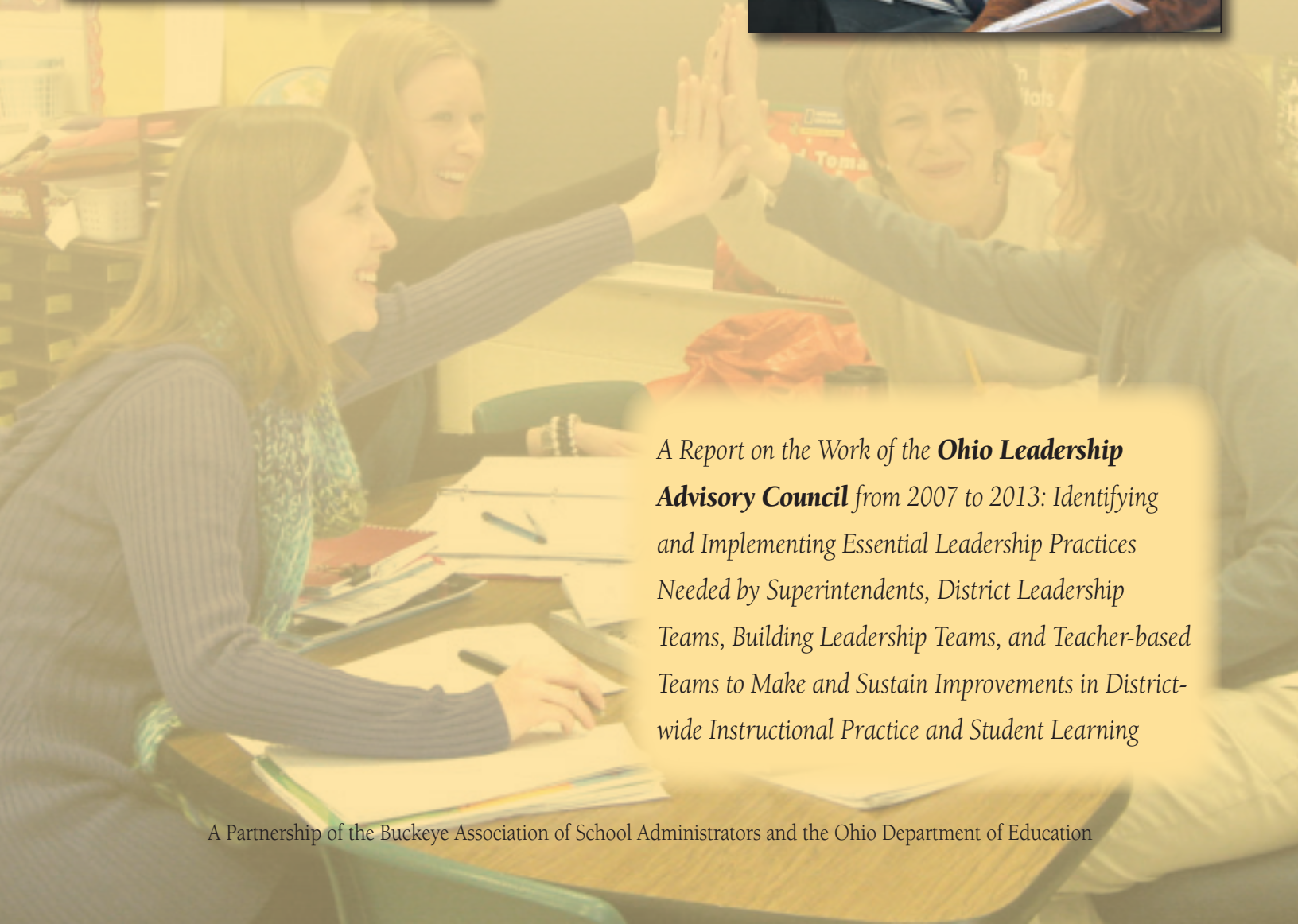


OHIO'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

2ND EDITION



2013



*A Report on the Work of the **Ohio Leadership Advisory Council** from 2007 to 2013: Identifying and Implementing Essential Leadership Practices Needed by Superintendents, District Leadership Teams, Building Leadership Teams, and Teacher-based Teams to Make and Sustain Improvements in District-wide Instructional Practice and Student Learning*

A Partnership of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and the Ohio Department of Education



“We know that to advocate well for students with disabilities, we must be true advocates for all children. OLAC’s work reaffirms that every adult has a role in providing the leadership needed to support higher levels of learning for all learners, including children and youth who have traditionally been viewed as the sole responsibility of a program or department. It is only through collaborative and ongoing professional learning about what works instructionally for children with varying needs, and the collective commitment to stay focused on sustained implementation of those few high-leverage strategies, that we will improve student, adult, and organizational outcomes.”

Dr. Susan Zake
 Director
 Office for Exceptional Children
 Ohio Department of Education

THE OHIO LEADERSHIP ADVISORY COUNCIL THEN AND NOW

Established by the Ohio Department of Education in collaboration with the Buckeye Association of School Administrators in 2007, the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC) was charged with addressing four critical questions:

1. *What are the essential practices against which current and proposed leadership development initiatives could be assessed by school boards, superintendents, central office personnel, principals, and teacher leaders interested in improving instructional practice and student performance?*
2. *What are the critical elements of a comprehensive system of development for superintendents and leadership teams, including core content and a roll-out strategy that relies on multiple effective delivery methods for reaching all districts?*
3. *What tools, products, and/or services should the state provide, in partnership with districts, institutions of higher education, professional associations, and others to assist superintendents and leadership teams in improving instructional practice and student performance?*
4. *What are the policy implications affecting the development of a cohesive statewide leadership system for Ohio, including key components and leverage points for strengthening leadership in a coherent way?*

Since 2007, OLAC has redefined leadership for Ohio, established a foundation for continuous and sustainable improvement in instructional practice and student learning, and anchored the work of Ohio’s statewide system of support by articulating a cohesive and coherent set of essential leadership practices for Ohio districts and their schools. The work of OLAC is directed by and facilitated through the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA) in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Education.

Council Leadership and Membership

OLAC was established as a 50-member advisory and study group comprised of representatives of key professional associations, business and school board representatives, practitioners in leadership roles, higher education representatives, and state education agency and regional technical assistance provider personnel. Today, the work of OLAC continues to be informed by broad-based stakeholder representation from practicing superintendents, central office personnel, principals, and teachers from Ohio school districts; institutions of higher education; and the following partner groups:

- Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA)
- Ohio Education Association (OEA)
- Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT)
- Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA)
- Ohio Association of Administrators of State and Federal Education Programs (OAASFEP)
- Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators (OAESA)
- Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators (OASSA)
- Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO)
- Ohio Educational Service Center Association (OESCA)
- Ohio Council of Professors of Educational Administration (OCPEA)

OLAC’s work is grounded in a strong belief in shared leadership. Thus, two primary principles guide the development of OLAC tools and resources: (1) all educators have the capacity to lead; and (2) essential leadership practices must be implemented at all levels to make and sustain improvements in student, adult, and organizational learning.

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FOREWORD

The Ohio Leadership Advisory Council's mission is to provide educators with the structures and resources necessary to develop and support effective leadership at every level. From its initial meeting on March 19, 2007, the Council recognized that its charge had to be addressed from a systems perspective. It also recognized that the hard work of supporting district-wide implementation of practices necessary to make real improvements on behalf of all students required a rethinking of what was meant by leadership. Throughout the Council's early debates and discussions, members remained steadfast in their belief that traditional models of leadership, which most often conceptualized leadership as something residing in a person or persons, must be replaced with shared leadership models that acknowledged the collective contributions of many individuals working at various levels across the education system.



As the Council's work took form, the Ohio Department of Education initiated the development of the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP). The OIP – a structured process that relies on the use of a connected set of web-based tools – was designed for use by all districts and their schools, regardless of improvement status. OLAC established the essential practices and the OIP provided a vehicle for districts to use in setting the boundaries for more focused and collective conversations about how to use those practices in improving outcomes for all children.

While Ohio has experienced much change over the past several years, the tenets underlying the work of OLAC are as relevant today as they were in 2007. New federal and state initiatives have offered numerous opportunities for education reform and improvement. At the same time, multiple and sometimes competing requirements associated with these opportunities have increased the potential for fragmentation of the core work of teaching and learning in Ohio districts. If districts are to realize the vision of the Ohio State Board of Education in ensuring that all students graduate from the PK-12 education system with the knowledge, skills and behaviors necessary to successfully continue their education and/or be workforce ready and successfully participate in the global economy as productive citizens, they must be supported in focusing and fully implementing a limited number of evidence-based strategies and actions to meet their identified needs.

The goal of the state's reform agenda, as articulated in Ohio's Race to the Top (RttT) strategy, is to implement a world-class education system in which all students will

graduate with a sense of purpose and be well prepared for college, work, and life. While Ohio has made progress in improving learning outcomes, much work must continue to be done to aggressively and intentionally address the needs of all children and youth. Consider these data:

- Nearly 75 percent of high-needs children in Ohio enter school without the skills they need to succeed in kindergarten (Ohio Early Learning Challenge Grant, 2011).
- In the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress, just 22 percent of economically disadvantaged Ohio fourth graders were proficient in mathematics, and only 15 percent were proficient in reading (Ohio Early Learning Challenge Grant, 2011).
- Children's poverty in Ohio has increased with 23.1% of Ohio's children living below the poverty line in 2010. These percentages are higher at 26.5% and 25.9%, respectively, for children in Appalachian and metropolitan areas, and the highest among black children at 45.3% (Children's Defense Fund-Ohio, 2011).
- In 2008, more than 175,000 Ohio children were from immigrant families, up from 124,000 in 2000-2002 (The Ohio State University, 2011).
- In the 2010–2011 academic year, 16.2 percent of Ohio's fourth graders failed to reach reading proficiency (Children's Defense Fund-Ohio, 2011).
- Ohio's disability gap has increased in both reading and mathematics since 2007 – in reading from 29.3 percentage points in 2007 to 31.2 percentage points in 2011; and in mathematics from 29.8 to 34.5 percentage points across the same time period (Ohio ESEA Flexibility Waiver, May 24, 2012, p. 68).

