



Determining Priority Areas for Improving Instructional Leadership

PRIORITIES EXERCISE



INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1:

Facilitators will outline the objective of this activity: to help State teams prioritize strategies for improving instructional leadership. Facilitators will emphasize that there is no right answer or single best course of action.

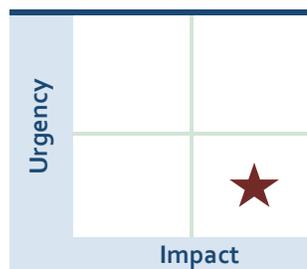
Step 2:

Facilitators will read each quality assessment statement listed in Tool 1: Assessing Current Status, and ask teams to add to or edit each statement if necessary to represent their vision of quality in their State. Facilitators will record changes to quality assessment statements.

Step 3:

Facilitators will ask each team member to individually reflect on each quality assessment statement and determine whether he or she strongly agrees, agrees, disagrees or strongly disagrees with each statement based on his or her opinion of the status of each area of focus in their State. Facilitators will also ask each member to identify the appropriate quadrant for the urgency and impact matrix by asking members to rate the degree to which this content area requires timely attention (urgency) and the degree to which work in this area is expected to lead his or her State toward meeting instructional leadership goals. Facilitators may want to model an urgency and impact matrix rating:

URGENCY AND IMPACT



Example: The star on this matrix indicates that an area that may not be as urgent in terms of needs of the State but in the long run could have a significant impact toward reaching goals

Facilitators will ask members to report out their responses and will lead a discussion to identify areas of agreement and disagreement. Facilitators do not need to get the group to come to consensus around the status of implementation or the urgency and impact rating; rather, the point of the exercise is to reflect on the quality of each area of focus in the State and surface and discuss areas of agreement and disagreement.

Step 4:

Facilitators will review the areas of focus and, using Tool 2: Prioritizing Areas, lead the State team in a discussion around ranking these areas from highest priority for improvement to lowest priority for improvement. Facilitators will draw on the discussion around Tool 1, highlighting areas of agreement

and disagreement, and lead teams in a discussion around why they are ranking one area of focus above or below another.

Step 5:

Facilitators will lead the teams in reflecting on their results by discussing the following questions:

- Were team members surprised by the results of the priorities exercise?
- Based on the ratings, does the team agree on what area(s) should be prioritized in the State?

Step 6:

Based on the priority area(s), facilitators will walk through the strategies exercises.

Tool 1: Assessing Current Status

Area of Focus		Quality Assessment Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Urgency and Impact	
	Instructional Leadership Definition	Research-based competencies that indicate the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to improve teaching effectiveness and student achievement form the basis for school leader preparation curriculum and approval, licensure decisions and performance management (evaluation, professional development and career pathways).					Urgency	
								Impact
	Preparation	A sufficient number of quality school leader candidates are available for all types of schools, and recent graduates of school leader preparation programs (both traditional and alternative) are effectively prepared to lead their schools and achieve high levels of student achievement.					Urgency	
								Impact
	Licensure	School leader licenses accurately reflect whether an individual has demonstrated necessary competencies and/or accomplishments to be effective leaders.					Urgency	
								Impact
Performance Management	Evaluation	Evaluations accurately differentiate performance among instructional leaders based on multiple measures including, in significant part, student growth information, provide information that is useful for improvement, and inform career decisions, including professional development, career roles/pathways and dismissal.					Urgency	
								Impact
	Professional Development	Professional development for all instructional leaders is aligned to individual needs, achieves intended results and improves leadership competencies for leaders at all levels of effectiveness.					Urgency	
								Impact
	Career Pathways	Effective instructional leaders, including teacher leaders, mentors and other peer coaches, have opportunities to grow in their careers and be rewarded for their contributions, including receiving additional compensation and/or serving in leadership roles outside the principalship or teaching.					Urgency	
								Impact
	Systems and Structures	Data systems, technology and role structures enable the support and monitoring of instructional leadership initiatives and drive continuous improvement.					Urgency	
								Impact

Tool 2: Prioritizing Areas

	Ranking	Area of Focus	Reasoning
<i>Highest Priority for Improvement</i>  <i>Lowest Priority for Improvement</i>	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
	5.		
	6.		
	7.		

