Selected
Exercises and Assessments
from

Finding Your Leadership Focus

What Matters Most for Student Results

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From Labels to Implementation

The objective of this exercise is to test whether your school is focused on definable practices or merely the label of a program.

STEP 1: Working as a group, identify some of the most important initiatives in your school or system. Agree upon one initiative that the group believes is widely and consistently used in your system.

Write the name of that instructional initiative here:

For the rest of this exercise, please work entirely alone, without collaboration with any colleagues. Please do not put your name on the paper or otherwise identify yourself, your grade level, or your school.

STEP 2: Answer the following questions about the initiative identified in Step 1.

• How much instructional time do you spend on this initiative every day?

• If students are not mastering the concept you are teaching in this initiative, how much extra time do you devote to those students every day?

• If you were observing a classroom teacher to assess the degree to which this initiative is being effectively implemented, what would you look for if you made a brief (4–5 minute) visit to the classroom and focused exclusively on looking for the *three most important things* that would show evidence of effective implementation:

(1)

(2)

(3)

Make a prediction about the consistency of your implementation compared with that of your colleagues, with a score of "10" representing very consistent implementation and a score of "1" representing very inconsistent implementation.

For this particular instructional initiative, I predict that the consistency of implementation among **classroom teachers** is:

                    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

For this particular instructional initiative, I predict that the consistency of implementation among **building administrators** is:

                    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

For this particular instructional initiative, I predict that the consistency of implementation among **central office administrators** is:

                    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

STEP 3: Post your anonymous responses to these questions and discuss with your colleagues the similarities and differences you observe in defining implementation.

Influence and Impact

This exercise highlights two essential questions leaders must ask about every decision they consider:

1. What is the extent of my ability to influence this action?
2. What impact will this action have on the student learning results I am seeking to achieve?

Consider the agenda—both the written one and the list of matters that were actually discussed—of a recent faculty meeting, cabinet meeting, or board meeting. List 10 topics that you can recall and rate each one of them for leadership influence and impact on results on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 representing the highest level of influence or impact. For example, if the agenda item you consider is opposition by a taxpayer advocacy group to a proposed bond issue, your ability to influence the matter—persuading the group to endorse the bond issue—may be a "1" but the impact it has on your results may be a "10." A discussion of faculty parking spaces may be a "10" in terms of the leader's ability to influence it, but chances are that the impact on results is near zero.

Agenda Items	Leadership Influence (1–10)	Impact on Results (1–10)

The Leadership Focus Assessment

Instructions: Please respond to each statement with your level of agreement and a brief comment explaining your response. You will have the most meaningful results if you also ask a colleague, assistant, and family member to complete this assessment with their candid views of your performance.

1. When I assess the performance of the people who report directly to me, I have clear scoring guides (or rubrics) that help me communicate with my colleagues exactly what their performance levels are now and how their performance can improve.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   No Opinion   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

   Comments:

2. Within the past 4 weeks, I have gathered specific performance measurement information for the two or three most important initiatives in our system.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   No Opinion   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

   Comments:

3. I can identify at least three specific initiatives that we have evaluated and terminated in the past 12 months.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   No Opinion   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

   Comments:

4. In the past 3 working days, I have been able to complete all of the "A" priorities on my task list.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   No Opinion   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

   Comments:

5. In the past month, I have hardly ever missed or been late to a family commitment.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   No Opinion   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

   Comments:

6. In the past month, when I was faced with a new priority, project, or task, I specifically identified an old priority, project, or task that I decided to eliminate.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   No Opinion   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

   Comments:

7. When I look at the agenda of my most recent important meetings (board, cabinet, faculty, department), I see visible evidence that the agenda is shorter and more focused than the agenda for the same meeting 2 years ago. [If you are not sure, please take a moment to check—count the agenda items and pages of documents.]

