainly when they are focused on low-inference data. In their chapter titled "Learning to See, Unlearning to Judge," the authors of "Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning" (City, 2008) describe taking objective data absent evaluation and judgment. This does not mean principals should only take quantitative data, such as tallying opportunities to respond or tracking the number of minutes a transition takes. Qualitative data is just as important, perhaps more so, depending on the school's instructional priorities provided principals script or record information without simultaneously making inferences or determining value. As the instructional leadership team calibrates look-fors, they can support each other in minimizing assumptions unconsciously embedded in the qualitative data.

- **Student-Facing Data**

As previously mentioned, some educators have experience conducting observations that focus all of their attention on the teacher's actions and words. While an instructional leader refines their practice of OFCCs, it will be necessary to also pay attention to the actions and words of students—this is where the actual proof of learning exists. One outcome of an effective observation is to notice the cause-and-effect relationship between how the teacher executes a lesson and the evidence of student learning. For example, based on the school's NM DASH, a teacher may craft high-level questions to increase students' cognitive engagement. While observing, the instructional leader scripts the teacher's questions but does not record student responses. Without student response documentation, it would be challenging to determine how the high-level questions resulted in the high cognitive engagement of the students. Additionally, to obtain quality student-facing data, the instructional leader should position themselves strategically in the room—usually in the front corner—and get comfortable moving around the room to examine student work. Taking pictures of student work can often prove valuable later in feedback sessions.

- **Resources at Hand**

Regardless of when instruction is observed, the instructional leader will want to ensure the necessary resources to understand the lesson's expectations. A strong instructional leader does not enter an observation without their state's core standards. Depending on the leader's instructional priorities, they may also need the teacher's scope and sequence, tools/strategies from PD, collaborative notes from the PLC, or the teacher's daily lesson plan. During the observation, referencing such informational documents can clarify what the leader is hearing and seeing and what they are not.

## After the observation

- **Warm and Cool Highlights of Instruction**

Ideally, an instructional leader would go straight from observing a classroom to a quiet space to plan their feedback session thoughtfully. However, the conflicting demands of the job often do not permit such a luxury. A leader may need to do three observations back-to-back before planning any feedback, or they may be immediately pulled from one responsibility to another, requiring them to give feedback the following day. This reality demands recording observation data. Before leaving the classroom, the leader can quickly review the data they have recorded and highlight or list two or three “warm” points of feedback—what the teacher or students did effectively. This will be helpful later when they plan the specific praise for the feedback session. Conversely, they can note two or three points of “cool” feedback, concerns, or improvements that may be helpful to keep in mind when planning feedback.

- **Audience for Feedback**

As mentioned earlier, prioritizing time to do OFCCs can be challenging. Therefore, leaders should strive for efficiency without sacrificing effectiveness. With this way of thinking, the leader must consider whether feedback from the observation(s) should be delivered separately to individual teachers or simultaneously to a team. General practice is individual teacher feedback sessions because the discussion is directly related to classroom observations. However, on rare occasions, the leader may notice a pattern emerge after observing multiple classrooms, and the needed improvement is linked directly to collaborative work done in PLCs. Then, it would be advantageous and efficient to provide feedback to the team all at once. For example, after observing the instruction of all three English Language Arts teachers, the leader notices that the learning targets for the day are vague. Only 17% can clearly describe the target, when students are asked about learning expectations. Because learning targets are part of the collaborative planning process, the leader decides to conduct the feedback session with the whole team during their PLC. Distinguishing the context for when feedback best suits an entire team will be developed over time.

- **Plan the Feedback Session**

Just as we would never want our teachers to deliver an unplanned lesson, neither should an instructional leader spontaneously conduct a feedback session. This is the leader’s opportunity to provide a quality professional learning experience with each teacher, and the leader must make the most of it. In educational coaching, there are various styles, such as “The Art of Coaching” by Elena Aguilar or “Instructional Coaching” by Jim Knight. In the original edition of “Leverage Leadership,” Paul Bambrick-Santoyo describes a protocol for feedback sessions called “Six Steps for Effective Feedback: Leading Post-Observation Face-to-Face Meetings.” In the 2.0 edition, the protocol evolves into “See It, Name It, Do It,” which aligns with similar protocols for data meetings, Instructional Teacher Action Plan (ITAP), review meetings, and other leadership discussions about improving student planning.

The final step of the OFCC is to track key data points. Each instructional leader should retain their observational data to be analyzed when planning feedback and referenced during the feedback session. It may also prove valuable in team meetings when identifying patterns that guide revisions to NM DASH. Ideally, the instructional leadership team will concisely collect the following:

- Name of coach
- Name of teacher

- Date of observation/feedback sessions
- Action steps: How the teacher will improve
- Evidence of implementation: Evidence of action step implementation observed in follow-up observation

## Resources for Further Learning

Aguilar, Elena, *The Art of Coaching. Effective Strategies for School Transformation*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons; 2013

Bambrick-Santoyo, Paul. *Driven by Data 2.0: A Practical Guide to Improve Instruction*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons; 2019.

Bambrick-Santoyo P. *Get Better Faster: A 90-Day Plan for Coaching New Teachers*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc; 2016.

Bambrick-Santoyo, P. *Leverage Leadership 2.0: A Practical Guide to Building Exceptional Schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; 2018.

Elevate NM: <http://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/educator-growth-development/elevatenm/>

Hammond, Zaretta, and Yvette Jackson. *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. 2015.

Knight, J. *Instructional Coaching. A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA; NSDC, 2007.

Lemov, D. *Teach Like a Champion 2.0: 62 Techniques That Put Students on the Path to College*. San Francisco, CA; Jossey-Bass, 2015.

Lemov, Doug. *Teach Like a Champion Field Guide*, Hoboken, NJ; Jossey-Bass, 2011.

NMDASH Resource Library: <https://dashlibrary.ped.state.nm.us/>

## THE SEVEN LEVERS AND DISTRICT SUPPORT EXPECTATIONS

The seven principles, or “levers,” identified in Paul Bambrick-Santoyo’s book *Leverage Leadership* and *Leverage Leadership 2.0*, are foundational components embedded in the Priority Schools Bureau support and programming. In his writings, Bambrick-Santoyo describes how the Seven Levers of School Leadership can create transformational growth and increase school leader learning by showing leaders what to do, how to do it, and when to do it.

To support school leaders with the implementation of the Seven Levers, district leaders should:

- Become familiar with the Seven Levers and what they look like in action when done well.
- Provide the requisite support and foundational structures required to address each lever. (Comprehensive curriculum, aligned assessments, data systems, collaboration structures, observation/feedback structures, vision alignment, professional development, etc.)
- Provide coaching support for each lever’s implementation - What to do, how to do it, and when to do it.
- Support School Leaders with identifying desired outcomes, setting short- and long-term goals, identifying actions to achieve those goals, and holding them accountable for reaching their self-identified goals.

The following tables include a brief description of each lever, essential leadership competencies for implementation, key indicators to identify the root cause, and suggestions for how district leaders can support schools with improving the application of the lever.

## LEVER 1- DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTION (INSTRUCTIONAL LEVER)

### **Why it Matters:**

Data-Driven Instruction (DDI) is a systemic approach to improving instruction and student achievement. DDI is one of two “super-levers” - the second being Student Culture. Bambrick has identified these two levers as super-levers; without articulating goals in each area reinforced by feedback on performance, schools have not achieved transformational growth. At its core, DDI is about knowing precisely what our students need and ensuring our leaders and teachers address these needs. It is about shifting our daily focus from “Did we teach it?” to “Did they learn it?” (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2018)

### **Essential Leadership Competencies to Develop:**

- Holding People Accountable for Student Performance
- Analytical Thinking
- Commitment to Student Learning
- Focus on Sustainable Results

### **Key Indicators:**

- Assessment calendars are developed and shared with the schools to include the assessment window and data-meeting timelines.
- Essential standards are assessed and reflected upon weekly to identify student successes and misconceptions.
- Student work is reviewed and scored aligned to developed student exemplars.
- Professional development is provided on data analysis and data meetings.
- Reteaching is completed per teacher-developed action plans.

### **Required District Support:**

When addressing this lever, district leaders must support principals with building a data-driven culture that focuses on setting realistic and challenging performance goals and developing specific data-based action plans to achieve these goals. District support staff should work with principals to ensure teachers are provided high-quality instructional coaching, data literacy training, effective data meeting structures and facilitation, and assessments aligned to a comprehensive curriculum. Leaders must also ensure principals are adept at leading teachers in creating exemplars of student work, backward planning, examining student work against exemplars, and creating action plans to address student achievement gaps.

## LEVER 2- INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING (INSTRUCTIONAL LEVER)

### **Why it Matters:**

Data-Driven Instruction identifies the strengths, gaps, and needs of students. Instructional planning is the step-by-step process leaders and teachers utilize to address those gaps and ensure essential learning. Lesson plans are the teacher's road map of what students need to learn and their strategy for ensuring students achieve their goals. By focusing on backward planning, teachers can learn to study the standards, plan, create exemplar student work, identify Indicators based on student work and assessment items, and then plan a lesson with the appropriate rigor.

