

Competencies to Meet Shifting Demands for Instructional Leadership

The educational landscape is shifting in marked ways. College- and career-ready standards (CCRS) are higher and more precise than many State standards that preceded them. More robust and rigorous evaluation frameworks raise the bar for teaching students, leading schools and assessing and developing educators. School turnaround models demand swift and effective transformation of historically challenged schools. To meet these expectations, instructional leaders must focus on the skills and behaviors that have proven to be effective and that support these reforms. Research, including the work of the Wallace Foundation, New Leaders for New Schools and Stanford University Professor Susanna Loeb and others, suggests focusing on the following key competencies of instructional leadership:

Drive improved student results and classroom practice aligned with the expectations of CCRS:

- Develop a shared vision for excellence in teaching and learning at each grade level and for progress toward improved student outcomes.
- Facilitate alignment of curricula and instruction to CCRS and integration of supports and extensions to engage learners cognitively at all levels.
- Continuously and collaboratively refine curricula and instruction using student work and data.

Create a school culture that promotes student success:

- Set and maintain high learning expectations for staff and all students, demonstrating and promoting the belief that all students can succeed academically.
- Develop and implement a clear code of conduct focused on positive learning behaviors and respect for self and others.
- Connect conversations of students with their goals for college and career.
- Create structures to ensure that each student's social/emotional learning is addressed and coordinated in alignment with other learning needs.

Build and manage high quality staff through robust evaluation and development processes:

- Communicate clear, specific standards of excellence using a research-based competency framework; develop a shared understanding of framework among staff.
- Recruit and select teachers based on high standards.
- Evaluate teacher effectiveness fairly and accurately by observing and synthesizing evidence of practice and student results according to an evaluation framework.
- Use observation data, student learning data and student work to provide actionable feedback to teachers about their practice and to create customized professional development plans.
- Reward top performers strategically, and dismiss or counsel out teachers who cannot or will not meet expectations.
- Practice distributed leadership, delegating meaningful tasks to capable staff and creating opportunities for effective teachers to support other teachers in their growth.

Manage resources and systems to support learning and continuous improvement:

- Create common direction, enthusiasm and collaboration around a short list of clear, focused school-level goals and action plans (long-term, annual and interim).
- Structure staff time so that teacher teams meet regularly and productively to collaborate, plan and revise to improve instruction and to engage students in challenging academic tasks.
- Analyze data and use it in meaningful ways to track progress on goals, guide school improvement efforts and help individual and groups of teachers to improve.
- Prioritize resources (human, material and fiscal) to focus on tasks that drive student achievement, such as managing and developing teachers.

This publication features information from public and private organizations and links to additional information created by those organizations. Inclusion of this information does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any products or services offered or views expressed, nor does the Department of Education control its accuracy, relevance, timeliness or completeness.