   Strongly Agree   Agree   No Opinion   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

   Comments:

8. Within the past 24 hours, I have taken time to express personal and specific appreciation to a colleague using a personal note, voice-to-voice call, or personal meeting.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   No Opinion   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

   Comments:

9. Based on clear and convincing evidence available to me right now, I am certain that my actions and decisions influence student achievement.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   No Opinion   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

   Comments:

10. Since the time I started responding to this assessment a few minutes ago, I have not interrupted myself to respond to an e-mail, instant message, Tweet, text message, or any other electronic intrusion.

    Strongly Agree   Agree   No Opinion   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    Comments:

Scoring: First, consider the responses of your colleague, assistant, and family member and make any necessary revisions in the responses above. Then, score 1 point for Strongly Agree, 2 points for Agree, 3 points for No Opinion, 4 points for Disagree, and 5 points for Strongly Disagree.

My total Leadership Focus score: _____

PIM™
(Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring)
School Improvement Audit

The PIM™ (Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring) School Improvement Audit assesses levels of focus in 30 specific leadership practices in five broad areas:

- Comprehensive needs assessment
- Inquiry process
- SMART goals
- Design
- Evaluation

The rubric provides specific performance criteria for the leadership practices to facilitate assignment of PIM scores as follows:

- Score 3, exemplary performance (High PIM)
- Score 2, proficient performance (Middle PIM)
- Score 1, needs improvement (Low PIM)

The PIM™ School Improvement Audit thus provides an objective means of gathering and comparing data on a wide range of leadership practices from large numbers of schools with diverse student populations and operating in diverse environments.

Section A: Comprehensive Needs Assessment (5 practices)		
Exemplary: Score of 3 (all of 2 +)	**Proficient: Score of 2**	**Needs Improvement: Score of 1**
In addition to meeting requirements at the Proficient level, specific evidence is provided in needs assessment areas to describe:	Specific evidence is provided in needs assessment areas to describe:	Needs assessment areas provide any evidence to describe:
1. Strengths are described specifically for student achievement, teaching practices, and leadership actions.	1. Strengths are specified in more than just the student achievement area, identifying strengths of the staff and school.	1. Strengths are limited to student achievement, and are vague or non-specific regarding staff strengths.
2. Student achievement is described in terms of state or district assessments, school-based assessments that describe subscale distinctions by subgroups, and classroom or contextual data that describe patterns and trends down to the skill level.	2. Student achievement data include some evidence of school-level achievement data, narrative, and school/classroom data to support district or state assessment data.	2. Data are primarily described in terms of standardized test scores or state-level assessments of student achievement, attendance, and demographics.
3. Teacher practices are supported by research, describe whether professional development or repeated practice is needed, and describe how monitoring of those practices will be used to improve instruction.	3. Teacher practices are supported by research and specific professional development needs.	3. Teacher practices are generic statements that may identify strategies supported by research, but fail to link to specific need for professional development.
4. Leadership actions describe the degree to which leaders monitor performance, set direction, provide feedback, or communicate values.	4. Leadership actions describe the degree to which leaders specifically monitor performance or set direction.	4. Leadership actions are not specifically distinguished from actions of other staff, or plan lacks clear description of actions.

Section A: Comprehensive Needs Assessment (*continued*)

Exemplary: Score of 3 (all of 2 +)	Proficient: Score of 2	Needs Improvement: Score of 1
In addition to meeting requirements at the Proficient level, specific evidence is provided in needs assessment areas to describe:	Specific evidence is provided in needs assessment areas to describe:	Needs assessment areas provide any evidence to describe:
5. Evidence of frequent (beyond traditional grading periods) parent communication regarding standards, best practices, and grading (e.g., standards-based report card, Educational Testing Service [ETS], writing, etc.): • Evidence of engagement of parents, patrons, and partner businesses or organizations is clearly described. • Links readers to various data warehouses for demographic and student achievement assessment data.	5. One or more instances of involvement of parents in process of improving student achievement (e.g., online student monitoring, participation in curriculum design, methods to support learning at home).	5. Compliance with P.L. 221 membership, and evidence of parent involvement tends to be in areas other than teaching and learning (e.g., % participation in conferences, attendance at school events, newsletters, assistance in school events).