### **Essential Leadership Competencies to Develop:**

- Commitment to Student Learning
- Holding People Accountable for Student Performance
- Conceptual Thinking
- Focus on Sustainable Results

### **Key Indicators:**

- Comprehensive curriculum and aligned assessments developed by district and provided to schools.
- Lesson planning template or cycle in place.
- Student work, assessment exemplars, and rubrics are available to leaders and teachers.
- Systems for monitoring in place.
- Backward planning process that includes unit and lesson planning in place.

### **Required District Support:**

District support staff should improve the school leader's instructional leadership skills and ability to support, facilitate, and guide teachers through a backward planning process. Requisite foundational elements for effective instructional planning include time to plan, a comprehensive curriculum, an aligned assessment, a framework for lesson planning, lesson planning template, exemplars or rubrics that demonstrate mastery, and a system for monitoring lesson plans and the delivery of instruction aligned to those plans. The absence of these foundational components could cause the school leaders to mistakenly identify poor tier-one instruction as a school-level challenge.

## LEVER 3- OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK (INSTRUCTIONAL LEVER)

### **Why it Matters:**

Creating a robust system for observation and feedback is a critical step towards ensuring learning opportunities are equitable, engaging, and aligned to the curriculum. Lessons are well-planned and delivered at the appropriate level of rigor, and teachers utilize effective instructional strategies. Ensuring teachers have established the classroom routines and effective management procedures outlined in lever two (Instructional Planning) could also be addressed in this lever. As with data meetings, schools need to have a cycle of observation and feedback connected to lesson planning, high-leverage action steps, and student data.

### **Essential Leadership Competencies to Develop:**

- Commitment to Student Learning
- Holding People Accountable for Student Performance
- Analytical Thinking
- Impact and Influence
- Conceptual Thinking

### **Key Indicators:**

- Observation schedule in place.
- Process for collecting and analyzing walkthrough data.
- Feedback provided to teachers.
- Professional development opportunities aligned with common themes in the feedback.

### **Required District Support:**

District support staff ensure school leaders create an observation and feedback process that communicates their commitment to developing their teachers. At the beginning of the school year, district leaders can assist school leaders with the following tasks: train school leaders on effective observation and feedback; create calendars for both observation and feedback sessions; ensure school leaders are receiving ongoing professional development to improve their instructional leadership skills; and practicing the 'see it, name it, do it' approach. District leaders must also support school leaders throughout the school year in monitoring and tracking the actionable feedback they provide to teachers to ensure transformational and sustainable instructional change.

## LEVER 4- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (INSTRUCTIONAL LEVER)

### **Why it Matters:**

There are numerous studies and statistics that show that professional development is ineffective. However, if you dig deeper, you will find that these statistics are based on professional development models disconnected from the root causes of the district's and school's performance challenges and the needs of individual teachers. PSB believes, if professional development is purposely and intentionally aligned with district priorities, school performance challenges, and individual teacher needs, this lever can significantly accelerate the growth of schools, leaders, and teachers and significantly boost student achievement. To increase effectiveness, professional development opportunities must allow leaders and teachers to practice the new learning during the session and provide ongoing and tailored support to ensure leaders and teachers are consistently and continuously implementing what they have learned.

### **Essential Leadership Competencies to Develop:**

- Commitment to Student Learning
- Engages the Team
- Conceptual Thinking
- Holding People Accountable for Student Performance

### **Key Indicators:**

- Yearly professional development calendar with high-leverage topics identified for professional development.
- Systems for determining professional development needs.
- Differentiated professional development plans for staff.
- Feedback from professional development sessions.

### **Required District Support:**

District support staff should begin by assisting school leaders with identifying the highest leverage performance challenges and actions their schools need to take to improve the delivery of instruction and increase student performance. Once these performance challenges and actions are identified, district leaders should support school leaders with identifying and providing the differentiated support and training school leaders and teachers need to address the performance challenges. The district must also ensure that the specified professional development and support provide time for reflection and practice, consistent follow-up and feedback, and systems for monitoring.

## LEVER 5- STUDENT CULTURE (CULTURAL LEVER)

### **Why it Matters:**

School Culture, the second “super-lever,” improves student outcomes by establishing a safe and supportive environment where students can develop academically, socially, and emotionally. By developing a clear vision and observable routines, students “will rise to expectations” (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2018). As a result, this will impact what teachers say and do, how students act and work, and how the articulated vision produces what is heard, seen, and felt within the campus.

### **Essential Leadership Competencies to Develop:**

- Engages the Team
- Impact and Influence
- Conceptual Thinking
- Hold People Accountable for Student Performance

### **Key Indicators:**

- A clear vision for student culture that is written and consistently communicated.
- Set of systems, routines, and procedures, with minute-by-minute plans for leader, teacher, and student actions defined.
- System for professional development and practice for the implementation of routines and procedures.
- Clear roles and models for leadership and teachers.
- Longitudinal student discipline data and survey data related to the student culture.

### **Required District Support:**

Student culture is a catalyst for improving student achievement and academic success. District support staff should assist school leaders in creating a safe and positive student culture, where students’ ownership of their behavior and learning is the focus. Before the school year starts, district leaders can support school leaders by helping them create their vision, creating routines and procedures, and developing the tools necessary to monitor implementation.

## LEVER 6- STAFF CULTURE (CULTURAL LEVER)

### **Why it Matters:**

The most successful schools generally have a positive staff culture. In these schools, teachers are engaged, believe in the school's mission and vision, and in many instances, go out of their way to ensure students are successful. Conversely, a negative staff culture commonly results in high staff turnover, absenteeism of both staff and students, poor relationships resulting in higher disciplinary incidents, disengaged staff, and low student achievement. If districts want their schools to be successful, they must take intentional steps to build and maintain a positive staff culture.

### **Essential Leadership Competencies to Develop:**

- Engages the Team
- Impact and Influence
- Conceptual Thinking
- Holding People Accountable for Student Performance

### **Key Indicators:**

- Written mission, vision, core values, and goals.
- Celebrations and traditions are evident.
- Stated clear behavior expectations that align with core values.
- Culture and climate survey data were collected and utilized to assess and address needs.

### **Required District Support:**

Staff culture is created by the school leader uniting the staff around a shared vision and mission that is both ambitious and measurable. Supporting school leaders with this lever involves reviewing the school's artifacts, such as mission and vision statements, written goals, celebrations, and traditions. The district support staff should also inquire and probe this lever to get a real sense of how the school culture looks, sounds, and feels. District support staff should ask how the school leader knows that staff culture is aligned with the mission and core values and support the leader when it is not. Additionally, district support staff should provide school leaders with support and training to conduct difficult conversations and probe and assess if and when these conversations occur.

## LEVER 7- MANAGING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAMS (CULTURAL LEVER)

### **Why it Matters:**

Effective School Leadership Teams, commonly referred to in New Mexico as school core teams (SCT), are the catalyst for instructional change. By deploying a systematic approach that focuses on highly effective instruction and student achievement, the school core leadership team becomes the glue that balances support and accountability for the teachers.

### **Essential Leadership Competencies to Develop:**

- Engages the Team
- Impact and Influence
- Conceptual Thinking
- Focus on Sustainable Results

### **Key Indicators:**

- A vision statement that promotes instructional growth and student success aligned to focus areas.
- A functioning school core leadership team.
- Meeting schedules, agendas, protocols, and defined roles of team members.
- Professional development calendar that includes opportunities to develop core team members.
- A well-developed 90-day plan.

### **Required District Support:**

District support staff should support school leaders in creating and developing effective school core teams. Before the school year begins, district support staff can help school leaders build a school core team that values different perspectives, exhibits a variety of strengths as measured by leadership competencies, and represents the school population's diversity. This support will foster a balanced team that implements the shared vision, promotes sustainable growth, and creates a culture of teaching and learning. District leaders should also attend weekly school core team meetings as frequently as possible to support school leaders with implementation, monitor effectiveness, and determine additional school-level and district-level support and professional development.



# TALENT MANAGEMENT

## GROW YOUR OWN

Hiring and retaining **quality** principals is a challenge in New Mexico and other districts across the country. Successful schools require leaders who possess both the leadership competencies necessary to lead a large organization through ongoing changes and the instructional leadership skills to support and coach teachers as they learn to deliver quality instruction in every classroom.

If districts do not make an effort to stop, or at least slow, the revolving door of principals entering and exiting the district, they will be unable to create the consistency required to build the systems, structures, and instructional capacity schools require to be successful. To that end, the need to develop and “Grow Your Own” administrators should be a priority for every New Mexico school district.

Recruiting, training, and hiring the people who live and stay in their local communities is a worthwhile strategy to address the shortage of effective school administrators. Selecting and growing local talent increases the retention rate of school leaders. The “Grow Your Own” effort should be designed to identify and develop district teachers and administrators to the level of competence needed to be an effective organizational and instructional leader in the district. Below are some steps a school district should consider as they prioritize this vital work.