Marc Tucker, in the 2011 report of the National Center on Education and the Economy, advocated for federal incentives to help states put in place the kind of comprehensive

OLAC TENETS

1. **Leadership is a shared responsibility** and needs to be viewed not as a role, but as a set of essential practices directed toward the improvement of instruction with the ultimate aim of increasing students' learning.
2. **Leadership is a process distributed across an entire school system** – its central office and all of its buildings – involving shared responsibility for and concerted action on behalf of improved instructional practice and school performance.
3. **Accountability for school improvement requires leadership structures** (that is, district leadership teams, building leadership teams, and teacher-based teams) through which personnel take responsibility and hold one another accountable for organizing, implementing, monitoring, and learning from improvement processes.
4. **A collective focus on full and sustained implementation** – and monitoring of the degree of implementation – of a few potent yet flexible strategies provides the conditions necessary for school improvement.
5. **The Ohio Improvement Process (OIP)** – a structured process based on the use of a connected set of tools for reviewing, analyzing, and basing decisions on relevant data – provides a vehicle for initiating Ohio's Leadership Development Framework in ways that are responsive to stakeholders' insights about local commitments, needs, and assets.
6. **All learning, including teachers' learning of instructional practices, depends on changes in behavior** that respond to precise and relevant feedback. Procedures (e.g., routine classroom monitoring) that provide teachers with feedback and support constitute the most powerful way to enable teachers to improve their instructional performance. For professional learning to occur teachers must be deeply engaged in understanding and responding to such feedback and support, not simply trying to comply with external requirements.

system of education practices needed for a more coherent education system. Ohio's work, through the development and ongoing refinement of OLAC-OIP services and supports, provides a useful set of resources for districts to use in increasing consistency, coherence, and quality as they implement district-identified core work to improve learning on a continuous basis.

The use of OIP and OLAC resources is established as part of Ohio's approved ESEA Flexibility (Waiver) Request, which highlights the work of teacher-based teams in meeting the needs of all subgroups of students, and in setting the stage for meaningful collaboration among general education and special education teachers and related services providers, administrators, and others in better meeting the needs of all learners. Similarly, the use of the OIP and embedded tools is required by School Improvement Grant (SIG) recipients, further reinforcing the importance of aligning school-level actions to the established state improvement process and district-identified goals and strategies. Finally, Ohio's RtT strategy builds upon existing structures of support and school improvement, asserting that "schools will not be starting from scratch nor doing something in place of the OIP," and further connecting the use of RtT to the ongoing work of OLAC-OIP by stating that "Ohio has been among the nation's leaders in the development of several high leverage initiatives that form a solid base from which RtT will flourish including: Identifying leadership systems for superintendents, principals, and teachers to improve instructional practices and student achievement through the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC)."

Ohio districts and their schools – as well as the regional technical assistance providers, higher education institutions, and professional associations that support them – are called to meet the increased rigor and requirements associated with common core state standards and the associated next generation assessments. As districts gear up to meet these challenges, the OLAC-OIP leadership team structures and aligned resources and tools will be essential in helping them to engage in focused planning, implementation, and monitoring of adult actions to provide the kind of feedback to the system that is needed for continuous improvement and learning.



IMPLEMENTING AND SUSTAINING A COHESIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM: SIX YEARS LATER



The Role of Leadership as a Critical Component of the Ohio Improvement Process

The leadership development framework presented in this report offers a common core of essential practices around which systemic efforts to improve leadership – at the state, regional, and local levels – can be unified and advanced. The Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) provides a means of aligning processes, structures, tools, and people to significantly improve instructional practice and student performance.

This framework delineates leadership roles/responsibilities at the district, school, and teacher-team level, validating leadership team structures needed to make and sustain improvements and support higher levels of learning for all students and adults in the system. It also supports a coherent leadership development system that can be used to:

- Improve shared understanding of essential and effective practices applicable to all districts and their schools;
- Support the ongoing development and growth of superintendents, principals, teachers, and other personnel;
- Address district systems through the development of highly effective leadership teams focused on implementation of essential practices; and
- Provide a strong foundation for aligning teaching and learning initiatives at the state level.

The second edition of *Ohio's Leadership Development Framework* promotes the use of the most essential leadership practices for superintendents, district leadership teams, and building leadership teams, and adds essential practices for teacher-based teams. Evidence suggests that the use of these practices when implemented deeply on a district-wide basis, will lead to better results for all learners. Sustainability and scalability of any practice requires its full implementation (Blasé, Fixsen, & Duda, 2011).

The Work of the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council

The Ohio Leadership Advisory Council was formed to facilitate the development of a leadership system for educators that would reach from top to bottom and across all levels. This system, which includes superintendents, principals, teachers, and other personnel, would affect every level of Ohio's education enterprise – from the state, to all regions, to the district, to the school building, and to the classroom.

At the inception of the Council's work, its goals were to (1) identify the essential skills or practices that superintendents and leadership teams at the district and school level must demonstrate to improve instructional practice and student performance; (2) identify the types of professional development and support needed to assist leaders in acquiring these skills, and how such support could be deployed to allow for universal access, as well as more targeted or intensive support for districts that need it; (3) identify the tools or products needed to facilitate continuous district-wide improvement; and (4) identify the policy implications that must be considered in developing a more coordinated and coherent leadership development system.



Today, OLAC's work focuses on the refinement of essential leadership practices as feedback is received from partner districts across the state. More important, OLAC facilitates the development of aligned resources for assisting districts to more effectively support the use of these practices in all classrooms within all schools across the district. At the same time, OLAC supports the development and use of aligned resources by higher education faculty, regional technical assistance providers, professional association representatives, and state education agency personnel across Ohio.

The Ohio Leadership Advisory Council identified the most essential leadership practices across the following six core areas that outline what superintendents, district leadership teams, building leadership teams, and teacher-based teams need to do to improve instructional practice and student performance. A description of these essential practices, which will be used to guide the ongoing refinement and development of universally accessible OLAC-OIP resources and tools (e.g., on-line assessment, on-line learning modules, professional development), follows:

AREA 1: DATA AND THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

This area recognizes that improvement cannot be random and reinforces the need to create and use one integrated plan with a limited number of focused goals based on data and directly aligned to identified needs.

AREA 2: FOCUSED GOAL SETTING PROCESS

This area focuses on using data to gain clarity around the biggest problems to be addressed, and creating a system that provides feedback and continuous use of data to monitor district and school practices and their impact on student achievement.

AREA 3: INSTRUCTION AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

This area emphasizes the importance of clarity on learning outcomes, full access to challenging curriculum for all students, combining core subject matter competence with a focus on critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and creating collaborative structures to improve the collective use of evidence-based practices to support high-quality teaching and learning.

AREA 4: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

This area focuses on the importance of involving stakeholders to assist the superintendent and board in the establishment of district goals around instruction and achievement, and gaining support for sustaining the focus on improving instructional practice and student performance.

AREA 5: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

This area focuses on broadening how we think about resources to include not only money but personnel, programmatic resources, time, and data, and ensuring that all resources are used in an intentional way to support district goals for instruction and achievement.

AREA 6: BOARD RELATIONS AND GOVERNANCE PROCESS

[Building Governance Process – at the School Level]

[Team Governance Process – at the Teacher-team Level]

This area focuses on the critical role of the board in developing and supporting district goals for instruction and achievement and using structures and processes that ensure these goals remain the primary focus of district work.



OHIO'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (2ND EDITION)

By every account, leadership matters. But what is leadership? A fundamental assumption underlying Ohio's work to create a coherent and cohesive leadership development system is that the purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role (Elmore, 2006). This foundational principle, supported by an increasing number of studies on the impact of district and school leadership on student achievement, lends support for approaches that can be used to distribute key leadership functions, and align and focus work across the system to improve instructional practice and student learning.

For example, the critical role of the district in supporting instructional leadership was highlighted in a major Wallace Foundation-commissioned study conducted in 2010, which found that “district policies and practices focused on instruction are sufficiently powerful that they can be felt by teachers as an animating force behind strong, focused leadership by principals” (p. 203). “Simply increasing pressure on principals is unlikely to bring about real improvements...” (p. 52). Instead, the report suggests that a better strategy would be to develop the capacity for instructional leadership through the development of instructional teams, lending further support for a collective, collaborative approach to improving professional practice.



Others (e.g., DuFour & Marzano, 2011; McNulty & Besser, 2011; Fullan, 2011, 2010; Darling-Hammond, L., 2010; Wahlstrom, 2010; Schmoker, M., 2006; David, 2008-09; Gallimore, et al., 2009; Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D., 2008) have also advocated for the use of team structures to facilitate shared learning for instructional improvement, noting that no single person has all the required knowledge, skills, and talents to meet the needs of all children. This finding is reflective of the growing body of evidence in support of teachers working together to inform each other's instructional practice, as well as the importance of stable school-based settings and distributed leadership, using explicit protocols, and having coherent and aligned district policies and practices (Gallimore, et al., 2009).

In *Leaders Make It Happen! An Administrator's Guide to Data Teams*, McNulty and Besser (2011) identified the following six practices – aligned with the use of OLAC-OIP – for improving a district's capacity for continuous improvement: (1) use data well; (2) focus your goals; (3) select and implement shared instructional practices; (4) implement deeply; (5) monitor and provide feedback and support; and (6) inquire and learn. These practices are evident in the work of 10 districts featured through a national initiative called *Moving Your Numbers*. Sponsored by the National Center on Educational Outcomes and implemented through the University of Dayton School of Education and Health Sciences Grant Center, *Moving Your Numbers* offered examples of district practices that, when implemented in a consistent, coherent, and aligned manner, contributed to improved results for all students, including those with disabilities and other learning challenges (Telfer, 2012). In each district, superintendent leadership was critical in identifying the non-negotiables and in setting the conditions and expectations for improvement.



These studies support the Council's belief that:

- Leadership in our districts and their schools is extremely important in improving student achievement, and effective district and school leaders are essential to implementing and sustaining meaningful school improvement efforts;
- There is an urgent need for effective leadership and a statewide system to support sustainable and scalable improvement;
- Ohio's leadership system must be anchored in teaching and learning, focused on building community, and directed to ensuring the success of all student subgroups and every learner;
- A body of research-based evidence exists to support the use of essential practices needed to improve student learning; and
- Effective leadership must be exercised at all levels of the education enterprise for meaningful and sustainable district-wide improvements in student achievement to be realized.