Section B: Inquiry Process (4 practices)

Exemplary: Score of 3 (all of 2 +)	Proficient: Score of 2	Needs Improvement: Score of 1
6. Inquiry routinely examines cause-and-effect correlations from needs assessment data before selecting **ANY** strategies or program solutions. Positive correlations at desired levels represent a quantifiable vision of the future.	6. Inquiry has identified some correlations from needs assessment data to select specific strategies or program solutions planned. Positive correlations at desired levels represent a quantifiable vision of the future.	6. Effects (results targeted) may or may not align with urgent needs assessed or represent a quantifiable vision of the future. Plan tends to address broad content area improvement needs, without identified correlations between needs and strategies.
7. **ALL** selected classroom-level research-based programs or instructional strategies are identified for a stated purpose, and **ALL** standards-based research strategies are designed to address **specific needs** in student achievement.	7. Majority of selected classroom-level research-based programs or instructional strategies are identified for a **stated purpose**. Most schoolwide programs or strategies (e.g., NCLB research-based programs, collaborative scoring, dual-block algebra, tailored summer school) specify the **student needs** being addressed.	7. Few (≤50%) classroom-level research-based instructional strategies. Few programmatic and structural antecedents identified on the basis of data supporting the need for that program or strategy.
8. **Explicit evidence indicates routine data analysis to identify cause-and-effect correlations. ALL** causes are adult actions or the result of adult decisions rather than demographic student or family factors outside of the instructional control of educators.	8. Most described causes are adult actions or the result of adult decisions rather than demographic student or family factors outside of the instructional control of educators; school improvement plan (SIP) describes some links between causes (antecedents) and desired results (effects).	8. Evidence of analysis of cause-and-effect correlations is not described in the SIP. Causes either are absent or tend to be demographic factors outside of instructional control rather than adult actions and strategies. SIP rarely inquires regarding cause–effect relationships.
9. **ALL** effects (desired results or goals) are specifically linked to cause behaviors or antecedent conditions for learning or administrative structures (e.g., time and opportunity, resources, etc.).	9. Majority of effects (desired results or goals) are explicitly linked to identified causes, strategies, conditions for learning, or administrative structures.	9. Few (≤50%) effects are explicitly linked to identified causes, strategies, conditions for learning, or administrative conditions.

Section C: SMART Goals (5 practices)

	Exemplary: Score of 3 (all of 2 +)	Proficient: Score of 2	Needs Improvement: Score of 1
Specific	10. **ALL** Goals and supporting Targets **specify**: • Targeted student groups, • Grade level, • Standard or content area and subskills that are delineated within that content area, • Assessments specified to address subgroup needs.	10. More than one Goal and supporting Target specify: • Targeted student groups, • Grade level, • Standard or content area and subskills that are delineated within that content area, • Assessments specified to address subgroup needs.	10. Most Goals and supporting Targets describe in **general rather than specific terms**: • Targeted student groups, • Grade level, • Standard or content area and subskills that are delineated within that content area.
Measurable	11. ALL Goals/Targets describe: • Quantifiable measures of performance, • **Baseline data** are always provided for each Goal/Target.	11. All Goals/Targets describe quantifiable measures of performance with specific assessments.	11. **Few** Goals/Targets describe quantifiable measures of performance. Stated goals seldom reference student needs or growth targets or specific assessment tools.
Achievable	12. **ALL** Goals/Targets are sufficiently challenging to **close learning gaps in 3–5 years** for targeted subgroups.	12. At least **one Goal/Target** is sufficiently challenging to close learning gaps in 3–5 years for targeted subgroups. Learning gaps are specified.	12. Goals/Targets are set so low that achievement will not close learning gaps in foreseeable future, or there are insufficient data to determine whether any learning gaps will be closed by achieving goal targets.
	Minimal Growth from Baseline to Close Gaps: 1st Quartile ≥10%; 2nd Quartile ≥10%; 3rd Quartile ≥5%; Highest Quartile ≥3%		
Relevant	13. In addition to alignment of Goals/Targets with urgent student needs, **ALL Goals can be explicitly linked** to the mission and beliefs of the school or district.	13. **All Goals/Targets align with urgent student needs** identified in comprehensive needs assessment (subgroups specified). Some Goals are explicitly linked to the mission or stated beliefs of the school or district.	13. **Few** Goals/Targets describe urgent student needs identified in comprehensive needs assessment. Links to mission or beliefs of the school or district are vague or absent.
Timely	14. Each Goal and Target describes a fixed date when it will be achieved.	14. Some Goals/Targets describe a fixed date when they will be achieved, but all Goals/Targets specify a specific window of time.	14. Goals/Targets rarely describe a fixed date when they will be achieved, and describe only broad windows of time for any Goals (seasons, years).