### **Selection and Credentialing**

Once the district has established the intent to “Grow Your Own,” developing a talent identification and selection process based on interest, recommendations, and competencies is the first step in the process. Districts need to decide if they will accept candidates who already hold the appropriate licensure or whether they will form a partnership with a local university and compensate aspiring leaders for pursuing the necessary credentials to meet state licensure requirements.

### **Professional Development**

On a parallel path, the district should begin identifying the professional development they will provide to ensure prospective candidates are steeped in the district’s practices and prepared to lead when needed. Keeping new principals in the folds of this ongoing professional development and actively seeking their feedback will ensure relevant and timely offerings.

The following list is a sample of the types of professional learning a district may want to offer its aspiring leaders:

- Leading data discussions.
- Leading the development of 90-Day Plans that support changes in adult behavior.
- Conducting effective observations and providing actionable feedback aligned to the Elevate NM elements.
- PLC protocols and systems that lead to continuous improvement.
- Coaching teachers
- Planning and conducting difficult conversations
- Competency development coaching

The District can tap many professional learning resources to guide its leadership professional development curriculum. The following is a list of some of the resources in wide use in New Mexico schools and supported by the PSB professional learning programs.

- Bambrick-Santoyo, P. *Leverage Leadership*: This resource outlines a process for analyzing assessment data and creating action plans to address areas of need for student improvement.
- Bambrick-Santoyo, P. *Get Better Faster*: This resource provides a process to guide classroom observations and provide meaningful, actionable feedback.
- Priority Schools Bureau. *Growing Our Own: Competency-Based Leadership documents*: This resource provides competencies rubrics and competency-based plans to support the leadership development of school leaders.
- Priority Schools Bureau (PSB). *Critical Friends process for 90-day planning*: This resource outlines a process by which a principal presents a challenging area in their 90-day plan to a group of colleagues. Colleagues discuss the issue brought forward in an open and often candid feedback session, and there is group support for creating action step(s) in collaboration with the principal.
- *Calibrating Classroom Observations*: Aspiring leaders can observe video clips of classroom instruction related to classroom observation training.
- *NMDASH*: The PSB provides an NM Dash toolkit to guide principals through the planning process. Ensuring that aspiring leaders can lead and conduct a high-quality improvement planning process will equip principals to lead the process when they step into a leadership role.

### **Pre-Service Experience**

In addition to the identification and selection process and the professional development curriculum, districts need to decide what leadership experience they will provide for the aspiring leaders. The type of experience may be shaped by where the candidate is in the program. For example, someone who is still teaching and in the early phase of the program can complete an action research project related to the professional learning curriculum that addresses a district priority. Fully credentialed participants may be released from their teaching duties for a part of the day or part of the year to participate in a mentoring or internship relationship. Along with these pre-service experiences, the district should create performance standards that define whether or not the candidate met the expectations associated with the experience.

## **Progression to Campus Leadership Positions**

Another critical decision a district needs to make is identifying potential candidates who have met the District's performance criteria and will progress into the pool for consideration for hire. Local policies should be developed regarding how these candidates will be considered for leadership openings. For example, will these candidates be given preferred status over out-of-district applicants? Will these candidates begin as assistant principals, or will they be eligible for principal openings?

No matter the approach, supportive and successful districts have a clear process for developing leaders within their organization. The overarching goal is to establish a pipeline of well-trained and ready administrators to step into administrative roles in the future. If done well, districts will have a supply of school leaders who fully understand and support the district's philosophy, strategic goals, and vision. A strategic plan to "Grow your Own" leaders who can support students, parents, and staff at the school site will accelerate student performance and create the sustainability of improvement that most districts struggle to maintain.

## **Resources for Further Learning**

Educational Research Services. *The Principal, Keystone of A High Achieving School: Attracting and Keeping the Leaders We Need*. Washington, DC: National Association of Elementary School Principals and National Association of Secondary School Principals. 2000.

Jackson, B., & Kelley C. *Exceptional and innovative programs in educational leadership*. Educational Administration Quarterly. 2002.

Shawn, J. *Planning to grow your own principal preparation programs: cultivating excellence in tough economic times*. 2015. [https://isep.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/18-2\\_4PlanningtoGrowPrincipal.pdf](https://isep.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/18-2_4PlanningtoGrowPrincipal.pdf)

## COACHING AND MENTORING PRINCIPALS

Since the school's success in meeting its students' social and academic needs is generally associated with how well the school is led and managed, the effectiveness of school principals is of great importance to the district. For this reason, any practice such as principal mentoring and coaching that supports the principal's success is a worthy investment on the part of the district.

Innovative leadership programs such as the University of Virginia's Partnership for Leaders in Education (UVA-PLE) and NM PED PPE/RISE/LEAD/THRIVE share similar theories of action. Each is built on the belief that if we strengthen the competencies of leaders to transform districts and schools, they will have the capacity to take bold and purposeful action on behalf of their students. Districts across New Mexico have adopted similar practices and partnerships and have allocated resources toward their principals' intentional and personalized development. Coaching and mentoring are used interchangeably in this example because they both provide differentiated support and accountability for school leaders. Regardless of the label, coaches and mentors serve as thought partners, district liaisons, and sometimes, a lifeline for school leaders.

Through interviews with numerous leaders across New Mexico, many cited the individualized support provided by their dedicated coaches and mentors as the defining difference between sustainable success and burnout. As a retention tool, districts that offer one-to-one support for school leaders have greatly benefited from the lengthened tenure of their experienced school leaders.

Coaching relationships are founded on trust and a shared commitment to students and their success. For districts and schools to succeed, both principals and coaches should be personally challenged and stretched as a result of individual conversations and tailored goals. Like all good communication, a coaching conversation is a two-way exchange. Transparency, acknowledging challenges, goal setting, and problem-solving compose the majority of coaching sessions. Responsibilities on the part of the principal and the district are very clear, and follow-up visits are scheduled to monitor the implementation of next steps and commitments. The work of supporting principals is approached through the lens of leadership development, and coaches and mentors help principals reflect on their successes and gain confidence in addressing future challenges.

Coaching is not a one-time event. To build trust and support the ongoing development of school leaders, districts should develop a site visit calendar that meets the unique needs of the principal based on experience and challenges they face at their school. Depending on the career stage of the principal, this should be monthly or weekly, with early career and struggling school leaders receiving the most intensive support. For example, a support protocol from one New Mexico district includes two to three visits per month for every school leader, focusing on 90-day plan implementation, instructional coaching, leadership competencies, and data-driven instruction. Each visit lasts between 1-2 hours, and they are calendared for the entire year before school begins. The coach determines the specific agenda for each meeting but leaves time to discuss issues that may have arisen unexpectedly. At the end of each visit, there are written deliverables to be implemented by the next meeting.

While focused on the leader, coaching and mentoring are meant to drive the achievement of all students. Ideally, a district's commitment to coaching will establish a culture in which all

staff members are developed. Principals should be expected to coach teachers. Teachers are expected to do the same for their students. Whether by a dedicated coach or supervisor, when principals receive targeted support from an individual dedicated to achieving their personal and career growth goals, overall school and student performance outcomes will increase.

## **Resources for Further Learning**

Bloom, Gary S. et al. *Blended Coaching: Skills and Strategies to Support Principal Development*. 2005.

Campbell, J. & Van Nieuwerburgh, C. *The Leader's Guide to Coaching in Schools-Creating Conditions for Effective Learning*. 2017.

Glickman, C., Gordon, S. & Ross-Gordon, J. *SuperVision and Instructional Leadership: A Developmental Approach*, 2014.

## DEFINED AUTONOMY

The concept of “defined autonomy” is examined by J. Timothy Waters & Robert Marzano in their 2006 publication: *School District Leadership that Works: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement*. At the school level, the authors state that in basic terms, defined autonomy is about empowering school leaders to take ownership of their school and use their judgment to follow through on the vision and goals established for them by the district leadership. The district’s responsibility is to define the vision and expectations and then define an expectation for conformity (tight) and flexibility (loose).

A good starting point for defining what’s “tight” and what’s “loose” is for districts to determine the areas for which the district holds specific expectations. This may include selecting instructional materials, developing lesson plans, daily schedule or budget elements, and spending guidelines. For example, a district might hold very tight to the expectation that the adopted curriculum materials are used for daily instruction, expecting teachers to utilize the scope and sequence of the program. However, schools and teachers may be given the autonomy to determine the appropriate formative assessments to be used to measure mastery, rather than being required to use the assessments included in the adoption. Concerning lesson planning, a district could require that teachers develop lesson plans that include specific elements, such as lesson objectives and opportunities for guided and independent practice while leaving the format and timelines of lesson plans up to each teacher or school.

Developing “tight/loose” guidelines allows districts to define the expectations that apply to all sites while still allowing some decisions to be made locally due to each school’s unique needs. Creating this level of clarity, including a rationale for each expectation they deem essential to district-wide implementation, eliminates confusion and provides the guardrails for school leaders to operate confidently. These expectations also ensure everyone holds a common understanding of the importance and purpose of each district priority and their role in accomplishing the district goals.

