PA Essential Practices for Districts

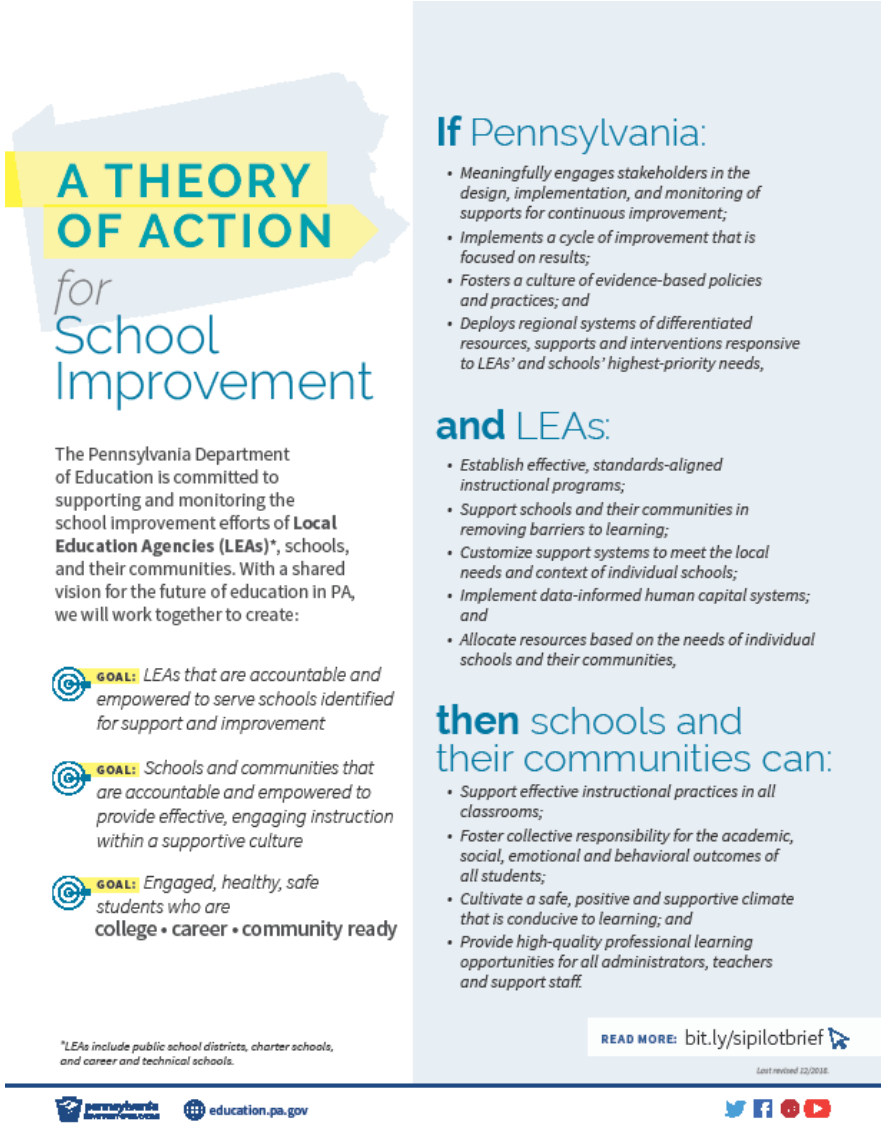
Agenda

- Theory of Action for School Improvement in PA
- PA Essential Practices for Districts Toolkit
- Self-Assessment Process
- Questions and Next Steps

Theory of Action for School Improvement in PA

- Focused on shared responsibility for establishing the conditions for continuous improvement of leadership, teaching, and learning in PA

- The **Essential Practices for Districts** is a tool for assessing our progress in establishing the necessary conditions for all students to be engaged, healthy, safe, and ready for college, career, and community



A THEORY OF ACTION *for* School Improvement

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is committed to supporting and monitoring the school improvement efforts of **Local Education Agencies (LEAs)***, schools, and their communities. With a shared vision for the future of education in PA, we will work together to create:

GOAL: *LEAs that are accountable and empowered to serve schools identified for support and improvement*

GOAL: *Schools and communities that are accountable and empowered to provide effective, engaging instruction within a supportive culture*

GOAL: *Engaged, healthy, safe students who are* college • career • community ready

*LEAs include public school districts, charter schools, and career and technical schools.

If Pennsylvania:

- *Meaningfully engages stakeholders in the design, implementation, and monitoring of supports for continuous improvement;*
- *Implements a cycle of improvement that is focused on results;*
- *Fosters a culture of evidence-based policies and practices; and*
- *Deploys regional systems of differentiated resources, supports and interventions responsive to LEAs' and schools' highest-priority needs,*

and LEAs:

- *Establish effective, standards-aligned instructional programs;*
- *Support schools and their communities in removing barriers to learning;*
- *Customize support systems to meet the local needs and context of individual schools;*
- *Implement data-informed human capital systems; and*
- *Allocate resources based on the needs of individual schools and their communities,*

then schools and their communities can:

- *Support effective instructional practices in all classrooms;*
- *Foster collective responsibility for the academic, social, emotional and behavioral outcomes of all students;*
- *Cultivate a safe, positive and supportive climate that is conducive to learning; and*
- *Provide high-quality professional learning opportunities for all administrators, teachers and support staff.*

READ MORE: bit.ly/sipilotbrief

Last revised 12/2018.

pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION education.pa.gov

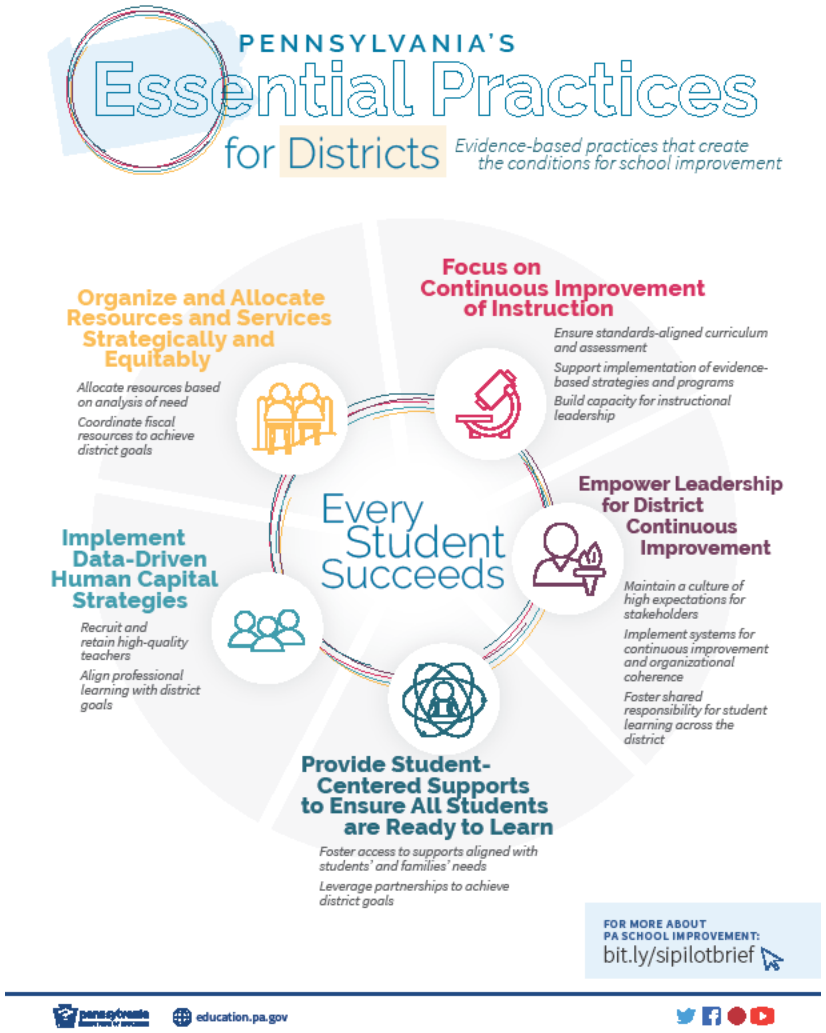
Future Ready Comprehensive Planning Process

READY	SET	GO
• Profile and Plan Essentials • Steering Committee • LEA Profile • Mission and Vision • Educational Values	• Future Ready PA Index • Student Performance Data • Supplemental LEA Plans • Conditions for Leadership, Teaching, and Learning • Summary of Strengths and Challenges	• Analyzing (Strengths and Challenges) • Goal Setting • Action Plan • Professional Development • Communications

Essential Practices Framework and Toolkit Development

- Developed, piloted, and brought to scale Essential Practices for Schools
- Draft research-based conditions and essential practices for districts
  - Stakeholder input
  - Round Table with PA Superintendents on 10/10/19
- Finalize essential practices framework and tools
- **Pilot and continuously improve**
  - School districts with multiple CSI schools
  - Phase 1 LEA comprehensive planning

PA Essential Practices for Districts



- ***Improving our capacity to identify the systems, policies, and/or practices*** that are either facilitating or hindering sustained improvement in teaching and learning across schools.

- ***Increasing the efficiency and efficacy*** of district and school improvement efforts and ***sustain progress*** over time

Rubric

Core Condition

CONDITION:

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

District leadership establishes a vision for continuous improvement and cultivates a culture of collective responsibility to provide the conditions for all students to be college, career, and community ready. There is a shared commitment to collaboratively identify, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and communicate the conditions necessary to continuously improve student learning and outcomes.

Essential Practice

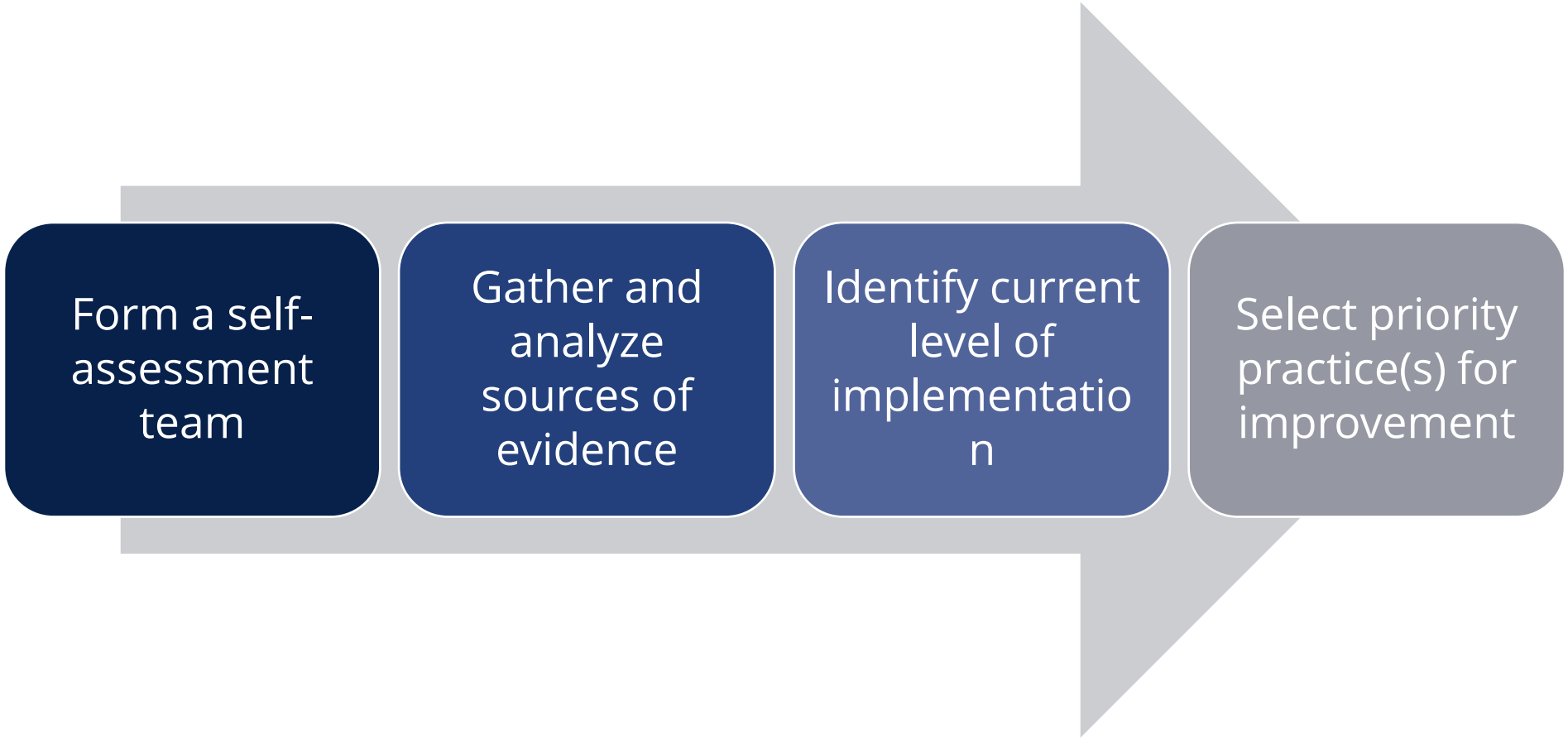
PRACTICE 1: Foster a vision and culture of high expectations for success for all stakeholders