Section D: Design (11 practices)

Exemplary: Score of 3 (all of 2 +)	Proficient: Score of 2	Needs Improvement: Score of 1
Design describes, in addition to all requirements of Proficient level:	Design describes:	Design describes:
15. **WHY each** focus area or major action step is being implemented.	15. **WHY** some action steps are implemented. SIP describes **HOW** the plan will be implemented, when, in what settings, and by whom.	15. When plan will be implemented and by whom.
16. **Multiple forms of student assessment data, including formative, as well as multiple measures of teacher practices and leader actions**.	16. Multiple student achievement assessment data and some data for teacher practices targeted.	16. Assessments are more often used to comply with directives rather than to serve as indicators of change or improved achievement.
17. **Explicit evidence** of improvement cycles for **every school improvement initiative**.	17. Explicit evidence of improvement cycles for some improvement initiatives.	17. Evidence of improvement cycles for schoolwide initiatives unclear.
18. Monitoring schedule (≥ monthly) that **reviews both student performance and adult teaching practices**.	18. Monitoring schedule (≥ monthly) to review student performance.	18. Monitoring less frequent than monthly for student performance or teaching practices.
19. **Capacity for rapid rollout of team responses** (to data, professional development, coaching, adjusted time and opportunity) in response to needs.	19. Some midcourse corrections delineated or anticipated in design of SIP.	19. No description of midcourse corrections observed in SIP design.
20. All Results Indicators serve as **interim progress probes** for each SMART Goal.	20. Some Results Indicators serve as interim progress probes for SMART Goals.	20. Results Indicators vague, describe compliance, or difficult to measure.
21. Consideration of **adult learning issues and the change process is evident** in time, programs, and resources.	21. Some attention to adult learning issues and change process is evident in SIP plan (e.g., limited initiatives, aligned focused professional development, integrated planning, related support structures).	21. Evidence provided of adult learning or change process considered in planning. SIP tends to be fragmented with multiple initiatives, little attention to time requirements for implementation.
22. Coaching/mentoring system creates a **coaching or mentoring cadre** by building capacity and application.	22. Coaching/mentoring is planned and systemic.	22. Coaching/mentoring is incidental. Viewed as sole responsibility of coach instead of schoolwide effort.
23. Research-based instructional strategies, programs, and structures selected to impact **specified student needs** at school. **ALL** design activities and innovations are strongly correlated with student achievement gains.	23. Majority of research-based instructional strategies, programs, and structures are linked to specified student needs at school (school, subgroup, or individual).	23. Selected strategies, programs, and structures are not clearly linked to student needs evidenced by data. May lack support in research or best practice.
24. Professional development (learning) that is **linked to meeting specific subgroup needs, addresses underlying causes** of any substandard performance, is limited to three major initiatives per goal, and prepares educators to improve decision-making through **planned reflection or analysis**.	24. Professional development (learning) that is explicitly collaborative, selected to meet identified student needs (school, subgroup, or individual), embedded in functioning school processes, limited to three major initiatives per goal, and scheduled within normal school functions at least monthly.	24. Fragmented professional development that may or may not address student needs at school. Professional development is rarely limited to three major initiatives per goal. Activities tend to be overly ambitious in number or scope.
25. Support of professional development is provided for **ALL** initiatives in multiple ways (e.g., change procedures, cross-curricular applications or integration, subtract obsolete practices, collaboration, modeling).	25. Support of professional development is provided in more than one way (change procedures, cross-curricular applications or integration, subtraction of obsolete practices, collaboration, modeling).	25. Design has few systems to support professional development efforts.