When developing district-level strategy and culture, district leaders are typically confronted with the dilemma of determining the level of principal and school autonomy. It can be tempting to choose a side, either absolute uniformity at all sites to ensure equity for all students or allowing each site to make independent decisions, possibly resulting in variations in the level of services and quality of instruction provided to the students. District leaders must find the middle ground between these opposing positions to honor the unique elements of each school while maintaining the shared vision and mission of the district.

### Resources for Further Learning

Dufour, Richard. *Building a Professional Learning Community*, The School Administrator, May 2003

Marzano, R.J. & Waters. *District Leadership That Works: Striking the Right Balance.*, T. Solution Tree; 35129th edition. 2009

# TEACHER EVALUATION

Having highly qualified, effective teachers in every classroom is a worthy goal. Numerous studies have established that teacher quality is positively linked with student learning (Goe, 2007). Positively impacting teacher effectiveness is the primary driver for states and school districts developing and implementing teacher evaluation systems. Effective teacher evaluation systems will enhance teacher practice, improve effectiveness, and ultimately increase student achievement.

Improving teacher quality is also an issue of equity. If we want equitable schools, we must ensure that every student has access to a high-quality teacher. Robust evaluation systems can dramatically improve teacher performance. Reliable indicators of effective teaching, paired with high-quality feedback and support systems, communicate that school and district leaders recognize the complexity of education and are collaborative partners supporting teacher development.

The graphic below represents the Theory of Action that underlies teacher evaluation systems.



Elevate NM is the most recent New Mexico teacher evaluation system. It is based on the model developed by Charlotte Danielson and has been adapted to meet New Mexico students' unique cultural and linguistic needs. The NM PED describes the goals of the new evaluation system as follows:

The intention for Elevate NM is to support and uplift both the morale of New Mexico educators and their teaching skills through a system that provides feedback in three different ways:

- Teachers' reflections through their Professional Development Plans (PDPs).
- Feedback from administrators on the PDPs and classroom observations; and
- Feedback from families and student surveys.

The model is designed around the growth and development of the teacher and is organized around four domains.

- Planning and preparation
- Creating an environment for learning
- Teaching for learning
- Professionalism

Each domain is supported with explicit descriptors for the criteria that must be met. Four areas characterize a teacher's development:

- Not Demonstrating,
- Developing,
- Applying, and
- Innovating.

Elevate NM entered formal implementation during the 2020-2021 school year, and educators, district leaders, and school administrators continue to engage in continued professional development related to the successful implementation. As a district administrator, there are specific timelines that you need to be aware of and ensure that your school leaders know and meet. The following is a high-level description of the significant activities arranged by the school-year calendar.

### **First Quarter**

*Teacher Self-Reflection* – The year begins with the teacher engaging in self-reflection using the rubric to help them identify their strengths and areas for growth. During self-reflection, the teacher will cite evidence. The self-reflection is not an observation but rather a teachers' quick look at improving and supporting their growth. Principals may want to complete a walkthrough for new-to-the-profession teachers before the self-reflection to give the teacher data to draw upon in their reflection.

*Administrator Walkthrough* – Following the teachers' self-reflection, the principal completes a walkthrough of their classroom. Walkthroughs provide an opportunity for principals to get a pulse of what is happening inside classrooms and better understand how to best support their teachers. For Elevate NM, a walkthrough is a 10–15-minute focused look at 1-2 elements of the Elevate NM criteria followed by a feedback meeting with the teacher.

*Professional Development Plan (PDP)* – A teacher can utilize the previous year's data and feedback to help inform their PDP. A teacher will create a PDP from this data and student academic data. Teachers should complete their PDP within the first 45 days of school. Teachers and administrators should allow enough time to start this process to include adequate time for the teacher to receive feedback from their principal and revise their PDP based on input. Timely information from the principal allows teachers to develop high-quality PDPs that provide the focus for the year.

### **Second Quarter**

During the second quarter of the year, principals should conduct a second walkthrough and provide the teacher with additional feedback. The data collected from walkthroughs offer an opportunity for the principal to see how the school is growing on a particular element. The principal may find teachers to highlight and leverage during peer observations, focusing on building collaboration and leadership within the school.

### **Third Quarter**

At the beginning of the third quarter, it is optional to have the teacher conduct another self-reflection and receive feedback from their administrator regarding their progress with their PDP. The middle of the year is an excellent time for principals to make sure teachers are on

track and utilizing their time wisely, or if any adjustments are needed. Remember, the PDP goal does not change, but may amend the strategies used to reach the goal or timeline.

### **Scoring Domains**

*Scoring Domain 1* – The third quarter is the time to score Domain 1 - Planning and Preparation. Teachers upload a lesson plan of their choosing to the principal. The principal rates the lesson plan and provides feedback, ensuring that the teacher plans for success.

*Scoring Domain 2 and 3* – The formal observation of Domain 2 - Classroom Environment and Domain 3 - Instruction occurs at the end of the third quarter. All elements within Domains 2 and 3 should be observed and scored. Generally, a principal will observe an entire class period. The observation may be done face-to-face or virtually.

### **Fourth Quarter**

The last quarter includes a third walkthrough, feedback meeting, and the teacher's End of Year Reflection on their growth and progress towards meeting their PDP goal(s). This reflection should include data, artifacts, and any evidence that supports teachers having met their goals. The principal scores the End of Year Reflection and provides feedback.

Every school district is responsible for its principals to successfully meet the teacher evaluation requirements. Additionally, NM PSB encourages districts to support their school leaders by providing the tools and training necessary to grow their teachers. Understanding multiple sources of data, utilizing coaching protocols, and providing opportunities to calibrate are strategies that assist principals with developing teachers' instructional skills.

Districts must acknowledge growth and success as it relates to individual teacher practice. When teachers can see the connection between their efforts and their students' outcomes, the evaluation process becomes a continuous improvement process instead of a mechanism for monitoring. Wise districts and schools address this causality at both the individual teacher and building levels.

Finally, it is worth noting that the required evaluation systems for teachers have historically been 'owned' by administrators. In the spirit of teacher leadership, there is a growing movement to transfer that ownership back to teachers themselves. Principals across New Mexico have indicated their awareness that the breadth of the evaluation system requires teachers to be experts in the classroom. To develop their expertise, principals and districts must compensate for the historically intimidating nature of evaluation and work to make it meaningful, actionable, and personal to the teachers it impacts. Suppose all New Mexico districts can do this. In that case, all New Mexico teachers will experience authentic engagement with their data and feedback. With support and coaching from their principal, they will aspire to and achieve high performance levels.

## Resources for Further Learning

Goe, L. *The Link Between Teacher Quality and Student Outcomes: A Research Synthesis*. National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. October 2007.

Marzano, R. et al. *Leading a High-Reliability School*. 2018.

Due dates and helpful videos for the school year:

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/educator-growth-development/elevatenm/administrator-toolbox/>

To Enroll in the Elevate NM Training for Administrators or Teachers and access resources including exemplars, training videos, and Canvas How-To complete each component videos, go to this link and click on course card: <https://nmped.catalog.instructure.com/browse/educator-growth-development>

New Mexico Educator Evaluation System

[https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/NMPED\\_InfoPage\\_EducatorEvaluation\\_Final2020-1.pdf](https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/NMPED_InfoPage_EducatorEvaluation_Final2020-1.pdf)



# SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

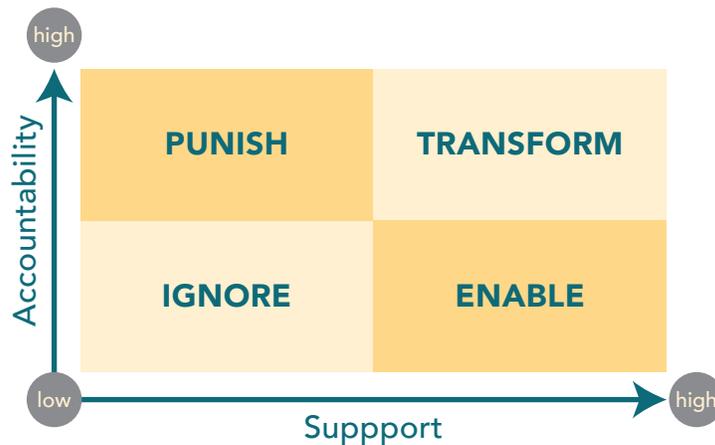
## PURPOSEFUL & COLLABORATIVE PRESENCE

Creating an atmosphere where district leadership is visible and present in school buildings is important because it signifies respect and support. Districts that balance support and accountability have a better chance of accomplishing their mission of improving outcomes for all New Mexico students. If districts commit to a purposeful and collaborative presence in schools, and if all central office staff are visible and engaged, then schools and the students they serve will benefit.

As outlined in this guide, support and accountability is a critical lever for school improvement. To ensure appropriate supports are provided to schools, district leaders must establish clear lines of communication between the school and the district. Once support is provided, district leaders should visit the school regularly to verify implementation and monitor progress.