“Leaders in designated roles at all levels are most effective when they understand, develop and incorporate leadership capacity within others in their organizations, including those individuals who have not traditionally been identified as leaders. These individuals are members of a leadership team that sets high expectations for all students, creates a true forum for discussion, planning and decision making, and has agreed upon processes and protocols; they become key components of the vehicle for improving the quality of our schools and the outcomes for all of our students.”

Cathy LaForme
 Consultant
 State Support Team Region 3
 ESC of Cuyahoga County

Exercising effective leadership at all levels of the education enterprise means acknowledging the critical role that local boards of education play in making student achievement the top priority and in ensuring that district goals for achievement and instruction remain the primary focus of the district’s work. It requires superintendents to focus their efforts on creating goal-oriented districts by engaging in collaborative goal setting, and working with the Board to set and monitor progress and align resources toward meeting non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction. And, it requires the aligned use of leadership team structures at the district, school, and teacher-team level to improve the capacity of districts to make and sustain improvements through collaborative dialogue and learning among all personnel.



It also requires the intentional shift away from the traditional notion of leader as manager and leadership as an administrative position/role to leadership as a set of practices that must be exercised across the system to address the increasing challenges and expectations – both internal and external – faced by public education today.

Inherent in these requirements is the recognition that district culture must support the use of evidence-based professional practices that lead to improved achievement, rejecting the notion that student achievement is pre-determined based on a student’s race, disability, or degree of wealth. Moving past opinion, preference, and popular practice to effective practice based on data and evidence requires clarity on learning outcomes, agreement on the “right” work, and a reframing of leadership as a set of practices that are implemented continuously and collectively across the system and for which the adults in the system are held accountable.



ESSENTIAL PRACTICES FOR SUPERINTENDENTS



The role of the superintendent in today's increasingly complex, competitive, and global economy must be to set the stage for student learning on a system-wide basis, not only to close achievement gaps between groups of students, but also to raise performance expectations for all students through a focus on twenty-first century skills.

Setting the stage includes focusing the core work of the district on the improvement of instructional practice and student learning, setting the direction and expectations for facilitating and monitoring adult implementation of agreed-on strategies and actions, as well as monitoring student progress and learning, providing time and structure for frequent collaborative conversations about the effectiveness of the instruction provided on student learning, engaging staff and the community in improving the teaching and learning process, implementing Board policies, and creating the processes, structures, and culture to support continuous improvement in adult and student learning across multiple dimensions.

Professor Mark H. Moore of the JFK School of Government at Harvard uses a strategic triangle to talk about the need for leaders to integrate three components when managing change associated with the implementation of complex improvement strategies: making strategic decisions based on the public value the organization is trying to create (i.e., moral purpose); managing the political environment so the organization obtains the resources and authority it needs to make improvement; and managing the operational capacity so that the organization can fulfill its organizational purpose and mission.



In effective districts and schools, this kind of improvement is not random. Rather, it is highly focused, beginning with an honest assessment of student data and the identification of academic weaknesses that must be addressed. It involves the development of leadership teams, targeted professional development, the alignment or realignment of resources to address identified weaknesses, and an internal accountability system for continuously monitoring whether instructional practices are having the desired effect on student performance.

These practices are reflected in findings released in September 2006 by the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) following a comprehensive analysis of 27 studies conducted since 1970 on the effect of district leadership on student achievement.

This meta-analysis, which constitutes the largest-ever quantitative examination of research on superintendents, found a statistically significant relationship between district-level leadership and student achievement, demonstrating that effective superintendents create goal-oriented districts focused on teaching and learning goals. These goals are centered on achievement and instruction, are collaboratively developed, are Board-adopted, and are stable and sustainable for an extended period of time. For purposes of *Ohio's Leadership Development Framework*, such goals are referred to as district goals.

Researchers identified the following five district-level responsibilities that were significantly positively correlated with improved student achievement.

1. Collaborative goal setting

Effective superintendents work with their Board to involve all relevant stakeholders in establishing goals for the district.

2. Non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction

Effective superintendents ensure that the collaborative goal setting process results in non-negotiable goals, defined as goals that all staff members must act upon, in at least two areas (i.e., student achievement and classroom instruction), set specific achievement targets for schools and students, and ensure the consistent use of research-based instructional strategies in all classrooms to reach those targets.

3. Board alignment and support of district goals

The local board of education is aligned with and supportive of the non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction in districts with higher levels of achievement. They ensure that these goals remain the primary focus of the district's efforts and that no other initiatives detract attention or resources from accomplishing these goals.

4. Monitoring goals for achievement and instruction

Effective superintendents continually monitor district progress toward achievement and instructional goals to ensure that these goals remain the driving force behind a district's actions.

5. Use of resources to support achievement and instruction

Effective superintendents ensure that the necessary resources – including time, money, personnel, and materials – are allocated to accomplish the district's goals. Initiatives that are not aligned with district goals for achievement and instruction are reduced or eliminated.

These leadership functions are reflected in the *Ohio Standards for Superintendents*.

Adapted from *School District Leadership that Works: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement*, by J. Timothy Waters, Ed.D. & Robert J. Marzano, Ph.D., September 2006, 3-4.



Area 1: Data and the Decision-Making Process – Superintendent



- Importance of identifying, collecting, analyzing and effectively using relevant data to identify greatest problems to be addressed, and to create the kind of culture and expectation that supports effective data-based decision-making at all levels of the system.
- Importance of developing shared accountability by broadening the concept of accountability to include “internal” measures that hold all adults accountable for improved student performance, rather than only external accountability imposed from outside.
- Importance of using data to continuously monitor adult implementation and student progress against performance targets and district established goals.
- Importance of addressing achievement and growth, and in getting past opinion through the use of evidence-based practices.

Essential Practices

1. Establish clear expectations for and require the effective use of data at all levels of the system to drive improvement in instructional practice, to assess its impact on student achievement, and to make decisions about teaching and learning.
2. Build a culture that supports the effective use of data to improve student performance by organizing and presenting data in ways that identify gaps and trends in student performance and requiring intentional decisions regarding curriculum and instruction, interventions, and professional development.
3. Require the use of current disaggregated student achievement data to establish focused goals and measurable strategies for instruction and achievement.
4. Use data to set performance targets for each building and grade level, planning for the success of all children and designed to close achievement, expectation, and implementation gaps for every subgroup of the population.
5. Ensure the skillful and accurate use of data by providing ongoing training and support throughout the organization.
6. Expect district administrators and principals to model and monitor use of data to inform instructional decisions.
7. Establish, as a part of the central office, services to regularly review and analyze building-level data and to provide guidance for district and building-level actions and the actions of teacher-based teams.



“I firmly believe that having a first-rate school without first-rate leadership is impossible. Leadership is a balance of management and vision. A top-notch school leader places student and adult learning at the center of all decisions for that school. Effective leadership requires a leader to make decisions based on the needs of the students. Effective leadership also depends on a leader having the authority to hold people accountable for results. Quality leaders set high expectations and standards for both students and the adults, creating a culture of continuous learning. Leadership demands someone who understands that he/she is not seen as the person who has everything figured out, but rather someone who challenges the process while modeling the way and enabling others to act.”

Bill Sears
 Center Director
 Instructional Services
 Hamilton County ESC

Area 2: Focused Goal Setting Process – Superintendent

- Importance of identifying – based on a review of data – a limited number of goals, and a limited number of strategies for each goal, that allow for concentrated focus on the core work that needs to be done to improve student performance.
- The importance of aligning district work with district goals for instruction and achievement (i.e., defined as non-negotiable goals that are collaboratively developed, board adopted, and stable/sustainable over an extended period of time).
- Importance of reducing the number of initiatives to align improvement efforts on a district-wide basis around two or three focused goals directly related to identified needs.
- Importance of developing one plan, rather than multiple and often contradictory plans, aligned with the district goals.
- Importance of internal accountability, which holds all adults in the system accountable for implementing evidence-based practices to improve teaching and learning.

Essential Practices

1. Commit, in conjunction with the board of education, the district and all schools to make continuous progress toward meeting district goals and performance targets for instruction and achievement.
2. Ensure the collaborative development and ongoing monitoring of a single district improvement plan that focuses on a limited number of district goals.
3. Implement the district improvement plan with a limited number of focused district goals that are based on current aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data.
4. Establish and convey the district’s vision and mission for guiding the collaborative development and communication of district goals.
5. Ensure that schools have focused building improvement plans that are clearly aligned to and designed to meet district goals.
6. Develop and implement an internal accountability system that holds the adults at all levels accountable for results.
7. Implement a sustainable system for monitoring progress, providing feedback and support, and making adjustments to implementation of the district improvement plan.

Area 3: Instruction and the Learning Process – Superintendent

- Importance of focusing on 21st century skills, ensuring that all children combine core subject mastery with other significant skills, including critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication, and collaboration skills; information and communication technology literacy; life skills (leadership, ethics, personal productivity, self-directed learning); and twenty-first century content (global awareness and business fundamentals and economic literacy).
- Importance of developing collaborative structures (e.g., district, building, teacher teams) to facilitate communication, build trust and credibility, and stay focused on the collective and shared responsibility for improving student achievement.
- Importance of providing full access to challenging content aligned with rigorous standards for all students and student groups as part of closing the achievement, expectation, and implementation gap.



Essential Practices

1. Require the district-wide use of an established curriculum aligned with district goals.
2. Ensure the development and implementation of high-quality standards-based instruction aligned with district goals.
3. Establish clear priorities among the district's instructional goals and strategies.
4. Require use of a process that accurately monitors implementation of the district's instructional program.
5. Ensure that the district curriculum and instructional program are designed to provide full access and opportunity to all students/student groups to meet district goals.
6. Require the systemic implementation and ongoing evaluation of prevention/intervention strategies as part of the district's instructional program to ensure that all students meet performance targets.
7. Require the frequent use of collaboratively developed common formative classroom assessments to gauge student progress and guide instructional planning toward meeting district goals.
8. Define and expect principals to fulfill instructional leader responsibilities.
9. Require administrators, building leadership teams (BLTs), and teacher-based teams to take action to ensure the progress of each student toward meeting district goals.



