



CYCLE OF IMPROVEMENT PLAYBOOK:
Human Capital

Assessing the Human Capital Needs of a Local Education Agency

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Background

A cycle of improvement uses data and other information to identify key successes and challenges in a system and creates a vision and plan for the most important work that needs to be done. This cycle of improvement playbook lays out a framework that leaders can use within a local education agency (LEA) to improve their human resources work through five key steps [Figure 1]. Using a Cycle of Improvement Framework allows an LEA to identify and focus on the most important work based on their data, context, and available resources. Each step of the Cycle of Improvement Framework is described in detail in this playbook, with examples of what it looks like in practice and recommended tools and resources that can be used at that step.

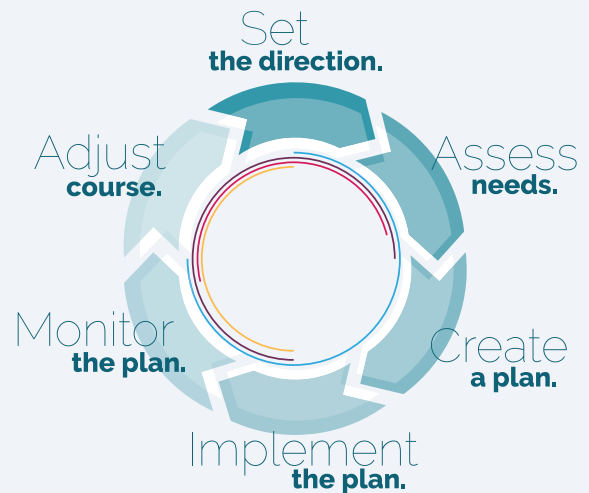


Figure 1.
The Cycle of Improvement

Assessing the Human Capital Needs of a Local Education Agency

Assessing the Critical Functions of Human Capital

What is the “right” work of HR? A highly effective HR Department focuses on the right work. This includes supporting principals to find and keep great talent for their school and supporting the appropriate LEA administrators to find and keep great principals. While not all of the work to ensure teacher and principal quality may reside in the HR Department (if one exists), the HR Department or HR lead/s play a critical role in assessing the current state of human capital work and taking specific steps to move it forward—either individually or in partnership with others.

The key functional areas to improve teacher and principal quality in an LEA are the following:

| Teacher Quality | Principal Quality |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ☑ Teacher Preparation & Recruitment | ☑ Building a Quality Pool |
| ☑ Hiring & Selection | ☑ Hiring & Selection |
| ☑ Induction & Support | ☑ Induction |
| ☑ Staffing & Deployment | ☑ Deployment |
| ☑ Compensation & Benefits | ☑ Compensation & Benefits |
| ☑ Performance Management | ☑ Performance Management |
| ☑ Professional Learning | ☑ Career Management |
| ☑ Career Management | ☑ Principals Supervisors as Human Capital Managers |
| ☑ Principals as HC Managers | ☑ Principals as HC Managers |

These functional areas are interconnected; each component of the work impacts and influences all the others. At the center of each are the key human capital managers—principals and supervisors of principals—that HR needs to work with to improve human capital and, ultimately, student learning. For more detail on these functional areas, please view the [Teacher and Principal Puzzle Pieces here](#).

How do you assess how the LEA is performing in these key functional areas? When discussing an LEA’s human capital challenges and deciding what to address, it can be easy to pay the most attention to the “squeaky wheels” such as a yearly struggle to find enough quality applicants for a special education position. Such challenges are easy to notice and demand attention. However, to optimize human capital work and thus improve student learning, LEA leadership teams should collaborate on the frank, thoughtful use of an organized self-assessment that analyzes all parts of the human capital system.

→ *For a qualitative assessment of an LEA’s human capital performance, LEA teams can use the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s **Human Capital Self-Assessment and Key Look Fors**. Using the guiding questions and the identified look-fors, LEAs can determine their level of performance in the components of human capital.*

As an additional approach, the **Teacher Assess, Breakthrough, Change Tool** and the **Principal Assess, Breakthrough, Change Tool** (aka “the ABC Tools”) define the key levers and metrics for HR’s strategic work related to improving teacher and principal quality in these functional areas. The ABC Tools are comprehensive rubrics and assessments that measure 56 components of teacher quality and 33 components of principal quality and provide an LEA with a roadmap for improvement. These tools are backed by research and include a functional description, along with data to be collected and a benchmark goal for LEAs to target. These tools can assess the HR department’s current level of performance on the key human capital components, which will help identify focus areas. HR teams can conduct each ABC Tool assessment together, discussing performance in each area.

Using Key Data and Other Information to Inform the Functional Assessment

While the tools above define a comprehensive set of functions and metrics that contribute to the overall effectiveness of human capital systems, LEAs should track and closely manage a priority set of human capital metrics to ensure a high quality teacher and principal workforce.