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
• District leadership does not define or communicate a clear vision for district and school continuous improvement. • There is no clear vision for the success of all students, including students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps. • The district does not yet take observable action to build a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and a growth-orientation among district staff and stakeholders.	• District leadership demonstrates efforts to define a vision for district and school continuous improvement; the vision is informal and/or inconsistently communicated. • The developing vision may articulate expectations for the success of students but does not yet specifically address students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps. • The district has initiated steps toward building a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and/or a growth-orientation among district staff and/or stakeholders; efforts may be developing and/or limited to only a few stakeholder groups.	• District leadership defines and regularly communicates a clear vision for district and school continuous improvement. • The vision clearly articulates expectations for the success of all students, including students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps. • The district takes observable action to build a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and a growth-orientation among district staff and stakeholders.	• District leadership, in collaboration with a diverse array of school and community stakeholders, defines and regularly communicates a clear vision for district and school continuous improvement. • The vision clearly articulates expectations for the success of all students and district leaders publicly communicate, review, and address these opportunity and achievement gaps in order to advocate for district and school needs. • The district takes observable action to build a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and a growth-orientation among district staff and stakeholders, resulting in high levels of school, family, and community belief and trust in the district and district leadership (e.g., as measured by formal surveys).

Implementation Continuum

Indicators

District Self-Assessment Process



Essential Practice Quick Reference Guide

Appendix B.

QUICK REFERENCE:

Pennsylvania Essential Practices for Districts
Quick Reference Guide

CONDITION:

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

District leadership establishes a vision for continuous improvement and cultivates a culture of collective responsibility to provide the conditions for all students to be college, career, and community ready. There is a shared commitment to collaboratively identify, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and communicate the conditions necessary to continuously improve student learning and outcomes.

EMPOWER LEADERSHIP FOR DISTRICT CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
Practice 1: Foster a vision and culture of high expectations for success for all stakeholders	• Have we defined a district vision that clearly articulates high expectations for all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, family background, or individual needs? • How do we ensure that all stakeholders understand and commit to attaining the vision of our district? How do we know it is working? • To what extent do our stakeholders believe in and trust our district leadership? Do we have a way to measure this? How do we know? • What actions do we take to build trust, shared responsibility, and a positive district culture? How do we know it is working?	

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- ☐ District-wide vision statement
- ☐ Vision-specific communication materials
- ☐ Communications around improving outcomes for all students
- ☐ District meeting agendas and minutes
- ☐ Stakeholder surveys (e.g., board members, central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)
- ☐ Stakeholder focus groups (e.g., board members, central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)
- ☐ District and state assessment measures, by student group (e.g. achievement, growth)
- ☐ District on-track and college/career ready measures (e.g., attendance, early indicators of success, pass rates, credits and credit recovery, EL growth/attainment, graduation rates, industry-based learning, post-secondary transition to school/military/work, by student group)

“Look-Fors”: Indicators of Operational Implementation

Appendix C. Pennsylvania Essential Practices for Districts

Indicators of Operational Implementation

CONDITION:

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

District leadership establishes a vision for continuous improvement and cultivates a culture of collective responsibility to provide the conditions for all students to be college, career, and community ready. There is a shared commitment to collaboratively identify, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and communicate the conditions necessary to continuously improve student learning and outcomes.

PRACTICE 1: Foster a vision and culture of high expectations for success for all students, educators, and families

LOOK-FORS:

- There is a documented district vision (e.g., via district websites, newsletters/handouts, and/or posters) that defines high expectations for learning and growth of all students, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background and/or family income.
- There is evidence that district leadership works collaboratively with stakeholders that are representative of the district/community to develop and refine the district’s vision (e.g., visioning committee list, community meeting minutes, community feedback to the vision, etc.).
- District leaders articulate the vision during all meetings and interactions with internal and external stakeholders to ensure all decisions align back to the district’s vision.
- District leaders create systems for engaging parents/guardians and all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success reflecting the district’s vision.
- District and community stakeholders are aware of and understand the district’s vision.
- District leaders cultivate a culture of professional norms for peer support, collaboration, and continuous learning, resulting in high levels of trust, shared responsibility, support, and growth-orientation among staff.
- The district/school community works actively to identify and revise/adjust policies, practices, and cultures that keep students of different backgrounds and races from achieving equitable outcomes.
- Measurable short- and long-term goals are clearly articulated for the district, as well as individual schools and student groups (especially students who are economically disadvantaged, students of color, students with disabilities, English Learners, and other student groups who are historically marginalized).
- District, school, and community stakeholders hold each other accountable for the success of all students, especially students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps.
- District, school, and community stakeholders have positive and trusting working relationships.

Questions and Next Steps

Thank You!

PENNSYLVANIA'S

Essential Practices for Districts

Evidence-based practices that create the conditions for school improvement

Every Student Succeeds

Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction

Ensure standards-aligned curriculum and assessment

Support implementation of evidence-based strategies and programs

Build capacity for instructional leadership

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

Maintain a culture of high expectations for stakeholders

Implement systems for continuous improvement and organizational coherence

Foster shared responsibility for student learning across the district

Provide Student-Centered Supports to Ensure All Students are Ready to Learn

Foster access to supports aligned with students' and families' needs

Leverage partnerships to achieve district goals

Implement Data-Driven Human Capital Strategies

Recruit and retain high-quality teachers

Align professional learning with district goals

Organize and Allocate Resources and Services Strategically and Equitably

Allocate resources based on analysis of need

Coordinate fiscal resources to achieve district goals

FOR MORE ABOUT PA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:
bit.ly/sipilotbrief

Pennsylvania Essential Practices for Districts: Self-Assessment Guide

Last revised November 2019.