“If a school district wants to continuously improve it must promote and foster leadership at all levels of the organization. OLAC is the leadership framework that allows schools to systematically build structures for total school reform based on improving student outcomes.”

Debbie Campbell
*Co-director of Member Development
 Buckeye Association of School Administrators*

Area 4: Community Engagement Process – Superintendent

- Importance of meaningfully involving all relevant stakeholders to assist the superintendent and board in establishing district goals.
- Importance of gaining support for needed improvements and to sustain a focus on district goals.
- Importance of managing change needed to improve student achievement.
- Importance of assessing the effectiveness of the community engagement process.
- Importance of engaging both internal and external community members, defined as those individuals who affect or are affected by the success of the district [typical stakeholder groups include students, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, school administrators, students’ immediate family members, school board members, community leaders, local business and industry representatives, and citizens who live in the community(ies)].

Essential Practices

1. Collaborate effectively with internal and external community members in the development and support of district goals.
2. Communicate clear expectations with regard to district goals.
3. Offer opportunities for meaningful input and feedback from internal and external community members with regard to district goals.
4. Ensure that partnership activities are focused on district goals.
5. Provide for training/support as needed by internal and external community members to enable them to meaningfully participate in activities aligned with district goals.



Area 5: Resource Management Process – Superintendent



- Importance of broadening the definition of resource management to include the management of time, money, staff, and programmatic resources, emphasizing the importance of directing effort toward student achievement.
- Importance of including the district business manager/director of business operations/treasurer as an integral member of the district leadership team.
- Importance of maintaining shared central office and school authority over major resource decisions, focusing district, building, and teacher team meetings on learning and instruction, using performance data to guide program decisions, investing in targeted professional development aligned with identified needs, and investing in academic support programs to narrow or close achievement gaps.
- Importance of making “proactive, highly intentional decisions” about the equitable (as compared to equal) allocation of resources to achieve the district’s non-negotiable goals.
- Importance of advocating for the generation of additional funding aligned with district goals.

Essential Practices

1. Focus the use of district resources, including time as well as staff, programmatic, and monetary resources, to support district goals.
2. Use data to inform the budget process and ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to support the district’s continuous improvement plan (CIP).
3. Support the effective use of data to improve focused planning and instruction on a district-wide basis.
4. Support and equitably allocate resources to principals and their schools to meet the district’s CIP and school improvement plan (SIP).
5. Establish procedures to screen, interview and select staff based on district goals.
6. Develop and implement a system for staff performance reviews aligned with district goals.
7. Provide for extensive job-embedded professional development for all staff aligned with district goals.
8. Eliminate initiatives that are not aligned with district goals, or are ineffective in meeting district goals.



“Leadership is all about relationships. The three most important keys to Leadership are: (1) developing relationships; (2) maintaining relationships; and (3) maximizing relationships.”

(The above quote/paraphrase has been attributed to Michael Fullan, among others)

Ted Zigler, Ed.D.
Associate Research Professor
Leadership Studies
Wright State University

Area 6: Board Development and Governance Process – Superintendent

- Importance of the board’s involvement in the development and approval of district goals, as well as the board’s support for the district’s goals for achievement and instruction, ensuring that these goals remain the primary focus of district efforts.
- Importance of the relationship of superintendent continuity to increases in student performance.
- Importance of engaging multiple constituencies to gain support for needed improvements and to sustain a focus on district goals.
- Importance of the moral imperative of maintaining a student-centered focus and ensuring that improvement efforts are designed to ensure the success of every child.
- Importance of shared understanding of the roles of the superintendent and board members.

Essential Practices

1. Keep the purpose of ensuring the success of every student central to all decisions.
2. Work in partnership with board members to adopt and review all policies in meeting the district goals.
3. Report student achievement data and progress on district goals to the board on a regular and frequent basis.
4. Maintain high expectations for district and school performance.
5. Continually promote high expectations so that all internal and external stakeholders can articulate district goals.
6. Provide opportunities for and encourage board member participation in professional development aligned with district priorities.



ESSENTIAL PRACTICES FOR DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Richard Elmore, Gregory R. Anrig Professor of Educational Leadership at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, describes the purpose of leadership as one of improving instructional practice and performance, regardless of role. He asserts that the deromanticizing of leadership in American education – anchoring leadership in the focused work of instructional practice rather than in the character traits and actions of individual leaders – would have a very positive effect on the quality of schools.



Distributing key leadership functions – all centered on improving practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment – through the development and use of leadership teams shifts the focus of leadership from a single individual to a team of individuals that can function as purposeful communities, “enhancing the skills and knowledge of the people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result.” (Elmore, 2006, p. 59)



Promoting a culture of shared understanding and expectations for what constitutes high-quality instructional practice, holding all schools accountable for following through on the full implementation of agreed-on strategies and actions to meet district-identified goals, and providing the support that schools need to make progress are key functions of Ohio district leadership teams (DLTs). DLTs are instrumental in facilitating the transition of central office personnel from serving traditional managerial roles to serving a support function, assisting all school principals and building leadership teams in improving outcomes and results for all children. This changing role means working together across traditional departmental structures and making more informed decisions with regard to hiring and allocating school personnel, allocating funding to schools, and providing a range of support services aligned with the core work of the district.

Leadership functions of the DLT would include such tasks as setting performance targets aligned with Board-adopted district goals; monitoring performance against the targets; building a foundation for data-driven decision making on a system-wide basis; designing system planning and focused improvement strategies, structures, and processes; facilitating the development and use of collaborative structures; brokering or facilitating high-quality professional development consistent with district goals for instruction and achievement; and allocating system resources toward instructional improvement.





“Leadership is not a position or person, but a set of practices. More and more case studies and research throughout Ohio and the nation conclude that districts and their schools that embed the practices identified in the work of OLAC - as represented in Ohio’s Leadership Development Framework - and the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) have improved student achievement even for our most challenging student groups.”

Don Washburn
 Director
 Ohio Leadership Advisory
 Council (2011-2013)

Area 1: Data and the Decision-Making Process – District Leadership Team

- *Importance of identifying, collecting, analyzing and effectively using relevant data to identify greatest problems to be addressed, and to create the kind of culture and expectation that supports effective data-based decision-making at all levels of the system.*
- *Importance of developing shared accountability by broadening the concept of accountability to include “internal” measures that hold all adults accountable for improved student performance, rather than only external accountability imposed from outside.*
- *Importance of using data to continuously monitor student progress against performance targets and district established goals.*
- *Importance of addressing achievement and growth, and in getting past opinion through the use of data and evidence-based practices.*

Essential Practices

1. Establish and implement procedures and norms requiring the effective use of data at all levels of the system to drive improvement in instructional practice, to assess the impact on student achievement, and to make decisions about teaching and learning.
2. Model the effective use of data as an ongoing strategy to improve adult implementation and student performance.
3. Require the use of current aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data to establish district goals and measurable strategies for instruction and achievement.
4. Based on data analysis and interpretation, set performance targets for each building and grade level, planning for the success of all children and designed to close achievement, expectation, and implementation gaps for every subgroup of the population.
5. Assist administrators in monitoring staff use of data to inform instructional decisions.
6. Provide training, support, and guidance in the effective use of data for building leadership teams and teacher-based teams.



Area 2: Focused Goal Setting Process – District Leadership Team

- *Importance of identifying – based on a review of data – a limited number of goals, and a limited number of strategies for each goal, that allow for concentrated focus on the core work that needs to be done to improve student performance.*
- *The importance of aligning district work with district goals for instruction and achievement (i.e., defined as non-negotiable goals that are collaboratively developed, board adopted, and stable/sustainable over an extended period of time).*
- *Importance of reducing the number of initiatives to align improvement efforts on a district-wide basis around two or three focused goals and a limited number of strategies directly related to identified needs.*
- *Importance of developing one plan, rather than multiple and often contradictory plans, aligned with district goals.*

Essential Practices

1. Support the development and ongoing monitoring of a single district improvement plan that focuses on a limited number of district goals.
2. Facilitate the implementation of the district improvement plan with a limited number of district goals that are based on current aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data.
3. Commit to continuous improvement toward meeting district goals.
4. Convey to all schools the district’s vision and mission for guiding the collaborative development of district goals, and communicate performance targets to all buildings.
5. Ensure that schools have a focused school improvement plan (SIP) clearly aligned to and designed to meet the district’s CIP.
6. Implement an internal accountability system that holds the adults at all levels accountable for results.
7. Monitor the progress of the district improvement plan and, based on current data, make necessary adjustments.





“In the world of education it is important to develop leadership at all levels. Shared responsibility and accountability are essential foundations for supporting each other in ways that maximize results for students. Leaders must work collaboratively to assure student success. OLAC provides the framework to support the collaborative environment necessary to make successful changes in the education community.”

Deb Tully
Director of Professional Issues
Ohio Federation of Teachers

Area 3: Instruction and the Learning Process – District Leadership Team

- Importance of a focus on 21st century skills, ensuring that all children combine core subject mastery with other significant skills, including critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication, and collaboration skills; information and communication technology literacy; life skills (leadership, ethics, personal productivity, self-directed learning); and twenty-first century content (global awareness and business fundamentals and economic literacy).
- Importance of developing collaborative structures (e.g., district, building, teacher teams) to facilitate communication, build trust and credibility, and stay focused on the collective and shared responsibility for improving student achievement.
- Importance of providing full access to challenging content aligned with rigorous standards for all students and student groups as part of closing the achievement, expectation, and implementation gap.

Essential Practices

1. Support the implementation of high-quality standards-based instruction aligned with the district’s curriculum and goals for instruction and achievement on a district-wide basis.
2. Assure that the district curriculum is the curriculum used in all schools.
3. Convey clear priorities among the district’s instructional goals and strategies.
4. Ensure the delivery of high-quality instruction on a district-wide basis that is based on research-based practices, engages students, incorporates culturally responsive practices, and relies on ongoing assessment and progress monitoring to inform instruction.
5. Implement the process that accurately monitors the district’s instructional program.
6. Monitor student achievement, ensuring that school instructional practices are designed to provide full access and opportunity to all students/student groups to meet district goals.
7. Ensure the systemic implementation and ongoing evaluation of prevention/intervention strategies as part of the district’s instructional program to ensure that all students meet performance targets.
8. Require the frequent use of collaboratively developed common formative classroom assessments to gauge student progress and guide instructional planning toward meeting district goals.
9. Assist administrators in fulfilling instructional leader responsibilities.
10. Assist administrators, building leadership teams (BLTs), and teacher-based teams (TBTs) to effectively monitor the progress of all students in their building toward meeting district goals.