Support and accountability is a delicate balance. Providing high accountability and high support takes time and effort, but it is worth the effort. For example, suppose districts provide low support and low accountability. In this case, school leaders will feel ignored and think district leaders do not care about them or their schools, causing low staff morale and damaging culture. On the other hand, providing high support and offering low accountability enables poor leaders and allows them to make excuses for their poor performance. In reverse, high accountability and low support convey punishment and provoke feelings of fear and distrust towards district leaders. Transformational leadership takes both high support and high accountability.

The accountability grid below demonstrates the possible leadership development outcomes based on a continuum of high and low support and accountability.



Beyond supporting and growing school leaders, when districts have a process involving district office personnel making purposeful and meaningful school visits, there is an increased opportunity for a partnership to develop between the district and the school. Site visits inform the district office of the needs and challenges schools face, provide an opportunity to identify and leverage best practices, surface themes and patterns across schools, and, most importantly, identify opportunities to provide needed support.

Given the time challenges that school administrators face, it's essential that school visits be focused, purposeful, and of value to the school leadership team. Some criteria to consider when developing a school site visit process:

- District leaders should co-develop the purpose and outcomes of the site visits with their principals.
- Protocols should guide the site visit process, ensuring a focus and outcomes of value to the school leadership team. Ideally aligned to their 90-day plan priorities.
- Ensure the district leadership team members conducting the visits are credible and have the knowledge and experience to address the school's challenges.
- Provide a feedback and accountability loop for both the school site and the visiting team.

## **Resources for Further Learning**

Achieve, Center for School Leadership Website

<https://ca.achievethecenter.com/>

New Mexico State ESSA Plan

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NM-PED-Amendments-to-ESSA-Section-4.pdf>

The University of Virginia Partnership for Leaders in Education Website

<https://www.darden.virginia.edu/darden-curry-ple>

## NM DASH 90 DAY PLAN

PSB believes every student has the ability to succeed in their college, career, or civic endeavors and that every New Mexico school has the potential to prepare them to do so. As part of New Mexico Rising, New Mexico's state plan for Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), all New Mexico schools must implement an improvement system designed to increase student outcomes by focusing on the levers of school instructional leadership led by a solid and diverse School Core Team.

To make this process both meaningful and impactful rather than compliance-driven, district leaders must provide both a high level of support for creating and implementing the plan and high accountability by monitoring implementation and growth towards goals and desired outcomes.

NM PED has provided the New Mexico School DASH Model (Data, Accountability, Sustainability, and High Achievement) to support districts and schools. This model is:

- A guided team discussion providing schools with a strategic educational plan that is unique to their school population and challenges.
- Non-linear, but all components are interrelated and provide a common approach.
- A guide for continuous growth and accountability through planning, implementation, monitoring, and reflection.
- Organized as an Annual Plan consisting of two 90-day Plans, coupled with reflection and monitoring.

### **Certified Reviewer/Reflection Monitor**

Beginning in 2022-23, approval and authorization of each NM DASH 90-day Plan is the responsibility of the Local Education Agency/District before the implementation. Certified Reviewer/Reflection Monitor status is awarded to individuals designated by the LEA/District who have completed the NM PED Certified Reviewer/Reflection Monitor training(s) and NM PED Certified Reviewer Assessment. Districts are encouraged to begin the certification process during the 2021-22 pilot year of implementation.

PSB outlines six components necessary to complete rigorous planning, design monitoring activities, and inform implementation. These components provide schools with a common language and common expectations to help build shared momentum for change. The six components are:

- Component 1: Build School Core Team
- Component 2: Set Student Achievement Goals
- Component 3: Conduct Data Analysis and Identify THE Performance Challenge
- Component 4: Conduct Root Cause Analysis and Select Focus Areas
- Component 5: Create Desired Outcomes, Develop Progress Indicators, and Define Critical Actions
- Component 6: Implement Plan and Monitor Progress

The following section lists questions district leaders can ask when supporting schools with their 90 Day planning process. All information included in this section can be found in the NM DASH Process Guide for Schools 2021-2022. We strongly encourage all district leaders to become familiar with this guide and fully understand its content.

## **COMPONENT 1 - Building a School Core Team**

### **Guiding Questions**

District Level:

Is the District Representative actively involved in the planning and implementation processes involved in the Annual and 90-day Plan?

Has the district provided adequate data to the school leader to enable the development of a School Core Team that will meet the unique needs of the school?

School Level:

To what extent does the School Core Team represent diverse backgrounds and viewpoints, based on relevant data, to consider challenges from many perspectives?

Are there representatives from across grade levels? EWS representative? Content experts?

Is the School Core Team representative of the student body, including student groups and the community?

## **COMPONENT 2 – Set Student Achievement Goals**

### **Guiding Questions**

Summative Goals – ELA and Math (Grades 3–8)

- Given the most recent Summative Student Assessment Data, which goals will create a sense of focus and urgency toward actions to increase student achievement?
- How will the School Core Team set ambitious Student Achievement Goals?
- Which option for setting Student Achievement Goals will best address the unique needs of the school?
  - » Grade Level Proficiency Increase – measurement of last year’s grade level proficiency to current year’s grade level proficiency goal; or
  - » Cohort Proficiency Increase – measurement of the same students’ grade level proficiency growth over time (last year to the current year); or
  - » Growth within Cohort – measurement of movement from level-to-level within assessment by the same students year-to-year (last year to current year).

Summative Goal – High School Graduation Rate (Grades 9–12)

- Given the most recent EWS data, how will the School Core Team create a sense of focus and urgency toward increasing the high school graduation rate?
- How does the graduation rate differ from 4-year cohort to 5-year cohort?
- How will the School Core Team set ambitious high school graduation rates?

Benchmark Goals

- How will the School Core Team know it is on track to meet Summative Goals for grades 3–8 and 9–12?
- Are Benchmark Goals aligned with Summative Goals (including the selected option for setting Student Achievement Goals)?

## COMPONENT 3 – Conduct Data Analysis and Identify THE Performance Challenge

### Guiding Questions

- Were you able to meet the Summative Student Achievement Goals established for the previous school year?
- What does the data reveal about strengths? What does the data reveal about concerns?
- What are prioritized student achievement concerns?
- Are specific student groups performing significantly below “the ALL student group”?
- Will the Data Analysis provide evidence in identifying areas of concern, THE Performance Challenge, and Root Cause?
- What are the most urgent and important concerns regarding the whole child (i.e., physical health, social and emotional status)?

## COMPONENT 4 – Conduct Root Cause Analysis and Select Focus Areas

### Guiding Questions: Select Focus Areas

Standards Alignment: All grade levels have identified essential standards.

- How does the school ensure that the Layer I (core) curriculum and instruction are aligned with the NMIS and are being implemented with fidelity?
- Does the school have a scope and sequence aligned to the NMIS?

Layer I (core) Instruction and Intervention: There is a dedicated block of time devoted to providing core instruction to all students aligned with grade-level standards.

- What percent of students achieve grade-level expectations or make significant growth (including specific student groups)? If at least 80% are not attaining proficiency, what is the School Core Team doing to ensure that the school makes significant progress toward this goal?
- What evidence does the School Core Team have that the rigor level of the tasks students perform during the lesson is aligned to the rigor of the NM Instructional Scope?
- What culturally and linguistically responsive instruction is occurring in all classrooms?
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Data-Driven Instruction (DDI): There is a precise, systematic approach to improving student learning throughout the year. The cycle of DDI includes assessment, analysis, and action.

- Are the district’s and school’s assessment strategies firmly in place? (formative, interim, and summative)?
- How do teachers and leadership analyze and act on assessment data?
- Do teacher action plans include focused and targeted whole-group, small-group, and individual interventions?
- How effectively does school leadership hold teachers accountable to ensure effective instructional adjustment, interventions, and instructional feedback?

Layer 2 and 3 Interventions: There are fluid, flexible interventions in place in addition to Layer 1 (core) instruction for students not progressing as expected.

- How does the school identify students needing Layer 2 and 3 interventions?
- How does the school differentiate instruction based on the screening results and all students' abilities and needs (including cultural and linguistic differences) in the core program?
- To what extent are Layer 2 and 3 interventions successful in addressing student needs based on data?

Collaboration: Teachers have time to work together to promote student success during the week.

- What evidence does the School Core Team use to ensure teacher teams work together weekly to analyze data, share strategies, plan collaboratively, and debrief the outcomes of instruction?

School Leadership and Systems: There is a school leadership framework that supports increasing and sustaining student achievement and improved outcomes for the whole child.

- Is there a school leadership team in place comprised of key instructional leaders and support service providers?
- To what extent does the leadership team focus on data-driven instruction, observation and feedback, standards-aligned planning and instruction, and job-embedded professional development?

School Culture: All students, staff, and stakeholders are aware that increased student achievement and improved outcomes for all students are top priorities of the school?

- Do students receive the continual message that nothing is as important or engaging as learning?
- How do consistent minute-by-minute systems and procedures support a student culture focused on achievement?
- How does leadership monitor and maintain a positive student and staff culture?
- How does leadership ensure that instruction and interactions occur in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner?