Adapted from Appendix B of *Finding Your Leadership Focus,* by Douglas B. Reeves

Section E: Evaluation (5 practices)

Exemplary: Score of 3 (All of 2 +)	Proficient: Score of 2	Needs Improvement: Score of 1
26. **Evaluation compares planned with actual results in the prior year** and examines achievement results based on safety-net power standards by grade and compares them with district performance. Student comparisons are augmented by a specific review of curriculum impact, time/opportunity for students, or the effect of teaching practices on achievement.	26. Evaluation summarizes data and evidence that examine student performance in multiple content areas and describes students in need of intervention whose performance puts them at risk of opening learning gaps.	26. Evaluation tends to limit data summaries to student achievement analyses. Plans tend to examine student performance without specifying students in need of intervention whose performance puts them at risk of opening learning gaps.
27. **Evaluation plan describes explicit new knowledge, specific skills, and attitudes** that will result from professional development associated with **each** goal for students, staff, **AND** stakeholders.	27. Evaluation plan describes new knowledge and specific skills or attitudes that will result from professional development associated with the majority of goals for students and staff.	27. Evaluation plan tends to describe new knowledge, skills, and attitudes in general terms and perceptions rather than specific knowledge or skills.
28. **Evaluation specifies data and evidence needed to evaluate progress** in meeting all stated goals, including formative school-based Tier 2 data explicitly aligned to address those students whose performance puts them at risk of opening rather than closing learning gaps.	28. Evaluation specifies data and evidence needed to evaluate progress to meet all stated goals, including formative school-based Tier 2 data and their frequency of collection.	28. Evaluation tends to use identical generalities for each goal rather than to specify data and evidence needed to evaluate progress toward goals.
29. **Next steps are documented that outline how changes in teaching and learning will occur**, describe how the leadership team analyzes data, provide evidence of submitting data to colleagues and peers for review, recommend changes from alternatives, and delineates a process to secure resources, implement changes, and evaluate results.	29. Next steps to improve teaching and learning are delineated and supported by a clearly defined improvement cycle in the plan.	29. Next steps rarely address changes in how teaching and learning will occur; next steps, if specified, tend to describe future outcome targets (goals) rather than next steps in terms of adult actions.
30. Evaluation plan is **transparent** in describing how results (positive or negative), conclusions, lessons learned, and **next steps will be communicated and disseminated** to all primary stakeholders (families, educators, staff, patrons, partners, and the public).	30. Plan describes how compared results (positive or negative) are communicated to improve goal-setting and ensure lessons learned.	30. Evaluation plan may describe process for communicating results, but seldom specifies how results will be explained to stakeholders or describes next steps.

SUMMARY	Comprehensive Needs Assessment	Inquiry Process	SMART Goals	Design	Evaluation	Notes
Exemplary						
Proficient						
Needs Improvement						
TOTAL SCORE:						

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Science Fair Reflections: "The Treasure Hunt"

Name:	**Date:**

1. Identify one or two important challenges that you face with regard to improving student achievement and educational equity:

2. Find one or two other displays illustrate a challenge similar to one of your challenges, but that appeared to have better results.

   What did you notice that was *similar* in the strategies that were used in the other displays?

   What did you notice that was *different* in the strategies that were used in the other displays?

   What did you notice about the *results*? How are the results related to the strategies?

3. *Data Analysis and Displays:* What did you notice about the data display that you can use to improve your displays for the next Science Fair? Identify two or three specific best practices in the display and communication of information:

4. *Action Plan:* Based on what you have learned during this Science Fair, what are your most important priorities with regard to refining strategies, communicating information, and achieving results?

5. *Recommended Improvements:* How can the next version of the Science Fair be improved to make this event most useful for you and the schools that you serve?

Your feedback and reflections are very important. Please turn in one complete copy of this form before you leave the Science Fair today. Thank you!