Assessing Implementation of High Impact Instructional Leadership Strategies

DEFINING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitators will focus on *Defining Instructional Leadership* strategies only if this area was selected as a priority in the Priorities Exercise.

Step 1:

Facilitators will lead a discussion on the implementation status and quality of State teams' instructional leadership competencies. To inform the discussion, facilitators will refer to the Louisiana Case Study as an example of revised leadership competencies and reference the Reform Support Network's definition of leadership competency model or framework:

The knowledge, skills and disposition necessary for instructional leaders to improve teaching effectiveness and student achievement.

Step 2:

Facilitators will use Tool 3: Assessing Strategies for Defining Instructional Leadership, to lead a conversation with State teams around strategies for defining instructional leadership. Teams may edit existing strategies or add additional ones, with the facilitators remaining focused on the quality of strategies and the outcomes they can produce. Facilitators will drive State teams towards an implementation status rating and priority rating for each strategy, marking N/A for those strategies that the State team thinks are not appropriate given the State's status and/or context.

When considering the priority rating for each strategy, facilitators should emphasize the importance of honoring work already underway and the degree to which work in each area is expected to lead the State toward meeting desired outcomes in instructional leadership.

Facilitators will lead discussions around why the team is rating one strategy above or below another in terms of priority.

Tool 3: Assessing Strategies for Defining Instructional Leadership

Implementation Status:

4: Fully Implemented 3: Partially Implemented 2: Planning for Implementation 1: Not Planned/Implemented

Priority:

High, Medium, Low

	Strategies for Defining Instructional Leadership	Implementation Status	Priority
Create a competency model for instructional leadership	1. Understand and articulate the purpose of the instructional leadership competency model and the practices it drives.		
	2. Draw on research to define instructional leadership competencies that clearly articulate the State's/district's understanding of excellence and that increase student achievement. (For example, include competencies that address the instructional leader's role in both organizational management and teaching and learning.)		
	3.		
	4.		
Integrate competency model	5. Determine how the competency model will inform preparation curriculum and accreditation/approval and what preparation program outcomes it will drive.		
	6. Determine how the competency model will inform licensure decisions and what licensure outcomes it will drive.		
	7. Determine how the competency model will inform performance management for instructional leaders, including evaluation, professional development and career pathways and what performance management outcomes it will drive.		
	8. Identify which leadership roles the competency model can be applied/adapted to beyond the principal, such as assistant principals and teacher leaders.		
	9. Clarify the agents/entities responsible for driving toward outcomes defined by the competency model and ensure they share the State's understanding of and accountability for the model.		
	10.		
	11.		

Assessing Implementation of High Impact Instructional Leadership Strategies

PREPARING AND LICENSING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitators will focus on *Preparing and Licensing Instructional Leaders* strategies only if this area was selected as a priority in the Priorities Exercise.

Step 1:

Facilitators will lead a discussion on the implementation status and quality of State teams' preparation and licensing strategies. Facilitators will refer to the NYC Leadership Academy's Aspiring Principal Program case study as an example of an innovative preparation initiative and Kentucky's teacher leader licensure case study as an example of an innovative licensure option to inform the discussion.

Step 2:

Facilitators will use Tool 4: Assessing Strategies for Preparation and Licensing, to lead a conversation with State teams around strategies for preparing and licensing instructional leaders. Teams may edit existing strategies or add additional ones, with the facilitators remaining focused on the quality of strategies and the outcomes they can produce. Facilitators will drive State teams towards an implementation status rating and priority rating for each strategy, marking N/A for those strategies that the State team thinks are not appropriate given the State's status and/or context.

When considering the priority rating for each strategy, facilitators should emphasize the importance of honoring work already underway and the degree to which work in each area is expected to lead the State toward meeting desired outcomes in instructional leadership.