Pennsylvania Essential Practices for Districts Self-Assessment Guide

The Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) **Theory of Action for School Improvement**[1] outlines three goals for continuous improvement of leadership, teaching, and learning in Pennsylvania:

- *LEAs, including public school districts, charter schools, and career and technical schools, are accountable and empowered to serve schools identified for support and improvement;*
- *Schools and communities are accountable and empowered to provide effective, engaging instruction within a supportive culture; and*
- *All students enrolled in PA's public education system are engaged, healthy, safe, and* ***ready for college, career, and community****.*

In Spring 2018, PDE and 19 schools across three diverse districts field tested tools and a process for school improvement efforts, which resulted in the development of the PA Essential Practices for Schools and their Communities rubric and supplemental materials.[2]

Building upon those efforts, PDE, in collaboration with external partners, has identified research-based conditions and essential practices for districts to support continuous improvement efforts. With input from stakeholders across the state, PDE produced the PA Essential Practices for Districts and toolkit of resources to support districts across the state to incorporate the framework and tools into the comprehensive planning process.

Self-Assessment Guide Overview

This self-assessment guide details the following important information:

- *Purpose of Pennsylvania's Essential Practices for Districts;*
- *Structure of Pennsylvania's Essential Practices for Districts Rubric;*
- *Self-assessment process; and*
- *Appendix of additional tools to support this process.*

1 https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/ESSA/TheoryofAction.pdf

2 https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/ESSA/EssentialPracticesforSchoolsCommunities.pdf

Purpose

The PA Essential Practices for Districts is designed to promote a culture of continuous improvement across all districts and schools in Pennsylvania. The purpose of this guide and the PA Essential Practices for Districts self-assessment is to provide formative feedback as districts engage in the comprehensive planning process. These tools are meant to be non-evaluative, uncovering systems, policies, and/or practices within districts that are either facilitating or hindering sustained improvement in teaching and learning across schools. The data gathered through this process is meant to inform a comprehensive plan for continuous improvement, encouraging districts to prioritize no more than three essential practices for improvement at a time.

The PA Essential Practices for Districts Toolkit/ Process ***Is/Does...***	The PA Essential Practices for Districts Toolkit/ Process ***Is/Does Not...***
• **Is for all districts.** The framework is designed with all PA districts in mind, regardless of size, location, population, or performance profile. • **Is for self-reflection and planning.** These tools are intended for all districts to intentionally self-assess and plan for continuous improvement. • **Is customizable.** These tools propose a process and guidance for districts to self-assess and plan in a way that meets their needs. • **Highlights starting points and progress.** This framework is a tool to understand (a) where there is already progress in implementing the essential practices and (b) where there are logical starting points for local improvement efforts. • **Encourages prioritization of essential practices.** Districts should prioritize and focus on only a few essential practices at a time that will have the greatest impact. • **Informs a process over time.** We use a continuum of implementation because implementation doesn't happen overnight. Districts should aim for operational and then work towards exemplary over time.	• **Not only for districts with CSI or A-TSI schools.** The essential practices are true for all districts, regardless of the number of schools designated for support and improvement within a district. • **Not punitive or evaluative.** These tools are non-evaluative, for self- reflection and continuous improvement purposes only. • **Not one-size-fits-all.** We appreciate that all districts are unique and may need to modify processes to their local context. • **Does not identify district shortcomings.** This framework details a progression of implementation of essential practices to help districts identify where to start given their unique needs and context. • **Not an "all or nothing" approach.** It is a lot of work to thoughtfully bring each essential practice to life, and districts should not try to do everything at once. It is about quality over quantity. • **Not short-term or time-bound.** Each district has different starting places and different needs, and should plan to reach operational in an amount of time that makes sense for them.

Structure of the Pennsylvania Essential Practices for Districts Rubric

The PA Essential Practices for Districts (see Appendix A) are divided into five core conditions, related essential practices, and more detailed continuum of implementation that make up each practice.

The five **core conditions** are:

- *Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement;*
- *Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction;*
- *Provide Student-Centered Supports to Ensure That All Students are Ready to Learn;*
- *Implement Data-Driven Human Capital Strategies; and*
- *Organize and Allocate Resources and Services Strategically and Equitably.*

Within each condition, discrete **essential practices** are defined to provide a clear playbook for district leaders in their efforts to establish and maintain these core conditions for success. There are 12 essential practices in total.

For each essential practice, an **implementation continuum** is provided to describe the progression from "not yet evident" to "exemplary". Although the indicators within the implementation continuum are unique to each practice, to give a general sense of the meaning of each of the four implementation stages, Figure 1, below, shows the universal meaning and progression across the implementation continuum.

Figure 1: *Universal Meaning and Progression across the Implementation Continuum*

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
There is little or no evidence of implementation.	Initial steps to implement the practice have occurred and generated some evidence of implementation in a few areas.	The practice is implemented consistently and has generated evidence of implementation throughout the district.	The practice is implemented at a high level; there is evidence of continuous improvement of the practice, yielding evidence of more equitable results.

Each practice also defines discrete **indicators**, further defining specific pieces of each practice along the implementation continuum.

Figure 2, below, illustrates the overall structure of the rubric, including a core condition, an essential practice, the implementation continuum, and detailed indicators.

Figure 2: *Overview of the PA Essential Practices for Districts Rubric*

Core Condition

CONDITION:

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

District leadership establishes a vision for continuous improvement and cultivates a culture of collective responsibility to provide the conditions for all students to be college, career, and community ready. There is a shared commitment to collaboratively identify, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and communicate the conditions necessary to continuously improve student learning and outcomes.

Essential Practice

PRACTICE 1: Foster a vision and culture of high expectations for success for all stakeholders

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Implementation Continuum

Indicators

Pennsylvania Essential Practices for Districts Self-Assessment Process

The Essential Practices for Districts Self-Assessment is a collaboration between district and school leadership and diverse stakeholders, including staff, students, families, and community members. The process is designed to determine the current status of implementation of 12 evidence-based practices that foster sustained improvement in leadership, teaching, and learning for all students in a manner that:

- *Promotes shared responsibility for district and school improvement among a diverse group of stakeholders across the district;*
- *Relies on a comprehensive array of sources of evidence to establish a valid and reliable assessment of a district's current level of implementation of practices that are fundamental for continuous and sustained improvement; and*
- *Encourages prioritization of one to three essential practices for district comprehensive planning.*

Step 1: Form a Self-Assessment Team

Each district should begin the PA Essential Practices for Districts Self-Assessment by forming a team that will complete the self-assessment process. Please note, the self-assessment team does not necessarily need to be representative of all district stakeholders; the assessment process itself is meant to lift the voices and perspectives of all stakeholder groups through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and site visits.