These priority metrics fall under four key areas:

- 1 Recruitment** measures focus on answering the question, “Are we attracting and hiring the best educators?” Metrics should focus on identifying and tracking where the best teachers came from. This can include an educator preparation program, or a specific recruitment event or initiative for either new or experienced teachers. In addition, tracking the number of applicants per vacancy as well as the timing of hiring will help measure the quality of your recruitment and hiring efforts, as early hiring is correlated to higher teacher quality and higher retention rates.
- 2 Staffing and Assignment** measures focus on answering the questions, “Have we deployed educators deliberately? Are our best teachers teaching the students who need them the most?” Metrics should focus on the tracking and measurement of teachers by performance rating and by school type (high and low need schools), as well as measuring the incoming and outgoing staffing activity (new hires and transfers) by performance rating. If performance evaluation results do not do enough to indicate differences in teacher quality, LEAs should consider identifying other attributes and characteristics as a proxy for quality (e.g., principal feedback).
- 3 Retention** measures focus on answering the question, “Are we retaining the teachers that we want to keep?” Metrics should focus on measuring retention by performance ratings as well as school type and/or subject. Measuring retention by career stage (new, mid-career, veteran), teacher performance, and teacher race/ethnicity can also

help to inform targeted retention efforts and initiatives. When analyzing data on which educators stay or leave, differentiate educators by their evaluation ratings; classroom observation and practice models; and multiple measures of student achievement.

4 Customer Service measures focus on answering the question, “Have we delivered HR services effectively to our key customers: principals?” Measuring how satisfied principals are with HR services and supports can be accomplished by collecting valuable feedback and insights from principals and their supervisors. In addition, tracking and measuring timelines for key processes will also help measure how well principals and schools are served by HR. Such processes include: approvals for job posting and hiring; and inquiry response times; and the time to complete the hiring process once a candidate is selected.

HR teams should collect, analyze and share these metrics with key stakeholders to improve the quality of the workforce. Some of these metrics measure HR’s actions specifically, while others measure larger teacher and leader effectiveness outcomes. Teams should analyze these metrics as a part of the assessment process and **assess** the availability, use and sharing of these key metrics.

Stakeholder survey data can also provide valuable insight into self-assessment. Several of the aforementioned power metrics are focused on principal and principal supervisor satisfaction. Survey feedback from principals, teachers, new hires, or other key stakeholders provide valuable insight that balances the analysis that key quantifiable data can provide. For more information, see **this how-to guide on surveying stakeholders**.

In addition to the above assessments, LEAs may also want to understand how the HR Department or team is providing services to principals. The **Principal’s Bill of Rights** tool can help pinpoint high-leverage opportunities for LEAs to improve how human capital systems support principals’ work.

Identifying Areas for Improvement

Once the assessments are completed, the team should summarize the LEA’s performance, reflecting on where the LEA is strong and where it can grow. Teams can use insight from the **Stages and Priorities of Teacher Quality** and **Stages and Priorities of Principal Quality** about how to sequence their Human Capital improvement work. In assigning the LEA’s Priority, teams should consider the LEA’s broader strategy and goals, specifically around priority student needs. The team can complete the table in **Appendix 1** to clarify what the priority is and why it is important to local human capital work.

During the assessment step, an LEA may realize that they do not have robust data systems in place to collect, track, and analyze human capital data to measure their progress and results. If this is the case, the LEA can consider how to improve and expand collection, use and sharing of key human capital metrics.

APPENDIX 1: Identify a Human Capital Priority Area

Based on the results of the Assessments, identify 1 area of priority that will lead the LEA to its HC strategic goals and objectives.

TEMPLATE: Identify LEA's Priority Area

| LEA HC PRIORITY | ANSWER: |
|---|--|
| Based on our Assessment, what is 1 key priority we want to focus on in the coming year? | |
| How does this key priority fit into our LEA's broader goals? | |
| Does the long-term strategy impact TEACHER or PRINCIPAL quality? | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Principal Quality |
| What is our current performance in this priority area? Document baseline performance (ABC Tool metrics) | |
| How will we measure our progress at the end of the year? List at least one measurable goal. | |

SAMPLE: Completed Priority Area for Reference

| LEA HC PRIORITY | ANSWER: |
|---|--|
| Based on our Assessment, what is 1 key priority we want to focus on in the coming year? | Hiring teachers early in our highest need schools. |
| How does this key priority fit into our LEA's broader goals? | It focuses on providing more equitable access to students in high-need schools. |
| Does the long-term strategy impact TEACHER or PRINCIPAL quality? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Principal Quality |
| What is our current performance in this priority area? Document baseline performance (ABC Tool metrics) | District average for vacancies filled after July 1 st is 35%. In high-need schools, the average for vacancies filled after July 1 st is 65%, with a range from 50% to 100% across high-need schools. |
| How will we measure our progress at the end of the year? List at least one measurable goal. | By the end of the year, we expect to see the average for vacancies filled after July 1 in high need schools decrease to 45% from 65%, with no school having 100% of vacancies filled after July 1. |



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CREATED BY:

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