Facilitators will lead discussions around why the team is rating one strategy above or below another in terms of priority.

Tool 4: Assessing Strategies for Preparation and Licensing

Implementation Status:

4: Fully Implemented 3: Partially Implemented 2: Planning for Implementation 1: Not Planned/Implemented

Priority:

High, Medium, Low

	Strategies for Preparing and Licensing Instructional Leaders	Implementation Status	Priority
Ensure alignment and relevance of preparation programs	1. Require rigorous selection of candidates for preparation programs based on interest in school leadership, merit and potential to succeed.		
	2. Require curriculum alignment to instructional leadership competencies as part of accreditation and approval processes.		
	3. Require curriculum alignment to Common Core State Standards instructional shifts and State evaluation policy as part of accreditation and approval processes.		
	4. Require institutions to demonstrate presence of clinical/practical experience as a significant portion of the candidates' experience as part of accreditation and approval processes.		
	5. Develop partnerships with preparation programs to refine curriculum to better meet the needs of the State and districts.		
	6.		
	7.		
Ensure effectiveness of preparation programs	8. Annually report on the effectiveness of principals in improving student achievement and the percent of graduates that become school leaders by preparation institution.		
	9. Provide provisional approval to preparation institutions and confirm approval only after graduates have demonstrated effectiveness in improving student outcomes.		
	10. Provide streamlined review and approval process for preparation institutions whose graduates demonstrate consistent success in increasing student achievement.		
	11.		
	12.		



	Strategies for Preparing and Licensing Instructional Leaders	Implementation Status	Priority
Ensure alignment and relevance of preparation programs	13. Require rigorous selection of candidates for preparation programs based on interest in school leadership, merit and potential to succeed.		
	14. Require curriculum alignment to instructional leadership competencies as part of accreditation and approval processes.		
	15. Require curriculum alignment to Common Core State Standards instructional shifts and State evaluation policy as part of accreditation and approval processes.		
	16. Require institutions to demonstrate presence of clinical/practical experience as a significant portion of the candidates' experience as part of accreditation and approval processes.		
	17. Develop partnerships with preparation programs to refine curriculum to better meet the needs of the State and districts.		
	18.		
	19.		
Ensure effectiveness of preparation programs	20. Annually report on the effectiveness of principals in improving student achievement and the percent of graduates that become school leaders by preparation institution.		
	21. Provide provisional approval to preparation institutions and confirm approval only after graduates have demonstrated effectiveness in improving student outcomes.		
	22. Provide streamlined review and approval process for preparation institutions whose graduates demonstrate consistent success in increasing student achievement.		
	23.		
	24.		



	Strategies for Preparing and Licensing Instructional Leaders	Implementation Status	Priority
Remove barriers to entry	25. Identify and set standards for entry into instructional leadership such as exam requirements, degree requirements, lack of alternative pathway options (e.g., examine out-of-State licensure requirements and adjust if restricting high-quality out-of-State candidates).		
	26. Develop and encourage multiple pathways for becoming a principal: high-quality traditional preparation programs and/or proven alternative preparation programs or innovative and effective district leadership development programs that emphasize residency/clinical experience.		
	27.		
	28.		
Align licensure standards to competencies	29. Consider more rigorous, performance- and student achievement-based licensure assessments and/or review and revise cut scores/establish new baselines on licensure assessments.		
	30. Base licensure renewal in part on student achievement and evaluation results.		
	31. Implement tiered licensure to better differentiate performance and support structures for principals. For example, provide provisional licenses and intensive support to new principals; once they have proven their effectiveness, grant them full licensure.		
	32.		
	33.		

Assessing Implementation of High Impact Instructional Leadership Strategies

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitators will focus on *Performance Management* strategies only if this area was selected as a priority in the Priorities Exercise.