The district Superintendent will form a team of four to six members who will support all self-assessment activities, including:

- ☐ Coordination of self-assessment logistics (e.g., scheduling of assessment activities, data and artifact collection, survey administration, determination of interview/focus group questions, etc.);
- ☐ Facilitation of interviews and focus groups;
- ☐ Note-taking during interviews and focus groups;
- ☐ Classroom and building walk-throughs;
- ☐ Analysis of evidence to determine current implementation status on the rubric; and
- ☐ Documentation of notable observations/comments for each source of evidence that informed rubric ratings.

Step 2: Gather and Analyze Multiple Sources of Data to Prepare for the Self-Assessment

During this step, the self-assessment team will collaboratively collect and organize a variety of sources of evidence. This will include documents like data reports, artifacts, and surveys. Interviews and focus groups will also provide key feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders. Please refer to the "Quick Reference Guide" in Appendix B for possible sources of evidence and data to gather for analysis for each essential practice.

Below is a step-by-step guide to prepare for the self-assessment *(please also see considerations for customization later in this document).*

- ☐ ***Collect a variety of data and artifacts,*** using the possible sources of evidence listed in the "Quick Reference Guide" in Appendix B (e.g., most recent district comprehensive plan, communication materials, sample current school improvement plans and related documents, district-wide student achievement data, stakeholder survey data, etc.).
- ☐ ***Administer surveys to central office and school staff.*** Sample central office and school staff survey questions can be found in Appendix D, as well as guidance for administering the surveys.
- ☐ ***Analyze preliminary data and evidence to lift high-level trends and create a snapshot of district-wide student performance and the overall state of the district*** (e.g., enrollment, teacher retention, stakeholder perceptions, etc.); utilize data analysis findings to identify areas to probe further during remaining self-assessment activities (e.g., interviews, focus groups, and walkthroughs) and identify any gaps in evidence.

Best Practice Tip:

Find opportunities to analyze preliminary data along the way.

This can help reveal gaps in evidence prior to the actual self-assessment and allow districts to probe deeper into areas where data reveal challenges or successes.

Use ongoing data analysis to inform deeper levels of questioning in focus groups, interviews, and walkthroughs.

- ☐ ***Identify and schedule interviews and focus groups*** with district leadership, representatives of the school board, central office staff responsible for leading key district functions (e.g., academics, student support, facilities, human resources, finance, operations, etc.), principals, families, students.

  Districts will have different approaches to the organization of interviews and focus groups based on their size,

organizational structure, and individual roles and responsibilities, as well as other contextual factors.

A bank of questions aligned to each essential practice can be found in Appendix E. Districts can customize questions based on:

- *Stakeholder group and/or type of interview/focus group;*
- *Identified areas to probe further (e.g., areas identified through collection of data and artifacts, through surveys, etc.); and*
- *Other district contextual factors (e.g., reframe questions using language familiar to the district, etc.*

See the chart below for potential interviews and focus groups. Appendix E also provides additional guidance for maximizing interviews and focus groups to gather evidence toward all essential practices.

POTENTIAL INTERVIEWS *(Large Districts)*	**POTENTIAL INTERVIEWS** *(Smaller Districts)*
In districts with a larger organizational structure, we recommend conducting one-on-one interviews by role. Questions will be customized based on role to understand progress towards role-related essential practices. • Superintendent (90 minutes) • Self-Assessment District Lead (45 minutes) • Chief of Staff/Strategy or other district leaders not otherwise named below (45 minutes) • Chief Finance Officer or similar role (45 minutes) • Chief Talent/HR Officer or similar role (45 minutes) • Chief Academic Officer (45 minutes) • Chief Accountability and Data Officer, or similar role (45 minutes) • District Lead for Family and Student Supports and/or Community Partnerships (45 minutes)	*In districts with smaller central office teams, we recommend conducting one-on-one interviews by functional area. This allows for the review team to gather evidence toward all essential practices, even if the team interviews the same individual for different functions.* • District Leadership (90 minutes) • Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction (45 minutes) • Accountability/Data (45 minutes) • Talent/HR/Human Capital (45 minutes) • Finance and Operations (45 minutes) • Family and Student Supports/Community Partnerships (45 minutes)
POTENTIAL FOCUS GROUPS	
• Two school board members, including board president (60 minutes) • Principal supervisors focus group (45 minutes), *if applicable* • Principals focus group (60 minutes), *representative of all grade levels, school types, levels of performance, locations, etc.* • Parents/guardians/family member focus groups (45 minutes each), *4-6 participants in each focus group that represent district demographics* • High school student focus groups (45 minutes each), *6-8 participants in each focus group that represent different school types and demographics*	

☐ ***Facilitate scheduled interviews and focus groups.*** The district self-assessment team will conduct stakeholder interviews and focus groups and capture notes from these conversations. Ideally, all members of the team should be present during every interview (and at a minimum each interview/focus group should be conducted with a facilitator and a note-taker).

Guidance for Facilitating Interviews and Focus Groups:

- Be mindful of who is conducting each interview and focus group; for example, a principal supervisor should not be conducting a principal focus group.
- When planning for interviews and focus groups, keep in mind a plan for following up with communication regarding how the interview and focus group feedback is being used to inform the comprehensive planning process.
- Feedback gathered through focus groups should remain anonymous. Focus group data should be presented as high-level themes that emerged across focus groups. If a direct quote would be a powerful piece of evidence, do not attach a name or any other information that can be traced back to the individual who provided it.
- Take advantage of time between focus groups to synthesize findings, check for gaps in evidence, and identify areas to probe further with remaining stakeholders.

☐ ***Gather walk-through data representative of all school types and grade levels within the district.*** Coordinate with principals to ensure school staff is aware of the walk-through and its purpose (e.g., non-evaluative, informing a district continuous improvement planning process, etc.).

Step 3: Self-Assess Current Implementation Using the Essential Practices for Districts Rubric

☐ ***Each member of the district self-assessment team complete an individual, anonymous self-assessment.*** PDE recommends that the self-assessment review team members complete an individual, anonymous self-assessments of the PA Essential Practices for Districts Rubric (see Appendix A) prior to the group self-assessment. This allows time for individual members to learn the contents of the rubric and prepare initial thoughts about their own perceptions of the district's current implementation of each of the 12 essential practices. *Please see guidance on how to rate implementation using the PA Essential Practices for Districts Rubric below.*

Identify a point person to collect and collate the individual committee member responses and summarize ratings (e.g., tallies sheet, synthesize rubric, etc.) in each implementation level for each practice prior to the scheduled PA Essential Practices for Districts Self-Assessment.