## **COMPONENT 5 – Create Desired Outcomes, Develop Progress Indicators, and Define Critical Actions (Build a 90-day Plan)**

### **Guiding Questions**

Desired Outcomes

- What specific adult behaviors does the School Core Team want to see in place at the end of 90 days?
- Is it likely to result in increased student achievement?
- Can this Desired Outcome realistically be accomplished in 90 days?

Progress Indicators

- What metrics, feedback, observations, etc., the School Core Team will use to determine progress toward the Desired Outcome at the 30-, 60-, 90-day reflections?

- How will the School Core Team know the Critical Actions are having a positive impact?
- What is the evidence of progress?
- Are the Progress Indicators logically sequenced throughout the 90 days, and do they build upon each other?

#### Critical Actions

- What exactly will the school do within the 90 days that address the Desired Outcome and THE Performance Challenge?
- Are Critical Actions specific enough for all stakeholders to understand?
- Who will be involved/responsible?
- What are the timelines?
- What support/resources are needed to make this happen?

## **COMPONENT 6 – Implement Plan and Monitor Progress**

### **Guiding Questions**

#### Implement Plan and Monitor Progress

- How will the School Core Team reset If the school has not met the Desired Outcome Progress Indicators? How should the plan be modified?
- If the school has exceeded Desired Outcome Progress Indicators, how will the School Core Team expand the scope of Critical Actions for the next check-in date?
- Are the Desired Outcomes having a positive impact on student achievement? What is the evidence to substantiate the progress?
- Were the wrong Critical Actions identified? Are there other Critical Actions that should have been completed first? Should some Critical Actions be carried over, adjusted, or replaced with new Critical Actions?
- Did Critical Actions, if implemented with fidelity, lead to Desired Outcomes? If not, why not? Were Desired Outcomes too broad or unrealistic for 90 days?
- What unanticipated barriers and unexpected challenges did the School Core Team encounter?
- Has the School Core Team identified the best Progress Indicators? Are they rigorous enough? Do they truly measure progress toward accomplishing Critical Actions and Desired Outcomes?

### **Make Needed Adjustments**

- To what extent do Progress Indicators document progress toward the Desired Outcomes and Critical Actions?
- What adjustments should be made to the current 90-day Plan given the school's current student achievement data?
- Reflecting on Progress Indicators and student academic growth data, which Critical Actions had the most significant impact(s) on the quality of teaching and learning in the school?

- What were major lessons learned or barriers uncovered in implementation that needs to be addressed moving forward?
- What additional supports or resources are needed?
- Has the 90-day Plan been communicated to key stakeholders?
- Have adjustments been communicated to school site staff?

## DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

As a district leader, you must support your principals when they encounter leadership challenges and hold them accountable for addressing the challenges quickly and appropriately. Many of the school leaders interviewed for this guide cited having difficult and productive conversations to address performance issues at their school as one of their most significant challenges. Depending on an individual principal's conflict resolution style, these conversations can be more or less of a challenge. For example, suppose a principal's predominant conflict resolution style is "avoidance." In this case, they are likely to put off holding these conversations, and when they do, it is very stressful for them.

As a coach or principal supervisor, you must help your school leaders understand that not holding these conversations only worsens the problem over time and may negatively impact staff morale. And, if the issue deals with missed work expectations, poor behavior, or other matters that affect the school's performance, failing to address it is giving tacit approval to the current state.

There are many reasons principals may tend to delay or put off holding these conversations:

- They may lack the confidence to think we can do it effectively.
- They may define it as an either/or situation. For example, "I can either maintain a positive relationship with teacher X or address her daily late arrival."
- They may worry they can not handle the reactions or emotions the conversations may elicit.
- They may want to keep the peace and not rock the boat.

The good news is that district leaders can instruct their principals to help them plan for and guide these conversations using a research-based framework. Keep in mind; not all exchanges need this level of preparation. However, when there is likely to be a difference of perspective and potential for an emotional response, taking the time to think through and plan out the conversation will increase the likelihood that the principal can address the performance issue without negatively impacting their relationship with the individual.

As a district coach or supervisor, you can guide the principal through this framework and help them prepare for the conversation. Some principals may need very little support, while others may want to detail the conversation in writing and role-play before the exchange. Using this framework, you may consider developing guiding questions or prompts to help the principal think through the various steps.

Before the principal plans the conversation, some "self-work" needs to happen first. This list speaks to some of the most important considerations:

- Have a mindset that the goal of the conversation is to be in dialogue with the individual. You want to hear their perspective rather than simply "tell" them yours.
- Be open that there may be information you don't have that could change or impact your perception of the issue.
- Make sure that your goals for the conversation are healthy. For example, you want to seek to understand rather than be right.
- Be crystal clear about what you want as a result of the conversation. What does success look like?

The following four-phase framework is adapted from the work of Grenny, Joseph et al. in their best-selling books: *Crucial Conversations, Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* (2011) and *Crucial Accountability, Tools for Resolving Violated Expectations, Broken Commitments, and Bad Behaviors* (2013) and provides a structure to help you plan and hold more effective difficult conversations. There are sample sentence stems within the framework to help bring the content to life.

## **The Four Phases of a Difficult Conversation (Summary Level)**

### **1. Preparation**

- » Establish the goal based on the performance gap/problem you want to address.
- » Establish clarity about what you want - what does success look like?

### **2. Initiation**

- » Create safety and prepare to enter the discussion.
- » Ask for permission.
- » Establish mutual purpose.
- » Demonstrate respect.

### **3. Discussion**

- » Address the performance gap using STATE skills.
- » Listen and learn.
- » Monitor and rebuild safety if needed.

### **4. Conclusion**

- » Problem-solve agreements.
- » Make commitments and a plan to follow up.

## **The Four Phases of a Difficult Conversation (Detail Level)**

### **PHASE 1 - Preparation - Determining What You Want**

*Establish the goal based on a description of the performance gap* – What is your goal, what do you want to accomplish? What needs to be different? Using data and behavioral language, describe the performance gap - what is the expectation versus current performance? What facts do you have to support the description of the performance gap? Using data rather than feelings and impressions to describe the problem tends to depersonalize the content and make it easier for the person to understand the issue.

*Some questions to help you create clarity:*

- What do you want as an outcome of the conversation? For yourself and for the person with whom you are meeting? Address/examine your motives – be honest with yourself.
- What are the facts of the situation? (Look at those facts as a neutral observer would)

describe them. Your perspective may change when you take a step back.)

- What does resolution look like?
- What are the possibilities for how the person you are speaking with might react? And how would you then react?

### **What support or follow-up are you willing to provide?**

#### **PHASE 2 - *Initiation – Create Safety and Enter the Conversation***

When individuals do not feel safe, they may be in cognitive shutdown and unable to process or respond in a healthy way to what you have to say. Below are some simple strategies to create safety. When using these strategies, be sure to pay attention to your tone, body language, and overall affect as you begin the conversation. The two methods, Asking Permission and Establishing Mutual Purpose, can go a long way to establishing emotional safety and, as a result, support a productive conversation.

##### 1. *Ask for permission to hold the conversation.*

Asking permission and pausing for the person to give their consent helps create a safe environment for the conversation. It helps to put both participants on a more even playing field and shows a level of respect for their interests.

Some sample statements to ask permission:

- » Can I speak with you about something that I think is affecting our team?
- » Can I speak with you about something that I believe is affecting the morale of our faculty?
- » May we have a conversation about...

Caution: Do not use this “ask” to start talking about the problem – that comes later.

Also, if the individual responds that they do not feel ready for the conversation, it is best not to push. Say something like, “OK, well, let’s set a time to meet tomorrow.”

##### 2. *Establish mutual purpose*

Dialogue cannot begin until mutual purpose exists. Mutual purpose is the entrance condition for dialogue. Without mutual purpose, people are likely to hold back. When others think your goal is to blame, win, or chastise, they are likely to draw back and not engage in the conversation in a way that allows them to hear, learn, and understand.

Mutual purpose is the foundation of trust. When individuals believe that your intent is positive, they are more likely to listen to the content of your message, even if it is painful.

Sample statements to establish Mutual Purpose:

- » “I know we both want what’s best for your students...”
- » “I know that you’re as committed as all of the members of your team to having productive team meetings...”
- » “I know we both value healthy relationships with students and their families...”

### **PHASE 3 – Discussion – Hold the Discussion about the problem or issue**

After you have opened the conversation by asking permission and establishing mutual purpose, it is time to engage in the actual discussion of the issue at hand. STATE Skills supplies the roadmap for the conversation when discussing risky or challenging content. Carefully planning out what you want to say by following this map increases the chance of a successful outcome for you and the person with whom you are holding the difficult conversation. STATE is a useful mnemonic and is described below:

*Share your facts* – Experts in dialogue share tough messages by *beginning with what they see and hear and then moving to stories and feelings*. The less skilled do the opposite. They jump in with their emotions and stories but share few facts. *Starting with what you see and hear minimizes defensiveness*.

Identify the performance gap/issue you want to address. What have you seen or heard? What have you seen or noticed that you want to share? What are the facts that are leading you to your conclusion/story?