“Most systems require leadership to ensure implementation fidelity and monitoring integrity. Integral for OIP is the facilitation that builds capacity for distributive leadership and the protocols and processes around data analysis and collaborative action planning.”

Michael Tefs, Ed.D.
 Superintendent
 Wooster City School District

Area 4: Community Engagement Process – District Leadership Team

- Importance of meaningfully involving all relevant stakeholders to assist the superintendent and board members in establishing district goals.
- Importance of engaging multiple constituencies to gain support for needed improvements and to sustain a focus on district goals.
- Importance of managing change needed to improve student achievement.
- Importance of engaging both internal and external community members, defined as those individuals who affect or are affected by the success of the district [typical stakeholder groups include students, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, school administrators, students’ immediate family members, school board members, community leaders, local business and industry representatives, and citizens who live in the community(ies)].

Essential Practices

1. Collaborate effectively with internal and external community members in the development and support of district goals.
2. Communicate clear expectations with regard to district goals.
3. Offer opportunities for meaningful input and feedback from internal and external community members with regard to district goals.
4. Develop partnerships focused on district goals.
5. Provide training/support needed by internal and external community members to enable them to meaningfully participate in activities aligned with district goals.



Area 5: Resource Management Process – District Leadership Team



- Importance of broadening the definition of resource management to include the management of time, money, staff, and programmatic resources, emphasizing the importance of directing effort toward student achievement.
- Importance of including the district business manager/director of business operations/treasurer as an integral member of the district leadership team.
- Importance of maintaining shared central office and school authority over major resource decisions.
- Importance of focusing district, building, and teacher team meetings on learning and instruction.
- Importance of using performance data to guide program decisions, investing in targeted professional development aligned with identified needs, and investing in academic support programs to close achievement, expectation, and implementation gaps.
- Importance of forecasting resources needed to meet district goals.
- Importance of making “proactive, highly intentional decisions” about the equitable (as compared to equal) allocation of resources to achieve district goals.

Essential Practices

1. Assess and make recommendations to the superintendent regarding financial and capital management aligned to district goals for instruction and achievement.
2. Use data to inform the budget process and allocate district resources to support district goals.
3. Allocate equitable and appropriate time, training, and resources to support the effective use of data to improve focused planning and instruction on a district-wide basis.
4. Assess and make recommendations to the superintendent regarding human resource development (including developing others as leaders) aligned to district goals.
5. Assess and make recommendations to the superintendent regarding scheduling aligned to district goals.
6. Support and allocate resources to schools to meet district goals.
7. Screen, interview and select staff based on district goals.
8. Establish and implement supervisory systems that ensure progress toward meeting district goals.
9. Provide for extensive job-embedded professional development aligned with district goals.
10. Identify initiatives not aligned with or ineffective in meeting district goals that should be eliminated.



“Real leadership is grounded in collaborative communication and conversation. Now more than ever our nation needs educational leadership from the bottom up, the top down, and from side to side. The OLAC leadership framework began as an idea and it has transformed into an effective model the can be used by all districts. In Olmsted Falls, the framework has provided our District, Building, and Teacher-Based Teams an effective mechanism for collaborative conversations to occur within the classroom, teachers’ lounge, at the building, and in the board room. When the OLAC framework is implemented with fidelity, the national transformative changes that are on the horizon can be discussed within a trusting environment and be met with vigor, enthusiasm, and success.”

Jim Lloyd, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Olmsted Falls City Schools

Area 6: Board Development and Governance Process – District Leadership Team

- Importance of the board’s involvement in the development and approval of district goals, as well as the board’s support for district goals for achievement and instruction, ensuring that these goals remain the primary focus of district efforts.
- Importance of the relationship of superintendent tenure to increases in student performance.
- Importance of engaging multiple constituencies to gain support for needed improvements and to sustain a focus on district goals around instruction and achievement.
- Importance of the moral imperative of maintaining a student-centered focus and ensuring that improvement efforts are designed to ensure the success of every child.

Essential Practices

1. Keep the purpose of ensuring the success of every student central to all decisions.
2. Support the superintendent’s work in partnership with board members to adopt and continually review progress toward meeting district goals.
3. Provide data and reports to the superintendent to inform the board as part of policy governance.
4. Maintain high expectations for district and school performance.
5. Continually promote high expectations so that all internal and external community members can articulate district goals.
6. Support the provision of professional development aligned with district priorities for board members.



ESSENTIAL PRACTICES FOR BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAMS



In *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results*, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) described the development of a strong building leadership team (BLT) and the distribution of 21 practices characterizing the job of an effective principal as key steps in enhancing student achievement. Such practices, identified through McREL's meta-analysis of 35 years of research on school-level leadership, suggest that leading a building requires a "complex array of skills" not likely to be found in a single individual, further supporting the need for a strong leadership team. Selecting the "right" work (i.e., work that has a high probability of improving student achievement), identifying the order of magnitude implied by the selected work, and matching strengths of leadership team members to the kind of changes needed (first-order or second-order) for significantly improving student achievement are other key components of developing a plan for effective leadership. These leadership functions are reflected in the *Ohio Standards for Principals*.

Selecting the right work based on the effective and ongoing use of data and focused planning, as well as developing the collective know-how to do the right work, often require the strategic use of collaborative structures and processes for aligning shared responsibility, expectations, and accountability across the school. Michael Fullan, professor of policy studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto and recognized expert in educational reform and organizational turnaround, encourages districts and schools to understand that all successful improvement strategies are socially based and action oriented. In other words, all successful turnarounds develop collaboration where there was none before, highlighting the need to improve relationships as a core strategy of effective improvement.

BLTs can play a pivotal role in fostering shared leadership and responsibility for the success of every child through the creation of purposeful communities at the school level. Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005) define a purposeful community as one with the collective efficacy and capability to develop and use assets to accomplish goals that matter to all community members through agreed-upon processes. Fullan (2011) calls this emphasis on building community as essential to district-wide success, asserting "whole system success requires the commitment that comes from intrinsic motivation and improved technical competencies of groups of educators working together purposefully and relentlessly." (p. 8) He offers four elements necessary for whole system reform – intrinsic motivation, instructional improvement, teamwork, and 'allness.'

CRUCIAL ELEMENTS FOR WHOLE SYSTEM REFORM

1. Foster intrinsic motivation of teachers and students;
2. Engage educators and students in continuous improvement of instruction and learning;
3. Inspire collective or team work; and
4. Affect all teachers and students – 100%

Source: M. Fullan, 2010

In addition to supporting improvement in instructional practice on a school-wide basis, the leadership functions of the BLT would include such tasks as establishing priorities for instruction and achievement aligned with district goals; supporting the effective and ongoing use of data to monitor adult follow-through and student progress; providing frequent and structured opportunities for teachers to learn from each other; monitoring the implementation of agreed-on practices at the teacher-team level; providing effective feedback to teacher-based teams on implementation of agreed-on strategies and actions and its effect on student learning; supporting the development, implementation, and monitoring of focused building improvement strategies/plans; and making recommendations for the management of resources, including time and personnel, to meet district and building goals.



Area 1: Data and the Decision-Making Process – Building Leadership Team



- Importance of identifying, collecting, analyzing and effectively using relevant data to identify greatest problems to be addressed, and to create the kind of culture and expectation that supports effective data-based decision-making at all levels of the system.
- Importance of the need to disaggregate data by subgroup to understand and address gaps between students based on race, poverty, English proficiency, and identified disability.
- Importance of developing shared accountability by broadening the concept of accountability to include “internal” measures that hold all adults accountable for improved student performance, rather than only external accountability imposed from outside.
- Importance of using data to continuously monitor student progress against performance targets and district established goals.
- Importance of addressing achievement and growth, and in getting past opinion through use of data and evidence-based practices.

Essential Practices

1. Establish data teams (including course, grade level, grade band or vertical team, department) and implement procedures for the effective use of data to assess the impact on student learning, and to make decisions about teaching and learning.
2. Create a school culture that supports the effective use of data to improve student performance by organizing and presenting data in ways that identify gaps and trends in student performance and requiring intentional decisions regarding curriculum and instruction, interventions, and professional development.
3. Support the use of current aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data to establish measurable strategies aligned with district goals for instruction and achievement.
4. Ensure data teams use building, course, and classroom data to constantly monitor progress in meeting performance targets for the building and at each grade level, planning for the success of all children and designed to close achievement, expectation, and implementation gaps.
5. Ensure the skillful and accurate use of data by providing ongoing training and support throughout the building.
6. Monitor staff use of data to inform instructional decisions and organization for learning (e.g., schedules, grading, grade-level configurations, interventions, etc.).
7. Provide support to all teacher-based teams and regularly review and analyze building-level data and to provide guidance for classroom-level and teacher team actions.



“Leaders are an integral part of any organization because they should be the instigators of change. They should possess vision to stay ahead of the oncoming trends and have a plan for the future growth and development of their organization. Good leaders also inspire their colleagues to work toward a common goal.”

Vincent Harris
 Social Studies Department
 Supervisor
 Sycamore Community Schools

Area 2: Focused Goal Setting Process – Building Leadership Team

- Importance of identifying – based on a review of data – a limited number of strategies for addressing district goals, which allow for concentrated focus on the core work that needs to be done to improve student performance.
- Importance of reducing the number of initiatives to align improvement efforts on a district-wide basis around two or three focused goals directly related to identified needs.
- Importance of developing one plan, rather than multiple and often contradictory plans, aligned with district goals.

Essential Practices

1. Communicate to all staff how the district’s vision and mission and focused goals relate to the school improvement plan (SIP).
2. Commit to the development, implementation and ongoing monitoring of the SIP (based on current aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data) aligned to the district’s CIP.
3. Develop and implement internal accountability indicators for research-based/effective practices and objective performance that hold staff accountable for results.
4. Use a sustainable data-based system to monitor progress, provide feedback and support, and make necessary adjustments to the implementation of the SIP.