☐ ***Assign self-assessment roles.*** On the day of the scheduled PA Essential Practices Self-Assessment, it is important to identify members of the self-assessment team who will serve in the following roles:

- **Facilitator:** Person responsible for guiding the self-assessment team through review of relevant sources of evidence and discussion of agreed-upon rating for each of the 12 essential practices. The Facilitator will likely be the district Superintendent or identified designee.

- **Note-taker:** Person responsible for capturing key points of discussion about the evidence for each of the 12 essential practices, as well as the group's agreed-upon rating for each practice.
- **Curator of evidence:** Person responsible for organizing and ensuring the committee's access to the possible sources of evidence for each essential practice as the group moves from one practice to the next.

☐ ***Conduct the self-assessment with the full self-assessment team*** using the PA Essential Practice for Districts Rubric and following the process recommended below.

RECOMMENDED SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS	GUIDANCE
1. Share the goals, purpose, and process for the self-assessment.	• Reinforce that this is a formative assessment of the district's current status of implementation, not an evaluation or indictment of any one individual or stakeholder group. • Establish norms for engagement in the self-assessment that create conditions for safe, open discussion about what the sources of evidence suggest about the current implementation of each practice. • Keep the group focused on the sources of evidence, not anecdotal perceptions.
2. Start with Practice 1. Review the Rubric indicators for the selected essential practice at each level of the implementation continuum.	• Use the "Quick Reference Guide" (Appendix B) to identify sources of evidence related to the selected essential practice. • Review the "Look-fors" tool (Appendix C) for more guidance regarding what to look for in specific pieces of evidence in alignment with the practice. • Ensure everyone is clear on what the practice entails and looks like at each level of the implementation continuum.
3. Review the summary of individual, anonymous self-assessment ratings related to the selected essential practice.	• Identify where the team is aligned on potential ratings and where deeper analysis and discussion of evidence is needed. • If there is a high degree of consensus, allow time for the team to confirm whether gathered evidence supports the initial consensual rating. Test assumptions and document evidence before moving to step 4. • If there is a great deal of diversity in ratings, the team will spend more time in step 4 considering the guiding questions in the "Quick Reference Guide" (Appendix B), the "Look-fors" (Appendix C), and the district's gathered evidence.

4. Compare gathered evidence of the selected essential practice to the Rubric indicators at each of the implementation levels.	• Use the guiding questions in the "Quick Reference Guide" (Appendix B), the "Look-fors" (Appendix C) to discuss to what level of implementation the district's evidence currently supports. • Document evidence that indicates level of implementation progress for each indicator (e.g., using a note-catcher, folder of evidence, etc.).
5. For each indicator come to consensus on the current level of implementation.	• On the rubric, document the agreed upon level of implementation progress for each indicator by highlighting/boldfacing the indicator that best describes the district's current level of implementation (See Figure 3, below). • Because each practice involves multiple layers of implementation, it is possible for a district to meet indicators across more than one column within the same essential practice based upon each indicator's level of implementation.
6. Determine an overall implementation rating for the selected essential practice.	• If progress within an essential practice falls across several levels on the implementation continuum, the district can select the average rating *(e.g., if indicators span three levels, choose the middle level; if indicators span all four levels, choose the lowest of the middle two)*. • Shade the full column to indicate a districts' overall implementation level for each essential practice (see Figure 4 for an example).
7. Repeat this process for each practice until you complete these steps for each of the 12 practices.	At the end of this process, districts should have: ☐ Completed rubric with bold/highlighted indicators and shaded implementation columns for all essential practices; and ☐ Documented notes and evidence to support rubric ratings.

Figure 3: *Example of District Placement on the Framework Based on Implementation Progress*

In this example, within the same essential practice, the district is "emerging" in one indicator, "operational" in another, and "not yet evident" in the remaining indicator, meaning the district demonstrates different levels of implementation progress in the same essential practice.

CONDITION:

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

District leadership establishes a vision for continuous improvement and cultivates a culture of collective responsibility to provide the conditions for all students to be college, career, and community ready. There is a shared commitment to collaboratively identify, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and communicate the conditions necessary to continuously improve student learning and outcomes.

PRACTICE 1: Foster a vision and culture of high expectations for success for all stakeholders

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
• District leadership does not define or communicate a clear vision for district and school continuous improvement. • There is no clear vision for the success of all students, including students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps. • The district does not yet take observable action to build a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and a growth-orientation among district staff and stakeholders.	• District leadership demonstrates efforts to define a vision for district and school continuous improvement; the vision is informal and/or inconsistently communicated. • The developing vision may articulate expectations for the success of students but does not yet specifically address students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps. • The district has initiated steps toward building a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and/or a growth-orientation among district staff and/or stakeholders; efforts may be developing and/or limited to only a few stakeholder groups.	• District leadership defines and regularly communicates a clear vision for district and school continuous improvement. • The vision clearly articulates expectations for the success of all students, including students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps. • The district takes observable action to build a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and a growth-orientation among district staff and stakeholders.	• District leadership, in collaboration with a diverse array of school and community stakeholders, defines and regularly communicates a clear vision for district and school continuous improvement. • The vision clearly articulates expectations for the success of all students and district leaders publicly communicate, review, and address these opportunity and achievement gaps in order to advocate for district and school needs. • The district takes observable action to build a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and a growth-orientation among district staff and stakeholders, resulting in high levels of school, family, and community belief and trust in the district and district leadership (e.g., as measured by formal surveys).

Figure 4: *Example of Final Rating for Current Implementation of Essential Practice*

This example shows how a district might synthesize the indicator levels into a full implementation rating for the entire essential practice (note the gray shaded column).

This rating system supports the district in two ways: (1) the single, overall rating for each practice allows the district to more easily assess their implementation progress over time, and (2) the yellow highlighted indicators allow the district to identify specific next steps and supports needed to progress to the next level of implementation.

CONDITION:

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

District leadership establishes a vision for continuous improvement and cultivates a culture of collective responsibility to provide the conditions for all students to be college, career, and community ready. There is a shared commitment to collaboratively identify, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and communicate the conditions necessary to continuously improve student learning and outcomes.