Sample statements for sharing facts:

- “Although as a faculty, we’ve agreed to use exit tickets daily, during the last three walkthroughs at the close of your class, I noticed you’re not doing this.”
- “I’ve noticed that you’ve been anywhere from 10-15 minutes late for each of our last PD faculty meetings.
- Because we are learning this content together, we had to stop and bring you up to speed; as a result, we’re not getting through all of the material.”

*Tell your story* – This is where you share what you have concluded and how you are feeling. What conclusions have you reached? What do you think is going on?

Sample statements for Telling your story.

- “I’m beginning to wonder if you’re on board with this practice.”
- “I’m beginning to feel that you may not be committed to implementing the new reading program.”

*Ask for other’s path* – Invite others to share their viewpoint. Carefully listen to what they have to say. Be willing to abandon or reshape your story as you gain more information. How do you make it safe for them to share their perspective, even if it is different from your own?

Sample statements for Asking for other’s path:

- “I’d like to hear your perspective on this issue.”
- “If I’m missing something here, I’d like to hear it.”
- “Do I have it right? Is there something else going on here that I need to know?”

*These first three steps are “What you do,” the following two steps describe “How you do it.”*

*Talk tentatively* – Strike a blend. When you share your facts and stories, it is important to do so tentatively. This means you tell your account as a story, not as fact. At the same time, you want to

express confidence in your conclusions but leave room for the fact that you might have it wrong. You might learn something in the conversation that causes you to revise your perspective – your story.

*Encourage Testing* – How you ask others for their views is another opportunity to balance confidence and humility. Remember your purpose. If it is to convince, compel, or control, this will carry through in your tone and manner and leave little room for the individual to share their views. After you share your facts and tell your story, following up with statements like those listed below invite the other person to share their perspective, their story.

Sample statements for Encouraging testing:

- “Do you see it this way?”
- “Does anyone see it differently?”
- “Is there something that I may not be seeing?”

During the discussion, you will perform three primary activities:

1. Communicating your ideas in a calm and logical manner
2. Listening to what the other person is saying. If notes or an outline helps you stay on track during your discussion, you should feel free to use them. However, do not read from the page.
3. Monitoring safety.

*What do you do when things do not go as expected?* When the conversation gets off track, you typically see two behaviors: defensiveness or silence.

*Defensiveness* – Step out of the content, focus on the process, and rebuild safety.

- Re-establish Mutual Purpose – Say something like, “I can see you’re getting upset, and that’s not my intention at all.” “I do appreciate all the work you do with your students and the other projects you’re involved in.” “I just want you to understand how not showing up on time is impacting the progress of the team.” “Is it OK for us to start the discussion again?”

*Silence* – If the individual goes to silence, ask questions that genuinely demonstrate your desire to learn and understand. Say something like:

- “I’d like to hear your perspective on this.”
- “Please let me know if you see it differently.”
- “Don’t worry about hurting my feelings; I want to hear your thoughts.”
- “Are you thinking that...”

If the person is upset, do not press on. If there is too much emotion, the conversation will not be productive. It may be better to delay and revisit it at another time. Say something like: “It seems like you’re upset. Would you prefer to have some time to think about it and meet tomorrow?”

## **PHASE 4 – Conclusion – Problem solve agreements, make commitments, and create a follow-up plan.**

### *Problem-Solve Agreements*

- Listen to their perspective – You may find out that issues are going on in their lives or at work that genuinely prevents or make it almost impossible to meet the expectation.
- Learn and respond to new information – Based on what you learn, restate or revise the expectation.
- Ask how you can help – If they are genuinely committed to improving their performance, asking how you can help send a powerful message that you are invested in their success.
- Reach an agreement on what will be different.

*Formalize the Agreements* – This is a step that most crucial conversations miss. The result is typically “groundhog-day conversations.” Ensure both parties understand the agreements reached, any support or consequences discussed, and when and how you will follow up to ensure that expectations are met.

Be sure to:

- Restate the agreements you reached.
- Follow the restatement to define who will do what, by when, and describe the follow-up plan. If appropriate, put it in writing.
- Set a follow-up time in which you can check to see how things are going.

Formalizing agreements may sound like, *“This has been a productive meeting for both of us, and I am pleased we have a plan that meets both of our needs. To restate so we are both clear, we agreed that I will... and you will... I will send this by email later today, so we both have a copy. I think it would be helpful for both of us to meet again in two weeks to check in and see how it’s going. Does that work for you?”*

## **Resources for Further Learning**

Grenny Joseph, Ron McMillan, Kerry Patterson, and Al Switzler. *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High, Second Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011.

Grenny Joseph, Ron McMillan, Kerry Patterson, and Al Switzler. *Crucial Accountability, Tools for Resolving Violated Expectations, Broken Commitments, and Bad Behaviors*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2013.

# PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Research has established that leadership is second only to instruction among the many school factors that influence student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). The reality is that school leaders impact students indirectly through their teachers. The more effective the leader is in developing and supporting teachers, the more effective teachers will be with their students. To do this work well and grow their skills as instructional leaders, principals need the support of district leaders and the collective wisdom of their colleagues. One of the more effective systems supporting principal professional growth is a principal professional learning community (PPLC).

Professional learning communities are made up of educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing collective inquiry and action research processes to achieve better results for the students they serve. PLC's operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, 2006).

PLC's can exist at all levels of the district and are essential for the continued growth of leaders and teachers in their understanding of best practices. PLC's serve as the format for connecting best practices into a logical approach for schools. Collaboration is an essential element of a productive and positive school and district culture, and PLCs provide the structure for collaboration to develop and thrive.

Notably, one of the ways that research has identified for districts to support school improvement is the investment in instructional leadership development at the school and district level (Revisiting p. 339). To this end, every district should engage principals in their own PLC to allow them to collaborate on improving the learning that occurs in classrooms.

## District Central Office Support for Principal PLCs

The District is responsible for creating the conditions for effective principal PLCs.

The article *What Research Says About Learning Communities for Administrators* (2009) describes three primary responsibilities of the district:

1. Ensure there is regular, protected, and sufficient meeting time for principals to collaborate
2. Provide strong facilitators who can guide and support learning rather than direct learning
3. Provide well-constructed agendas grounded in the real problems school administrators face

What does this look like for principals within their PLC? One priority of the principal PLC could be to develop a better understanding of and support the work that teachers do within their PLCs. For example, practicing with colleagues the analysis of student work samples that focus on the following:

- Engaging in conversations addressing the four questions of the focus on learning
  - » What do we want students to know?
  - » How will we know when they've learned it?
  - » What do we do when they haven't learned it?
  - » How do we provide enrichment for students who have learned it?

- Examining the alignment that exists between
  - » The standards and the resources used to teach the standards.
  - » The standards and the rigor of tasks assigned to students.
  - » The rigor of student work compared to the standards.

Other potential priority areas for principal PLCs may include:

- Conducting calibration rounds of classroom walkthroughs with peers and debrief.
- Practicing feedback cycles.
- Developing examining and applying district guidance documents, such as tight/loose guidelines.
- Reading and discussing case studies on relevant topics, such as leadership, systems, and culture.
- Examining and discussing grading practices and equity in grading.

Additionally, principal PLCs may follow a cycle that aligns with regular occurrences in a school calendar, such as assessment windows, the teacher evaluation cycle, or curriculum evaluation and development. Or, PLCs could follow a theme for a given year, allowing greater focus on a priority area for the district, such as rigor and relevance in the classroom or developing quality teachers through observation and feedback. Regardless of topic selection, districts should consider ways to connect the PLC's work to principals' daily practice. This can be achieved through calibration rounds by principals at each school site or the review of school artifacts at meetings. Just as goal setting is essential to teacher PLCs to ensure a focus on results, goals for principal PLCs should be results-oriented and progress reviewed periodically throughout the year.

## **Resources for Further Learning**

David, J.L., *What Research Says About Learning Communities for Administrators*. Educational Leadership. Volume 67, Number 2. October 2009

DuFour, Richard, and Robert E. Eaker. *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement*. Bloomington, Ind.: National Educational Service, 1999.

Dufour, DuFour and Eaker. *Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work*. Solution Tree, 2008.

Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*. New York: The Wallace Foundation. 2004

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Many leaders interviewed for this guide indicated a need to understand better who did what within their district. In many instances, there were no clearly defined roles or organizational systems that provided this information. This was less of a concern in small districts with limited district leadership team members. However, in medium to large districts, where there were numerous district leadership team members, principals who were unclear on the roles, responsibilities, and reporting hierarchy in these districts were frequently frustrated and confused when requiring support or clarity on an initiative or overcoming an obstacle. To overcome this frustration, every district should have a detailed organizational chart updated regularly and communicated to all stakeholders to address this. A well-developed district organizational chart visually conveys the internal structure of the district by detailing the roles, responsibilities, and relationships between individuals within the district. The value and simplicity of an organizational chart as a form of communication and alignment cannot be overstated. This efficient and quick reference is a valuable tool for all administrators.

Organizational charts can look different based upon the style and purpose of the chart and the information that is included. For example, organizational charts can indicate the hierarchy of positions with reporting paths and the responsibilities that fall under the purview of each position, or they can provide contact information and delineate decision-making protocols and structures.

