

Producing Results--Through School Improvement & Capacity Building

For every school, at any stage of excellence, School Improvement is not only possible, but probable under the RIGHT conditions.

GOALS (Vision, Mission) Focused on Identified Needs and Student Achievement

Leadership Actions >>

- Guide the school community in articulating the THE BIG PICTURE--*the possibilities of what could be*--thus reducing the feelings of fragmentation and a “this too shall pass” attitude.
- Guide the school community in identifying a limited number of critical priorities.
- Develop 1 plan--incorporate all initiatives, current actions and programs into the one plan.
- Give advice on effectiveness of goals--focused on student achievement; measurable; incrementally challenging; assessed and reviewed at least twice annually; written in direct, understandable terms.
- Screen all decisions against the criteria--“Is this in the best interest of students (and their learning)?”
- Promote ongoing, collective dialogue about priorities.
- “Walk the Talk”--ensure that day-to-day actions and activities reflect the priority of student achievement.
- Model commitment and gain commitment from others; be responsible and distribute responsibility to others; and hold yourself and others accountable in day-to-day interactions and actions.

DATA to Inform Decisions

Leadership Actions >>

- View data as a catalyst to thoughtful action, not as a source of intimidation and anxiety.
- Model the usefulness and importance of data.
- Maintain an up-to-date, longitudinal, disaggregated database of important indicators of student performance, from multiple sources.
- Guide teams in honest evaluation of data to identify strengths as well as challenges.
- Communicate frequently success stories based on data as objective evidence of progress.

TEAMWORK to get the Desired Results and Energy to Sustain the Efforts

Leadership Actions >>

- Communicate your beliefs in the power of teamwork and act on those beliefs by being an equal and contributing member of school teams.
- Monitor plan implementation on a regular basis to ensure action.
- Ensure effective, efficient functioning of grade level and across grade level teams.
- Provide the resources, especially time, information, and professional learning opportunities, to make productive teamwork happen on a regular basis.
- Model effective team behaviors especially communication (listening, supporting, accepting, challenging, etc.) and supportive interpersonal relationships.
- Develop and maintain productive partnerships with families and community members.
- Promote a sense of shared responsibility and ownership of student success.

“OUT OF THE BOX” THINKING & RESEARCH FINDINGS to address needs in creative and proven ways

Leadership Actions >>

- Engage in proactive *problem finding* to ensure quick response and flexibility in meeting needs.
- Model systematic problem-solving by collaborating with others to find ways around barriers or obstacles to change.
- Challenge the status quo.
- Hold fast against the urge to find and implement a “quick fix.”
- Ensure that problems are fully understood (from the perspective of all key representatives) before identifying action.
- Facilitate team inquiry into possible creative and innovative solutions.
- Encourage and actively support risk taking (of carefully calculated risks) and communicate “there are no failures, only feedback.”
- Guide in the selection of viable, research-based actions--reinforce, stretch, & persist.
- Encourage and instruct others in using best practice--be a knowledgeable instructional leader.
- Collaborate to develop complete implementation plans and evaluation designs (expected outcomes/benchmarks, timelines, responsibility, formative evaluations, etc.).
- Address priorities comprehensively--actions should be in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and organization.

POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS are critical to motivation and energy for improvement

Leadership Actions >>

- Attend to school culture--“*can do.*” Strengthen the culture by maintaining success expectations and celebrating the small (and big) steps forward.
- Infuse the belief that *all* students *can* learn given the *right* conditions.
- Adjust current thinking about student performance to reflect the actual performance level. Continually “raise the bar,” while ensuring continuous progress. Set reasonable expectations>>acknowledge progress>>set higher expectations, etc.
- Provide pressure (enabling reinforcement, not overwhelming anxiety) and lots of support, recognition, and encouragement.
- Model lifelong learning by moving outside personal comfort zone.
- Model commitment to “We may be excellent, but we always want to get better.”
- Facilitate high-quality professional learning focus on priority needs and goals.
- Build each individual’s leadership capacity and sense of efficacy.
- Keep everyone well informed. Two way communication is key--give and get.

***Building capacity and negotiating significant changes are difficult--
requiring vision, supportive relationships,
problem-solving, and, most importantly, persistence.***

***School Improvement Is A Journey--Not A Destination
Each School’s Journey is Unique***