PRACTICE 1: Foster a vision and culture of high expectations for success for all stakeholders

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
• District leadership does not define or communicate a clear vision for district and school continuous improvement. • There is no clear vision for the success of all students, including students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps. • The district does not yet take observable action to build a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and a growth-orientation among district staff and stakeholders.	• District leadership demonstrates efforts to define a vision for district and school continuous improvement; the vision is informal and/or inconsistently communicated. • The developing vision may articulate expectations for the success of students but does not yet specifically address students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps. • The district has initiated steps toward building a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and/or a growth-orientation among district staff and/or stakeholders; efforts may be developing and/or limited to only a few stakeholder groups.	• District leadership defines and regularly communicates a clear vision for district and school continuous improvement. • The vision clearly articulates expectations for the success of all students, including students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps. • The district takes observable action to build a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and a growth-orientation among district staff and stakeholders.	• District leadership, in collaboration with a diverse array of school and community stakeholders, defines and regularly communicates a clear vision for district and school continuous improvement. • The vision clearly articulates expectations for the success of all students and district leaders publicly communicate, review, and address these opportunity and achievement gaps in order to advocate for district and school needs. • The district takes observable action to build a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and a growth-orientation among district staff and stakeholders, resulting in high levels of school, family, and community belief and trust in the district and district leadership (e.g., as measured by formal surveys).

Step 4: Determine District Priorities for Improvement

- Once the self-assessment team finalizes and documents its current implementation status for each practice, **convene to summarize findings and lift trends from the review process.** This debrief should include a summary of findings that highlight specific strengths and challenges aligned to the core conditions and essential practices, as well as a presentation of final ratings for each practice.
- **Identify the highest-leverage priorities for continuous improvement.** A district may choose to have the existing self-assessment team make these decisions and propose recommendations or a district may invite other leaders and stakeholders to review framework findings and participate in the prioritization discussion. Ultimately, the district will elect a manageable set of essential practices (no more than three) to focus on for the current comprehensive planning cycle.
- **These priorities should inform the district's comprehensive planning.** It is recommended that districts consider any recommendations from the self-assessment team, conduct root cause analysis on challenges related to identified essential practices, and plan for continuous improvement. It may take several years to reach fully operational implementation of any given practice.

Recommendations to determine the highest-leverage priority areas:

- Start with a strong vision; all other essential practices flow from the vision.
- Identify root causes; drill down to determine which essential practices or indicators can impact multiple areas of leadership, teaching, and learning.
- Look for trends across all stakeholder groups; for example, if all surveys, interviews, and focus groups are lifting a concern with programs and supports for a student group or outcome area, this signals urgency.
- Identify practices in which no indicators were highlighted as "operational" or "exemplary".

Appendix of Additional Tools

TOOL	PURPOSE	SUGGESTED USE
Appendix A: Rubric	Provides a clear playbook for district leaders in their efforts to establish and maintain the core conditions for success.	• During Step 2 of the review process for individual, anonymous self-assessments. • During Step 3 of the review process to self-assess and document implementation progress in each essential practice.
Appendix B: Quick Reference Guide	Guiding questions and possible sources of evidence, aligned to each essential practice to determine a district's current implementation progress.	• During Step 2 of the review process to determine sources of evidence to collect. • During Step 3 of the review process to assist with analysis of evidence.
Appendix C: Look-Fors	Detailed Look-Fors aligned to each essential practice, to provide details about what districts should be "seeing" in their possible sources of evidence if they are truly operational or exemplary in that practice.	• During Step 3 of the review process to assist with analysis of evidence.
Appendix D: Sample Survey Questions *(for district and school-based staff)*	A bank of survey questions aligned to each essential practice to assist with data-gathering from central office and school staff.	• During Step 2 of the review process to focus data-gathering.
Appendix E: Sample Interview/ Focus Group Questions	A bank of questions aligned to each essential practice to assist with information-gathering. This document includes a list of master questions by essential practice and a list of recommended questions by potential stakeholder group.	• During Step 2 of the review process to focus information-gathering. • During Step 2 of the review process to conduct interviews and focus groups.

RUBRIC:

Pennsylvania Essential Practices for Districts

CONDITION:

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

District leadership establishes a vision for continuous improvement and cultivates a culture of collective responsibility to provide the conditions for all students to be college, career, and community ready. There is a shared commitment to collaboratively identify, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and communicate the conditions necessary to continuously improve student learning and outcomes.

PRACTICE 1: Foster a vision and culture of high expectations for success for all stakeholders

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
• District leadership does not define or communicate a clear vision for district and school continuous improvement. • There is no clear vision for the success of all students, including students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps. • The district does not yet take observable action to build a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and a growth-orientation among district staff and stakeholders.	• District leadership demonstrates efforts to define a vision for district and school continuous improvement; the vision is informal and/or inconsistently communicated. • The developing vision may articulate expectations for the success of students but does not yet specifically address students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps. • The district has initiated steps toward building a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and/or a growth-orientation among district staff and/or stakeholders; efforts may be developing and/or limited to only a few stakeholder groups.	• District leadership defines and regularly communicates a clear vision for district and school continuous improvement. • The vision clearly articulates expectations for the success of all students, including students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps. • The district takes observable action to build a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and a growth-orientation among district staff and stakeholders.	• District leadership, in collaboration with a diverse array of school and community stakeholders, defines and regularly communicates a clear vision for district and school continuous improvement. • The vision clearly articulates expectations for the success of all students and district leaders publicly communicate, review, and address these opportunity and achievement gaps in order to advocate for district and school needs. • The district takes observable action to build a culture of trust, shared responsibility, and a growth-orientation among district staff and stakeholders, resulting in high levels of school, family, and community belief and trust in the district and district leadership (e.g., as measured by formal surveys).

PRACTICE 2: Establish and maintain a focused system for continuous improvement and ensure organizational coherence