Step 1:

Facilitators will lead a discussion on the implementation status and quality of State teams' performance management strategies. Facilitators will reference the Reform Support Network's definition of performance management:

Performance management means the full set of State and district systems and processes for ensuring the quality of instructional leaders currently in schools

To inform the discussion, facilitators will refer to the Hillsborough County, Florida, Evaluation case study as an example of an innovative evaluation process; the Massachusetts professional development initiative as an example of rigorous and effective support for principals; and the National SAM Innovation Project in Charlotte-Mecklenburg district as an example of a promising career pathway option.

Step 2:

Facilitators will use Tool 5: Assessing Strategies for Performance Management, to lead a conversation with State teams around strategies for preparing and licensing instructional leaders. Teams may edit existing strategies or add additional ones, with the facilitators remaining focused on the quality of strategies and the outcomes they can produce. Facilitators will drive State teams towards an implementation status rating and priority rating for each strategy, marking N/A for those strategies that the State team thinks are not appropriate given the State's status and/or context.

When considering the priority rating for each strategy, facilitators should emphasize the importance of honoring work already underway and the degree to which work in each area is expected to lead the State toward meeting desired outcomes in instructional leadership.

Facilitators will lead discussions around why the team is rating one strategy above or below another in terms of priority.

Tool 5: Assessing Strategies for Performance Management

Implementation Status:

4: Fully Implemented 3: Partially Implemented 2: Planning for Implementation 1: Not Planned/Implemented

Priority:

High, Medium, Low

	Performance Management of Instructional Leaders	Implementation Status	Priority
Performance management systems and structures	1. Create and use communication structures, monitoring mechanisms and data analyses that allow districts and states to assess and group instructional leaders based on performance, know which actions to take as a result, monitor the outcome of those actions and drive continuous improvement.		
	2. Clearly define the principal role in alignment with the evaluation framework and ensure that there is adequate time and support to effectively execute the responsibilities.		
	3. Ensure principal supervisor role is accountable for and has ample time and support to observe, provide feedback and coach principals.		
	4. Develop technology to support and manage the evaluation and development process, including robust analytics to support monitoring and decision-making.		
	5. Create and use communication structures, monitoring mechanisms and data analyses that allow districts and states to assess and group instructional leaders based on performance, know which actions to take as a result, monitor the outcome of those actions and drive continuous improvement.		
	6.		
	7.		



	Performance Management of Instructional Leaders	Implementation Status	Priority
Performance management systems and structures	8. Create and use communication structures, monitoring mechanisms and data analyses that allow districts and states to assess and group instructional leaders based on performance, know which actions to take as a result, monitor the outcome of those actions and drive continuous improvement.		
	9. Clearly define the principal role in alignment with the evaluation framework and ensure that there is adequate time and support to effectively execute the responsibilities.		
	10. Ensure principal supervisor role is accountable for and has ample time and support to observe, provide feedback and coach principals.		
	11. Develop technology to support and manage the evaluation and development process, including robust analytics to support monitoring and decision-making.		
	12.		
	13.		
Professional development	14. Implement mentoring programs that push new principals to reflect, develop and focus on leadership competencies with their experienced principal counterparts.		
	15. Differentiate supports based on evaluation data, experience level and development goals.		
	16. Provide professional development that is aligned to the leadership competencies and evaluation framework, is effective at moving principals along a continuum of performance and includes peer-to-peer collaboration and problem-solving.		
	17.		
	18.		



	Performance Management of Instructional Leaders	Implementation Status	Priority
Evaluation	19. Develop framework for leadership evaluation based on multiple, research-based measures of performance, including student achievement.		
	20. Implement evaluation process that includes goal setting and regular, actionable feedback for principals.		
	21.		
	22.		
Career pathways	23. Strategically and equitably place school leaders so that all schools are matched with high quality leaders that meet their needs.		
	24. Implement strategic compensation for instructional leaders, basing pay on effectiveness.		
	25. Provide retention bonuses to highly effective instructional leaders based on student achievement results in high-need schools.		
	26. Implement leadership career pathways, such as assistant principals, school administration managers, mentors and/or lead principals.		
	27. Develop fair and efficient mechanisms for probation and dismissal based on evaluation data.		
	28.		
	29.		