Area 3: Instruction and the Learning Process – Building Leadership Team



- Importance of a focus on 21st century skills, ensuring that all children combine core subject mastery with other significant skills, including critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication, and collaboration skills; information and communication technology literacy; life skills (leadership, ethics, personal productivity, self-directed learning); and twenty-first century content (global awareness and business fundamentals and economic literacy).
- Importance of developing collaborative structures (e.g., district, building, teacher teams) to facilitate communication, build trust and credibility, and stay focused on the collective and shared responsibility for improving student achievement.
- Importance of providing full access to challenging content aligned with rigorous standards for all students and student groups as part of closing the achievement, expectation, and implementation gap.

Essential Practices

1. Ensure that the established district curriculum is the curriculum used by all teachers in the school, and ensure instruction is aligned with the big ideas and essential questions embedded in the curriculum.
2. Establish priorities for instruction and achievement based on data and aligned with district goals.
3. Monitor the implementation of the school instructional program and the follow-through on the implementation of the teacher-based teams' specific recommendations for instructional strategies.
4. Ensure the delivery of high-quality instruction on a school-wide basis that is based on research-based practices, engages students, incorporates culturally responsive practices, and relies on ongoing assessment and progress monitoring to inform instruction.
5. Require the systemic implementation and ongoing evaluation of prevention/intervention strategies as part of the building's instructional program to ensure that all students meet performance targets.
6. Require the frequent use of collaboratively developed common formative classroom assessments to gauge student progress toward meeting district goals.
7. Monitor student achievement, ensuring that each student has access to high quality instruction and is making progress toward meeting the district's CIP.

Area 4: Community Engagement Process – Building Leadership Team

- *Importance of meaningfully involving all relevant stakeholders to assist the superintendent and board members in establishing district goals.*
- *Importance of engaging multiple constituencies to gain support for needed improvements and to sustain a focus on district goals around instruction and achievement.*
- *Importance of managing change needed to improve student achievement.*
- *Importance of engaging both internal and external community members, defined as those individuals who affect or are affected by the success of the district [typical stakeholder groups include students, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, school administrators, students' immediate family members, school board members, community leaders, local business and industry representatives, and citizens who live in the community(ies)].*

Essential Practices

1. Ensure that building strategies/action steps for instruction and achievement are aligned with district goals.
2. Engage internal and external community members in establishing and supporting building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.
3. Communicate clear expectations with regard to building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement on an ongoing basis.
4. Offer opportunities for meaningful input and feedback from internal and external community members with regard to building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.
5. Develop collaborative partnerships aligned with building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.
6. Provide for training/support needed by internal and external community members to enable them to meaningfully participate in activities aligned with building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.





“I believe shared leadership fosters collaborative decision-making in a learning organization. Taking time to structure leadership at the district, building, teacher, and student levels offers stakeholders deeper levels of commitment to the organization’s mission. In a school environment, the ultimate reflection of success is the development of student leaders.”

Suzanne Darmer, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Ada Exempted Village Schools

Area 5: Resource Management Process – Building Leadership Team

- Importance of broadening the definition of resource management to include the management of time, money, staff, and programmatic resources, emphasizing the importance of directing effort toward student achievement.
- Importance of maintaining shared central office and school authority over major resource decisions.
- Importance of focusing school meetings on learning and instruction.
- Importance of using performance data to guide program decisions, investing in targeted professional development aligned with identified needs, and investing in academic support programs to close achievement, expectation, and implementation gaps.
- Importance of making “proactive, highly intentional decisions” about the equitable (as compared to equal) allocation of resources to implement the school’s strategies/action steps aligned with district goals.

Essential Practices

1. Use data to inform the budget process and allocate building resources to support building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.
2. Use resources to provide training on the effective use of data for planning and instruction.
3. Screen, interview and select staff based on building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.
4. Align staff performance reviews with building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.
5. Make recommendations for human resource development (including developing others as leaders) with building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.
6. Make recommendations for human resource deployment (teacher assignment, staffing patterns) with building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.
7. Provide for extensive job-embedded professional development aligned with building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.
8. Make recommendations regarding scheduling and time management based on building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.
9. Eliminate initiatives that are not aligned with or are ineffective in meeting building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.

Area 6: Building Governance Process – Building Leadership Team

- *Importance of the board's involvement in the development and approval of district goals, as well as the board's support for district goals for achievement and instruction, ensuring that these goals remain the primary focus of district and school efforts.*
- *Importance of principal and teacher leadership in improving student achievement.*
- *Importance of engaging multiple constituencies to gain support for needed improvements and to sustain a focus on district goals around instruction and achievement.*
- *Importance of the moral imperative of maintaining a student-centered focus and ensuring that improvement efforts are designed to ensure the success of every child.*

Essential Practices

1. Work in partnership with district leadership to continually review the school's progress toward meeting the building-level strategies/action steps aligned with district goals.
2. Keep the purpose of ensuring the success of every student central to all decisions.
3. Ensure that monitoring implementation of the building improvement plan is a standing agenda item of school staff meetings.
4. Continually communicate high expectations for school performance.
5. Continually promote high expectations so that all internal and external community members can articulate the building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.
6. Promote shared leadership through the effective use of teacher-based teams aligned with the building-level strategies/action steps for improving instruction and achievement.



ESSENTIAL PRACTICES FOR TEACHER-BASED TEAMS

McNulty and Besser (2011) emphasized the importance of developing leadership capacity at every level through “shared inquiry grounded in data” (p. 65). Their work on data teams (called teacher-based teams in Ohio) encourages districts to establish collaborative teams that use a structured process coupled with data to support continuous learning and improvement. According to Reeves (2009), “data teams are the single best way to help educators and administrators move from drowning in data to using information to make better instructional decisions. What makes the data team process distinctive is that we are not just looking at student scores, but at the combination of student results, teaching strategies, and leadership support.”



Monitoring implementation and providing feedback on what does and does not work in improving student learning are essential activities of district, building, and teacher-based teams. The district and its schools must set clear expectations for the use of collaborative teams at the teacher level, establish a common language with regard to the important terms used by the district to define and support high quality instructional practice, model the use of required team structures and protocols, and provide needed supports and ongoing opportunities to collaboratively and deliberately reflect on collective practice.

In Ohio’s model, collaborative teams at the teacher level (i.e., TBTs) use the Ohio 5-step process to set common instructional targets, use collaboratively developed common classroom formative assessment to assess student progress against those targets, make decisions about and adapt instruction based on what is/is not working, and report progress to BLTs. BLTs, in turn, monitor TBT implementation, use the data provided to make decisions about the kind of professional development and supports needed by schools and teacher teams, and report building data to the DLT. The DLT monitors implementation across all schools within the district and determines the level of district-wide and/or

building-level supports needed to ensure that goals are being met. This ongoing culture of inquiry, based on the flow of information across the district, is the hallmark of a learning organization.

Every teacher should be a member of one or more TBTs. While TBTs are most often comprised of teachers and other education professionals who teach the same grade or content area, there are variations in TBT membership depending on the level and size of the school. Regardless of the particular structure used to support TBTs, intervention specialists assigned to support the delivery of instruction to students with disabilities should be regular members of the team. Other individuals (e.g., Title I instructors; teachers of English Language Learners; school counselors; related services specialists; art, music, and physical education teachers, to name a few) are often TBT members.

A variety of teams usually operate in most schools, and team time is often used for an array of activities (e.g., planning events; discussing administrative issues, policies, or procedures; arranging schedules or calendars). For TBT members to learn from each other in ways that improve the collective instructional practice of the group, a singular focus on improving teaching and learning must guide the work of the team.



Area 1: Data and the Decision-Making Process – Teacher-based Team



- Importance of identifying, collecting, analyzing and effectively using relevant data to identify student strengths and differentiated learning needs.
- Importance of the need to disaggregate data by subgroup to understand and address gaps between students based on race, poverty, English proficiency, and identified disability.
- Importance of developing shared accountability among team members for the success of all students.
- Importance of using data to continuously monitor student progress against performance targets and district and school established goals, strategies, and actions.
- Importance of addressing achievement and growth, and in getting past opinion through use of data and evidence-based practices.

Essential Practices

1. Engage all instructional personnel as members of one or more teacher-based teams [Note: TBT instructional personnel include all personnel who have responsibility for making decisions about teaching and learning for an assigned group of students, including but not limited to general education teachers, intervention specialists, related services personnel, gifted/talented instructors, ELL instructors].
2. Follow established conditions (e.g., norms, expectations, roles, responsibilities, schedules) necessary for effective team functioning.
3. Collect, chart, and analyze pre- and post-aggregated and disaggregated student data (including data by subgroups) related to the common student learning/plan indicators that are being addressed by the team for the purpose of identifying student strengths and needs, and assessing student mastery of identified standards-based concepts and skills.
4. Use student data, as a team, to determine the level of student progress and make instructional decisions related to meeting the differentiated learning needs of the assigned group of students.
5. Monitor, as a team, the effectiveness of the TBT and the degree of classroom implementation of agreed-on instructional strategies.
6. Serve as a vehicle for continuous feedback and support among team members and shared professional learning by regularly reviewing and analyzing student performance data and data related to team member implementation of agreed-on instructional strategies.
7. Report TBT student achievement and adult implementation data results to the BLT on a regular basis.



“In every organization, leaders emerge through formal and informal processes. These individuals are essential to move the organization forward. Those who are most effective lead by example, actively mentor and support the development of others, and create opportunities for all members of the team to contribute ideas, expertise, and unique perspectives. Leaders emerge in times of opportunity and times of challenge, demonstrating strength, resiliency, and a strong sense of collegiality.”

Rebecca Watts
Associate Vice Chancellor
of P-16 Initiatives
Ohio Board of Regents

Area 2: Focused Goal Setting Process – Teacher-based Team

- Importance of identifying – based on a review of student data – a limited number of actions for addressing district and school goals and strategies, which allow consistent implementation of strong core instruction needed to support higher levels of learning for every student.
- Importance of reducing the number of activities to align team member efforts around the implementation of common targeted strategies and actions related to identified student needs.
- Importance of developing common instructional approaches and assessments for use by all team members aligned with district and school goals and strategies.