The development of an organizational chart for a district, and potentially for each department within a district, is important because:

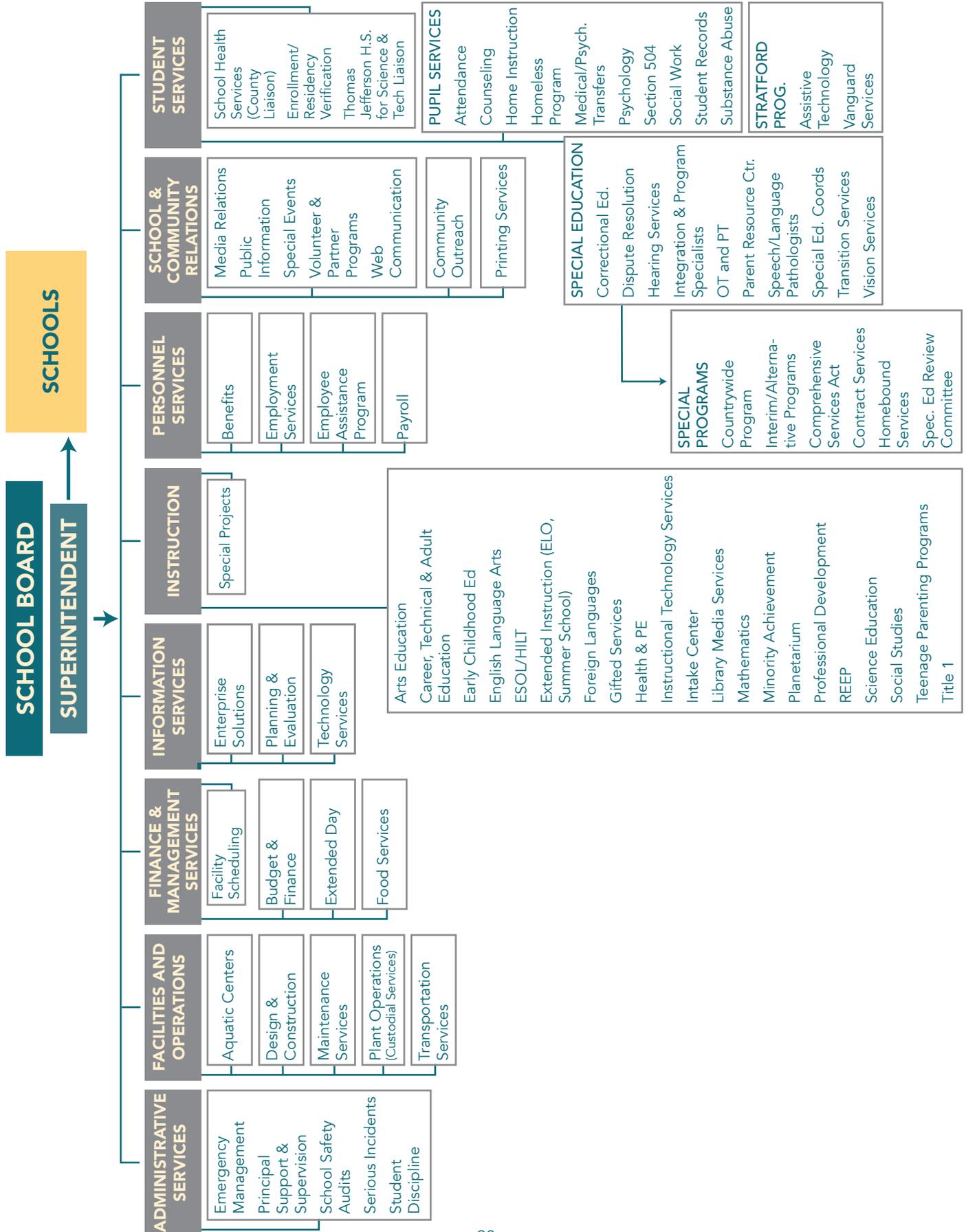
- It can improve collaboration and communication across positions and departments,
- It can bring clarity to site personnel regarding the division of responsibilities and routes/systems for the completion of processes or the approval of decisions,
- It can prevent a duplication of effort that may result when there is no clear delineation of responsibilities at the district level.

Your district organizational chart provides school leaders and other stakeholders easy access to information that directs them to the correct person to answer questions or approve requests. The organizational chart reduces frustration, increases efficiency, and improves the response school leaders and other stakeholders receive.

A well-developed organization chart can also help assimilate new staff into the workplace by assisting them with understanding who to contact for a given purpose. At the district level, it provides a reference that allows district administrators to appropriately assign a new task or project to the correct person based upon their area of expertise and alignment with other job responsibilities.

NM PSB encourages district leaders to utilize their district organizational chart as a reflection tool to ensure equity and to close the representation gap. The district organizational chart should reflect the demographics of the student body in the schools they serve and portray a balanced gender representation. The impact of a district with a culturally diverse team is felt in the classroom and directly affects the academic success of its students.

A sample organizational chart from a mid-sized school district is below. When creating your organizational chart, we would recommend adding names to positions.



# BEST PRACTICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGETING

The following “Best Practices” were obtained from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The recommendations are focused on optimizing student achievement within the available fiscal resources. The process encompasses a complete cycle for long-term financial planning and budgeting, including:

- Planning and preparing to undertake the budgeting process,
- Developing a budget,
- Evaluating how the budget process worked and adjusting accordingly.

The following five recommendations, or steps, are based on the premise that a solid support and communication plan exists between the district and the school sites. In each area, the emphasis is on budgeting related to supporting the delivery of an effective instructional program and the human resource requirements of the district’s schools.

**Step 1. Plan and Prepare** – The planning and budgeting process begins with mobilizing key stakeholders (e.g., focus groups), gathering information on the district’s academic performance and cost structure, and establishing principles and policies to guide the budgeting process.

Within this step, there are three key actions for district leaders:

- **Establish a partnership between finance, human resources, and instructional leaders.** A collaborative process increases the likelihood of the decisions being supported after the budget process is over.
- **Develop principles and policies to guide the budget process.** Budget principles and policies formalize standards and fundamental values that should govern the budgeting process.
- **Analyze current levels of student learning.** The current state of academic performance and the HR needs should be assessed to determine what course of action to take.

**Step 2. Set Instructional Priorities** – The budget needs to be rooted in the priorities of the District. Identifying and clearly articulating the District’s instructional priorities provides a solid basis for developing a strategic financial plan and supporting budget.

Within this step, there are four key actions for district leaders:

- **Develop goals** – Goals should be thoughtfully developed and structured to be specific, measurable, and reasonable to provide a strong foundation for the budget process.
- **Identify the root cause of the gap between goal and current state** – As stated by the Superintendent of Belen, a school district in NM, “by finding root causes of problems, a district can identify the most effective solutions to achieving its goals.”
- **Research & develop potential instructional priorities** – The District’s instructional priorities should be informed by research-proven practices and be limited in number to focus on items critical to optimizing performance.
- **Evaluate choices among instructional priorities** – A district should weigh its different options for achieving its goals against one another to focus on those with the most significant potential to impact student achievement positively.

**Step 3. Pay for Priorities** – Current resources and expenditures should be thoroughly analyzed to find the capacity to pay for key instructional priorities.

Within this step, there are three key actions for district leaders:

- **Apply cost analysis to the budget process.** Cost and staffing analysis are essential to identifying how the district might allocate its resources.
- **Evaluate & prioritize the use of resources to enact the instructional priorities.** Instructional priorities should be thoroughly quantified as a first step to determining how much money is needed to implement the priorities and where that money will come from. Trade-offs should be weighed to examine whether the costs, financial or otherwise, of implementing an instructional priority are viable.
- **Implement the plan.** The “strategic financial plan” is the long-term road map for implementing the District’s instructional priorities. A “plan of action” describes how the strategic financial plan is translated into coherent actionable steps.
  - » Develop a plan of action. Roles and responsibilities for implementing the strategic financial plan should be clarified for greater accountability.
  - » Allocate resources to individual school sites. Resources have the most direct impact at school sites and should be allocated transparently and consistent with the District’s overall strategy.

**Step 5. Ensure Sustainability** – The planning and budgeting process should be captured in writing, policy, and procedure to be replicated in the future.

- **Put the strategies into practice and evaluate results.** To ensure timeliness and accountability, the district should establish a system to implement the plan and monitor its progress while making necessary adjustments to stay on track.

Lastly, the district leadership needs to provide for their principals the central office contacts for the following functions:

1. Personnel issues (onboarding new employees, site-based personnel issues, etc.)
2. Budgeting/Fiscal support (training, collaboration, etc.)
3. Instruction (prioritizing, planning, collaboration, etc.)
4. Create district organizational flow charts for multiple areas (project planning, instructional planning, HR support, benefits support, etc.)

## Resources for Further Learning

GFOA Materials Library

<https://www.gfoa.org/materials>

NM PED School Budget Bureau

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/school-budget/>

Sorenson, R. & Goldsmith, L. *The Principal's Guide to School Budgeting*. Corwin. 2006.



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