Indicator Explanation

DOMAIN	EFFECTIVE PRACTICE	INDICATOR
Culture	Solicit and act upon stakeholder input	4B.2 The School Improvement Team monitors progress on actions, adjusts actions as needed, and shares progress with school community.

School leaders must articulate and communicate a clear vision and direction for rapid and sustained school improvement through all levels of the system. Research shows that leaders must develop consensus around achievable but ambitious goals that address the performance of all students within the district. School leaders at all levels (state, district, and school) must make the case for rapid school improvement through the use of multiple communication forums, seeking input from all constituents within the school community to build support for and inform the improvement process, and sharing priorities with faculty, parents and students to build consensus toward achievement goals within the school. Progress towards improvement goals should be also be shared with stakeholders, and successes shared and celebrated throughout every level of the system.

Rapid and continuous school improvement requires a systems approach in which a school's actions are complemented by coherent and guided research-based district and state practices (The Center on School Turnaround, 2017). These research-based practices take place within four key domains: turnaround leadership, talent development, instructional transformation, and a culture shift towards student learning and effort (The Center on School Turnaround, 2017). Effective turnaround leadership includes district and school leaders prioritizing school improvement and communicating its urgency to all members of the school community by:
- Setting the strategic direction for turnaround and establishing clear policies, structures, and expectations for ambitious improvement goals;
- Both articulating, and advocating fiercely for, a commitment to turning around the lowest-performing schools; and,
- Closely monitoring, discussing, reporting, and acting upon school improvement progress. (The Center on School Turnaround, 2018)

District leaders must develop frameworks of support that equip principals and schools with the capacity to implement effective practices as they progress through the improvement process. The Southern Regional Education Board suggests that districts align their efforts within a framework of support that includes establishing and securing support for a clear vision and direction for the district and the district's schools (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). The district's leadership, including school boards and the superintendent, must help its schools articulate this vision and/or mission for children's education, and organize support for that vision/mission by communicating improvement priorities to all stakeholders within the system (Hitt & Meyers, 2017; The Center on School Turnaround, 2017). Communicating improvement priorities and keeping stakeholders (including faculty and staff, students, and the broader community) apprised of progress

should not be a one-shot effort, but should involve an explicit and sustained process (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). This brief will summarize the research literature that addresses best practices to help school leaders develop routine practices to communicate improvement priorities to all stakeholders within the school community.

School leaders, including district administrators, exert a powerful influence on student learning and play a significant role in taking student learning successes to scale (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Louis et al., 2010). Effective district leadership includes developing a shared vision and consensus around achievable goals, monitoring progress, and ensuring that these goals remain at the forefront of district and school decision-making (Herman et al., 2017; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2010; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Educators at all levels, including teachers, should be actively involved in the goal-setting process to ensure that the school improvement design is strengthened, and to increase support and buy-in from all educators (Sebring, Allensworth, Bryk, Easton, & Luppescu, 2006). This process of discerning goals and objectives brings the vision to life and can foster shared meaning among educators; it is critical also that these shared goals are clearly communicated throughout the district's schools (Leithwood, 2012). One study of district leaders of "odds-beating" economically disadvantaged schools that achieved higher than expected performance on Common Core State Standards (CCSS)-aligned assessments, found that they used a variety of "bridging" strategies to enable communication with teachers and schools about the CCSS initiative (Durand, Lawson, Wilcox, & Schiller, 2016). For example, district-level leaders in odds-beating schools placed an "emphasis on timely, responsive communications… [and]…spoke of regular and informal meetings with school leaders for the purposes of goal setting, curriculum and instructional development, vision alignment, and professional development" (Durand et al., 2016, p. 58). School improvement results should be also shared both internally and externally with the public (Hitt & Meyers, 2017). Parents and other stakeholders who share details about school reforms in everyday conversations are powerful vehicles for obtaining further stakeholder support and investment (Straus & Miller, 2016).

The Center on School Turnaround (2018) suggests several examples for communicating improvement priorities to school stakeholders at each level of the system:
- State: State leaders advocate the social and moral imperative of school turnaround through multiple public forums; leveraging communication and other strategies to garner parent and community support;
- District: The superintendent articulates the need for turnaround, connecting the state's championing of it to local contexts and inviting local community members to further inform implementation efforts, policy, and resource distribution; and,
- School: Leaders at the school share turnaround priorities with students, faculty, and the school community, leveraging local media outlets to announce the school's commitment to change and to enlist parent and community partners in the effort.

Superintendents and district leaders can then use school reform successes to build momentum and spur progress throughout the district (Herman et al., 2008; Public Impact, 2007). Celebration of these early successes with all stakeholders (students, families, teachers and leaders), particularly those relating to student learning outcomes, fosters an expectation for further success and creates confidence in the competence of teachers and school leadership (Kowal, Hassel, & Hassel, 2009; Center on School Turnaround, 2017). Superintendents should also encourage building leaders to regularly celebrate student success through practices such as holding weekly celebrations for students who achieve classroom stretch standards and using data walls to chart progress (Robinson & Buntrock, 2011).

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