Essential Practices

1. Establish clear learning objectives for what all students should learn and be able to do aligned with the district and school focused goals, strategies, and actions for instruction and achievement.
2. Implement focused strategies and actions in accordance with adult implementation indicators as outlined in the district and school improvement plans.
3. Monitor frequently, as a team, the degree of implementation of selected strategies and actions, and make necessary adjustments to ensure alignment with the district and school focused goals, strategies, and actions for instruction and achievement.
4. Monitor frequently, as a team, the progress of students in response to focused strategies and actions implemented by the team and make necessary adjustments based on measured levels of student learning.



Area 3: Instruction and the Learning Process – Teacher-based Team



- Importance of a focus on 21st century skills, ensuring that all children combine core subject mastery with other significant skills, including critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication, and collaboration skills; information and communication technology literacy; life skills (leadership, ethics, personal productivity, self-directed learning); and twenty-first century content (global awareness and business fundamentals and economic literacy).
- Importance of using collaborative structures (e.g., district, building, teacher teams) to facilitate communication, build trust and credibility, and stay focused on the collective and shared responsibility for improving student achievement.
- Importance of providing full access to challenging content aligned with rigorous standards for all students and student groups as part of closing the achievement, expectation, and implementation gap.

Essential Practices

1. Use the established district curriculum as the framework for TBT work and ensure instruction is aligned with the big ideas and essential questions embedded in the curriculum.
2. Provide full access to core instruction – aligned with the district’s established curriculum and priorities for instruction and achievement – for all students, regardless of label.
3. Establish priorities for differentiated instruction based on TBT student data and aligned with district and building focused goals, strategies, and actions.
4. Develop and use, through focused collaborative discussion, specific instructional strategies that address student learning needs and meet the district’s/school’s priorities for instruction and achievement.
5. Increase the quality of teacher instructional discourse to improve student outcomes.
6. Use collaboratively developed common formative classroom assessments to gauge student progress toward meeting the district and school focused goals, strategies, and actions.
7. Monitor individual student achievement and growth to ensure that each student is making adequate progress toward achieving district and building learning goals for all students.

Area 4: Community Engagement Process – Teacher-based Team

- *Importance of meaningfully involving all relevant stakeholders to assist the superintendent and board members in establishing district goals.*
- *Importance of engaging multiple constituencies to gain support for needed improvements and to sustain a focus on district goals around instruction and achievement.*
- *Importance of managing change needed to improve student achievement.*
- *Importance of engaging both internal and external community members, defined as those individuals who affect or are affected by the success of the district [typical stakeholder groups include students, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, school administrators, students' immediate family members, school board members, community leaders, local business and industry representatives, and citizens who live in the community(ies)].*

Essential Practices

1. Ensure that TBT priorities are aligned with building and district focused goals, strategies, and actions.
2. Communicate clear expectations to internal and external community members in relation to the purpose and value of TBTs in improving the quality of instruction provided by the district.
3. Communicate clear learning expectations to parents and families with regard to individual student achievement and growth.
4. Integrate the support provided through BLT-developed collaborative partnerships, community activities, and parental feedback to improve and enhance the work of TBTs across the district.





“Visionary, bold, shared leadership is the one and only cornerstone for keeping our schools a place to prepare students for a globally based and fast changing work world. The future of our country as a world leader depends on the P-16 education that our young people are accessing today. Research-based leadership development is a non-negotiable component for school leaders. Engaging school leaders in this critical work is our challenge as a profession. OLAC offers a framework and tools to move shared leadership development forward.”

Pamela M. VanHorn
Director
Ohio Network for Innovation
and Improvement
Ohio Department of Education

Area 5: Resource Management Process – Teacher-based Team

- Importance of broadening the definition of resource management to include the management of time, money, staff, and programmatic resources, emphasizing the importance of directing all efforts toward adult and student learning.
- Importance of maintaining shared central office and school authority over major resource decisions.
- Importance of focusing team meetings on instruction and learning.
- Importance of using adult implementation and student performance data to guide team decisions, contribute to targeted professional development aligned with identified needs, and invest in academic support programs to close implementation and achievement gaps.
- Importance of making proactive, highly intentional decisions about the equitable (as compared to equal) allocation of resources to implement the school’s strategies/ action steps aligned with district goals.

Essential Practices

1. Use team time to focus on constructive discourse and reflection about effective instructional practice.
2. Utilize the district- and building-established data reporting system.
3. Identify, based on data, the level and type of support needed from the BLT and DLT to support TBT members to learn and improve.
4. Participate in targeted professional development based on identified team needs.
5. Support and implement the replication of effective instructional practices identified on a district- and building-wide basis.

Area 6: Team Governance Process – Teacher-based Team

- *Importance of the board's support for the use of collaborative learning teams (i.e., teacher-based teams) to meet district goals for achievement and instruction, ensuring that these goals remain the primary focus of district, school, and teacher team efforts.*
- *Importance of teacher collaboration and leadership in improving student achievement.*
- *Importance of engaging multiple constituencies to gain support for needed improvements and to sustain a focus on district goals around instruction and achievement.*
- *Importance of the moral imperative of maintaining a student-centered focus and ensuring that improvement efforts are designed to ensure the success of every child.*

Essential Practices

1. Understand the purpose and function of TBTs and their relationship to the DLT and BLTs across the district.
2. Establish a calendar that outlines meeting dates and times, within the required district/building schedule.
3. Bring relevant formative data/information to team meetings.
4. Use established protocols to facilitate meaningful and efficient communication, problem solving, and learning.
5. Align the team's work with district- and building-developed strategies and indicators.
6. Provide written documentation of decisions made by the team, including task assignments and associated time lines for following up on decisions made.
7. Evaluate continuously the effects of the implementation of shared work on student performance.



MOVING FORWARD: A FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AND SCALABLE IMPROVEMENT



Ohio recognized the need to develop a systemic approach that could be used to identify, sustain, and scale effective instructional practice on a statewide basis. The decision to intentionally approach the work this way required the development of a process that was relevant and applicable not only to districts and schools in improvement status, but rather to all districts and their schools regardless of demographics and accountability status. By definition, the use of a systemic approach required all parts of the system to be included.

Ohio's Leadership Development Framework, coupled with the OIP as a structured process with an aligned set of connected, web-based tools, offers a tried and viable mechanism for supporting districts and their schools in focusing and meaningfully implementing district-identified strategies and actions. It provides a vehicle for supporting continuous student, adult, and system learning and improvement on a district-wide basis. And, it provides a way to aggregate implementation data on a regional, quadrant, and statewide basis to identify common areas of need that should be addressed.

In short, Ohio's work through OIP, in concert with OLAC's focus on leadership, provides the foundation for a comprehensive professional learning and support system. Such a system can be used to elevate the improvement discussion beyond programmatic, departmental, or traditionally "siloes" or fragmented conversations to a collective conversation based on a shared commitment to improving the capacity of all aspects of Ohio's education system in the service of all students.

The work begun in 2007 is far from done. Focused and sustained attention is needed to help every district and school to better prepare all learners to be successful in post-secondary endeavors. OLAC provides a forum for stakeholders from the school, district, regional, and state levels to engage in shared work and decision-making to continually improve upon the content and methods of delivery of OLAC services and resources.

Stay focused and stay engaged!



APPENDICES



“Leadership makes the difference. The vision and commitment of a leader can help a team accomplish more than they ever thought possible. It is the leader who instills the hope, leads the process of charting the course, and provides the support the team needs to reach its objective. Leadership is not always positional and rarely about having all of the answers. Effective leadership is often about knowing the questions that need to be asked and answered. Leadership is about including others in developing the answers and the plans for their implementation. Leadership makes the difference.”

Kirk Hamilton, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Buckeye Association of School Administrators

Appendix A: HIGHLIGHTS OF OHIO DISTRICTS USING OLAC RESOURCES AND THE OHIO IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

OVERVIEW

As part of a formative evaluation of the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council’s (OLAC) resources and services as they relate to supporting effective engagement in the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP), eight districts from across Ohio were selected to tell their stories, focusing on their ongoing improvement journeys and their efforts in redefining the way in which they optimize student and adult learning throughout the system. Specifically, districts were asked to gauge the effects of using OLAC-OIP in supporting districtwide continuous improvement; identify barriers to full implementation of agreed-on strategies and actions; describe challenges, including those associated with ensuring the applicability of the work to all children and groups of children; describe “solutions” in addressing implementation challenges and putting sustainable improvements in place across the district; and assess implications for current and future OLAC work in assisting all districts and their schools to more effectively meet the instructional needs of all learners.

Two districts from each quadrant of the state were identified and participated in structured interviews. District selection was designed to ensure diversity in student demographics, district size and type (e.g., urban, rural), socioeconomic status, and district improvement status (e.g., high, medium, low support districts required to use OIP; districts that chose to use OIP). Districts selected ranged from serving just fewer than 1,000 students to over 11,300 students, in two to 18 buildings. Students identified as economically disadvantaged, students receiving special education services, and minority students ranged from 26 to 63 percent, 11 to 18 percent, and under two to 23 percent, respectively.



DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

*Bellefontaine City Schools
(Logan County)*

*Chesapeake Exempted Village
Schools (Lawrence County)*

*Lisbon Exempted Village
Schools (Columbiana County)*

*Massillon City Schools
(Stark County)*

*Parma City Schools
(Cuyahoga County)*

*Seneca East Local Schools
(Seneca County)*

*Triad Local Schools
(Champaign County)*

*Wilmington City Schools
(Clinton County)*

Districts were encouraged to involve individuals with varied roles and perspectives (e.g., central office personnel; principals; teachers; community and/or board members; members of DLTs, BLTs, TBTs; OIP internal facilitators; and others) in the interview. The superintendent from each district was involved in his/her district's interview. A structured interview guide was developed and used to ensure consistency in the interview process, and focused on district core beliefs and values, and stated goals; focus; use of collaborative team structures; essential practices used across the district; and challenges, accomplishments, and next steps.

While the featured districts varied in size, complexity, and the degree of student diversity, they shared an unwavering commitment to continuously examining and improving their own capacity to better meet the instructional needs of all learners. Lessons learned by and from interviewed districts follow and are organized as: (1) defining student success, (2) using focused goals to align the work across the district, (3) using OIP and OLAC resources, and (4) offering advice to other districts.

STARTING WITH THE END IN MIND: DEFINING STUDENT SUCCESS

In discussing the core beliefs and stated goals that districts use to focus and align their work, it became clear that student learning and development stands at the very center of all these districts do. The message was clear: the success of every student is the absolute priority, and students experience achievement and authentic growth when all adults in the system are engaged in conversation and ongoing data collection, reflection, and learning around their own instructional practice. Dr. Jeff Graham, Superintendent of Parma City Schools, said it this way: "having no dreams deferred...that's what success for our students means to us."

These districts have worked to clearly define what all students need to know and be able to do, and how they will demonstrate and reflect the successful acquisition of such knowledge and skills. Districts commonly remarked that the district's guiding parameters for learning could be articulated by any teacher or administrator across the organization and, often, could be summarized by various students.



“We really do have a sense of collective, shared responsibility for all kids. Every student’s learning is everybody’s job. Period.”

Laurie Hunker
 North Central Ohio ESC
 District Facilitator
 Seneca East Local Schools

Districts identified the following characteristics of success, which included:

- Seeing annual student growth, and seeing it in all students;
- Preparing students for life, so that they become productive citizens;
- Striving for improved State assessment scores, while always maintaining the attitude that authentic learning is about more than tests;
- Developing children who want to come to school because they view their educational environment as a safe and supportive place that challenges and encourages them;
- Recognizing student behavior as an indicator of success, and working to optimize positive behaviors and their outcomes while decreasing negative ones;
- Reaching graduation and being prepared to enter the world of work or higher education; and
- Observing students engaged in self-directed learning, demonstrating that they can take the knowledge they’ve built and apply it to other aspects of their lives.



IMPROVING COHERENCE & CONSISTENCY: USING FOCUSED GOALS TO ALIGN CORE WORK ACROSS THE DISTRICT

A commitment to creating and sustaining focus was evident in the stories shared by each district. As they relayed their experiences in developing a single, coherent plan based on a limited number of focused, data-driven district-wide goals, identifying the non-negotiables around teaching and learning emerged as a critical priority. The OIP and its embedded tools (e.g., Ohio Decision Framework tool), coupled with *Ohio’s Leadership Development Framework*, were identified by districts as having had a significant influence on their capacity to identify the most critical needs and develop clearly defined goals and associated strategies and actions that set the stage for district-wide implementation. Helen Otto, principal of McKinley Elementary School in the Lisbon Exempted Village Schools explained, “The ongoing work embedded in the Ohio Improvement Process allowed our district to align our practice and keep focused around a coherent statement of intention and action.”

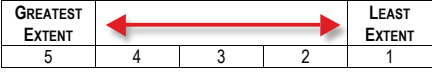
“As a superintendent, I want to see clarity and consistency, so that as building goals align to district goals, we make giant leaps together, rather than scattered steps.”

Dr. Jeffrey Graham
 Superintendent
 Parma City Schools

In every district interviewed, focused goals were being used to align and guide implementation across the district, and an increasing number of staff members understood the relationship between these goals and their day-to-day responsibilities.

The district plan was no longer a document developed solely for compliance or funding purposes, nor was it put in a drawer. Rather, it was described as a “living” document that was used to make intentional decisions about staffing needs and assignments, resource allocation, the use of professional development, and more. As districts better understood the importance of focus and alignment, individual schools within the districts no longer operated in isolation. Instead, school improvement plans were developed to meet district-identified goals and strategies (see results aggregated across the eight districts interviewed in Table 1 below).

TABLE 1: USING FOCUSED GOALS

						MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
	5	4	3	2	1		
To what degree...	5	4	3	2	1	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
...are the goals used to guide district and district-wide action and improvement efforts?	4 50.0%	4 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4.50	0.53
...do staff members across the district understand the relationship of these goals to their daily work?	1 12.5%	5 62.5%	2 25.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3.88	0.64
...do individual schools develop building goals separate from district goals?	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	8 100.0%	1.00	0.00

USING OIP AND OLAC RESOURCES

The most consistently acknowledged area of growth and progress among these districts was the development of an increased sense of shared responsibility for the core work of teaching and learning, marked by commitment to aligned, collective action and engagement in honest, open dialogue. Districts reported that involvement in the OIP, along with supported use of OLAC tools and resources, has yielded purposeful communication, effective and intentional collaboration, and the establishment of team structures that have been essential in facilitating broad implementation of effective practices and ongoing monitoring of implementation fidelity. These districts have discovered mechanisms for moving away from functioning as disconnected staff members and toward functioning as integrated networks of adults who share accountability for the learning of all students.

Having a sound foundation in place allowed districts to more effectively respond to new federal and state initiatives, making essential connections between aspects of new activities and the districts’ ongoing improvement work. As districts elaborated on the impact of using OIP-OLAC, interviewees reported that engagement in the process:

- Provided a focus for district work;
- Facilitated the development of common goals;
- Positioned the district to be more proactive than reactive;
- Supported the establishment of effective and aligned team structures at all levels of the system;
- Set expectations for the effective use of data to make instructional decisions;
- Allowed for a more significant voice for teachers, redefining their role and strengthening their sense of purpose;

THE ROLE OF THE OHIO DECISION FRAMEWORK (DF) TOOL

Across district interviews, the DF was consistently referenced as an essential tool in supporting critical conversations and identifying the districts' most pressing problems and needs, thereby laying a solid foundation for the development of focused goals. Districts interviewed acknowledged the rigors and challenges associated with use of the DF, describing it as “grueling but necessary.” District experiences reflected that engagement in stage 1 of the OIP (i.e., identification of critical needs) using the DF facilitated conversations that were difficult to have, but that were central to changing adult behavior. Use of the DF provided necessary structure for individuals with multiple perspectives and roles to have open and honest conversations, paving the way for shared accountability and collective practice. Districts continue to use the DF at regular intervals in analyzing data, prioritizing needs, and developing or refining needs assessments and district improvement plans.



- Provided a safe place for open sharing of information that led to more effective, strategic, and intentional decision-making;
- Helped districts to think critically about the interconnected nature of various initiatives and priorities, and focus on meaningful implementation of essential, agreed-on practices across activities; and
- Generated a sense of collective ownership for the core business of teaching and learning.

It's important to note that the OIP and OLAC resources were developed with all Ohio districts and their schools in mind. While districts in improvement status use the OIP as part of Ohio's differentiated accountability model, many other districts have elected to use the process and tools to support their improvement efforts. The superintendent of a district that chose to use the OIP-OLAC resources underscored the benefits of having access to on-line, research-based tools that facilitated customization of professional development designed to address very specific district needs. In consideration of the district's resource shortages and budgetary constraints, OLAC modules offered dynamic tools that the district believed it could not have developed or purchased on its own. This example underscores the importance of universal access to quality tools and resources.

In all districts interviewed, the use of professional development (PD) as a resource became much more targeted. Rather than a menu approach to PD, districts aligned the content of the PD with identified goals and ensured that all adults were involved in receiving the PD.

TABLE 2: TARGETING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)

To what degree...	GREATEST EXTENT ← → LEAST EXTENT					MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
	5	4	3	2	1		
...are PD activities aligned with the goals and strategies in the district plan?	6 75.0%	2 25.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4.75	0.46
...is there a critical mass of educators in each building participating in PD activities?	5 62.5%	3 37.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4.63	0.52
...has PD been effective in addressing identified district needs?	4 50.0%	3 37.5%	1 12.5%	0 00.0%	0 00.0%	4.38	0.74

“The OIP process has been the single largest catalyst for us. We got to that place where we knew our infrastructure was solid.”

Donald Thompson
 Superintendent
 Lisbon Exempted Village
 School District

ADVICE TO OTHER DISTRICTS

Districts agreed that full investment in and commitment to the process on the part of the district superintendent is essential in setting the stage for success and cultivating buy-in at all levels. Craig Meredith, superintendent of Triad Local Schools, emphasized the importance of recognizing that “you can’t do it by yourself.” Meredith advised other superintendents to “focus on distributive leadership and shared responsibility with the people that truly ‘make it happen’ with kids every day. The superintendent has to own the process and be invested; if he or she shows even the slightest doubt in the process, it can create a ‘break’ in the system. Superintendents need to show that they are not afraid to do the work that everyone else is doing.”

Districts were asked to reflect upon the most meaningful lessons learned as they engaged in system-wide improvement and reform. In response, they offered the following advice to other districts:

- Keep your work focused;
- Stay with the process, no matter what – do not lose hope simply because circumstances become difficult;
- Having the right people on the right teams (e.g., BLT) is so important – be extremely intentional and thoughtful during initial selection, ensuring that you have a true cross-section of the entire district;
- Remember that this work is a learning process, not an event;
- Work with others whenever you get the chance; this is when you will learn the most;
- At the beginning of an improvement process, it’s easy to see only pieces and parts, but don’t stop trying to see the ‘whole picture;’
- Maintain a strong sense of vision, and stay committed to the strategic changes you are making; and
- Keep ‘showing up’ and celebrate successes...even the little ones.

Districts reported that the investment of time spent on the “front end” of the OIP actually saves time later by providing a strong foundation against which decisions can be evaluated and more efficiently made. Use of the process also provides a mechanism to aid districts in communicating progress, as explained by Cathy Houston, 6th grade teacher in Massillon City Schools: “The OIP has allowed us to share information about the district in more effective and strategic ways.”

Sincere thanks are extended to the districts and district/school personnel that participated in structured interviews. For additional information about the use of OIP-OLAC in participating districts, contact the district at the number provided below:

Bellefontaine City Schools

Beth Harman, Superintendent
 937.593.9060

Chesapeake Union Exempted Village Schools

Jerry McConnell, Superintendent
 740.867.3448

Lisbon Exempted Village Schools

Donald Thompson, Superintendent
 330.424.7714 (Ext. 2000)

Massillon City Schools

Richard Goodright, Superintendent
 330.830.3900

Parma City Schools

Dr. Jeffrey Graham, Superintendent
 440.842.5300

Seneca East Local Schools

Michael Wank, Superintendent
 419.426.7041

Triad Local Schools

Dr. Craig Meredith, Superintendent
 937.826.4961

Wilmington City Schools

Ron Sexton, Superintendent
 937.382.1641

For more information about the work of the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC), contact Dr. Jim Gay, OLAC Director, at 614.846.4080, or via email at: jimgay@basa-ohio.org.



Appendix B:

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NOTES





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