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
• The district does not yet have a system to collect and/or report multiple data sources to understand holistic district strengths and opportunities. • The district leadership team has limited or no processes in place to review data and identify priorities and strategies for continuous improvement; there may be no formal district or school improvement processes. • The district leadership team does not yet have processes in place to monitor comprehensive plan implementation and impact. *For larger districts:* • *Central office staff do not yet have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and/or organizational structures are not coherently organized to support district needs.* • *The district does not yet gather feedback or data on the quality of central office services, policies, and practices.*	• The district collects and reports some data to understand district strengths and opportunities; data may not be aggregated or disaggregated to provide a holistic view of district strengths and opportunities. • The district leadership team initiates some planning processes that include a review of data and identification of priorities and strategies for continuous improvement; these processes may not yet consistently align to school improvement processes and needs. • The district leadership team monitors comprehensive plan implementation but monitoring inconsistently assesses impact and identifies course corrections. *For larger districts:* • *Central office staff have defined organizational structures, roles and responsibilities; it is not evident how these central office structures are coherently aligned to the vision for district and school continuous improvement.* • *The district informally gathers feedback and data on the quality of central office services, policies, and/or practices based on what schools need.*	• The district annually collects, reports, and aggregates/ disaggregates data (e.g., by individual student, student group, course, grade level, school, district) to understand holistic district strengths and opportunities. • The district leadership team engages in a formal, annual planning process, including a review of data and identification of priorities and strategies for continuous improvement that address root causes within district control; there is evidence of some alignment of district plans to school needs. • The district leadership team monitors comprehensive plan implementation and impact quarterly, and makes adjustments when data suggest a need for mid-course corrections. *For larger districts:* • *Central office organizational structures, roles, and responsibilities staff are clearly defined and aligned to the vision for district and school continuous improvement.* • *The district annually gathers feedback and data on the quality of central office services, policies, and practices based on what schools need to make annual improvements to district functions.*	• The district frequently collects, reports, and aggregates/disaggregates multiple sources of data (e.g., by individual student, student group, course, grade level, school, and district) to understand holistic district strengths and opportunities; this process prioritizes historically marginalized student groups. • The district leadership team engages in a formal, annual planning process to review data and identify priorities and strategies for continuous improvement that address root causes within district control. There is evidence of intentional alignment of district plans to school needs. • The district leadership team monitors comprehensive plan implementation and impact monthly, and makes adjustments when data suggest a need for mid-course corrections. *For larger districts:* • *Central office organizational structures, roles, and responsibilities are clearly defined and aligned to the vision for district and school continuous improvement; stakeholders understand and articulate how central office staff and structures consistently work together.* • *The district frequently gathers feedback and data on the quality of central office services, policies, and practices, resulting in continuously improved services, policies, and practices in alignment with the district's vision, mission, values, and priorities.*

PRACTICE 3: Engage in meaningful two-way communication with stakeholders to establish and sustain shared responsibility for student learning across the district

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
• District leadership does not yet engage families, students and other stakeholders as part of the district's comprehensive planning, implementation, and monitoring process. • The district has no plan and/or no structures in place to communicate with a variety of stakeholders about progress toward achieving the district's goals for student learning. • Stakeholders have no formal opportunities to offer input in addressing school issues with district and school leaders.	• District leadership initiates some engagement of families, students and other stakeholders in the comprehensive planning, implementation and monitoring process, but it is not yet consistent and/or formalized. • The district has an initial plan or informal structures in place for communicating with a variety of stakeholders about progress toward achieving the district's goals for student learning. • Stakeholders, including families and/or community, have at least one formal opportunity during the year to offer input in addressing school issues with district and school leaders.	• Meaningful engagement of families, students, and other stakeholders is an evident part of the district's comprehensive planning, implementation, and monitoring process. • The district has a formal structure for communicating with a variety of stakeholders about progress toward achieving the district's goals for student learning. • Stakeholders, including families and community, have multiple opportunities during the year to offer input in addressing school issues with district and school leaders.	• Meaningful engagement of families, students, and other stakeholders is evident in comprehensive planning, implementation, and monitoring processes. The district continually evaluates and improves the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement strategies as a key part of the comprehensive planning process. • The district has a formal structure for communicating with a variety of stakeholders about progress toward achieving the district's goals for student learning, including a focus on how well the district is supporting administrators, teachers, staff, and families. • Stakeholders, including families and community, have multiple opportunities during the year to exchange ideas in addressing district and school issues, resulting in evidence of feedback being incorporated into district and school decisions.

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CONDITION:

Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction

District leadership facilitates access to tools, systems, and structures to ensure effective, standards-aligned instructional programs that are evidence-based, differentiated, individualized, and informed by data-based planning and reflection.

PRACTICE 4: Ensure effective, standards-aligned curriculum and assessment

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
• Schools have limited access to high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum and instructional materials. • Schools have limited access to rigorous, standards-aligned assessments. • The district does not yet monitor schools' curriculum and assessment implementation progress. • The district does not yet report student assessment data.	• The district ensures schools have access to high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum and instructional materials; materials may not be consistently available and utilized in all content areas, grade levels and all schools. • The district ensures all schools have access to rigorous, standards-aligned assessments in critical/state-testing content areas and grade levels; some schools are not yet fully utilizing them. • The district has an initial plan for monitoring schools' curriculum and assessment implementation progress; plan implementation is inconsistent and/or does not yet inform support for school leaders and teachers. • The district has a system for reporting student assessment data, but does not yet have consistent systems to disaggregate by student group and analyze the data.	• The district ensures all schools utilize high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum and instructional materials in all content areas and grade-levels. • The district ensures all schools utilize rigorous, standards-aligned assessments in critical/state-testing content areas and grade levels. • The district monitors schools' curriculum and assessment implementation progress in order to inform support for school leaders and teachers. • The district has a system for reporting, disaggregating by student group, and analyzing student assessment data.	• The district ensures all schools utilize high-quality, standards-aligned, culturally relevant curriculum and instructional materials in all content areas and grade-levels and works to strengthen K-12 curricular alignment. • The district ensures all schools utilize rigorous, standards-aligned assessments in all content areas and grade levels. • The district monitors schools' curriculum and assessment implementation progress in order to inform support for school leaders and teachers and to lift districtwide trends and next steps. • The district has a system for reporting, disaggregating by student group, and analyzing student assessment data and that data is accessible and useful to central office and school staff.

PRACTICE 5: Support schools in implementing evidence-based instructional strategies and programs to ensure all students have access to rigorous, standards-aligned instruction			
NOT YET EVIDENT	**EMERGING**	**OPERATIONAL**	**EXEMPLARY**
• The district does not yet monitor schools' implementation of evidence-based programs and instructional strategies. • The district provides limited or no resources and targeted training to support evidence-based and standards-aligned instruction. • The district provides limited or no resources and academic supports for students with special education and language development needs.	• The district takes some steps to monitor schools' implementation of evidence-based programs and instructional strategies; there is not a formal routine to do this and/or efforts are inconsistent. • The district provides some resources and targeted training that support evidence-based and standards-aligned instruction; support does not consistently align to school needs. • The district provides some resources and academic supports for students with special education and language development needs; support does not consistently align to evidence-based, grade-level, and standards-aligned instruction and/or is not yet fully accessible.	• The district monitors the effectiveness of all schools' implementation of evidence-based programs and instructional strategies. • The district provides resources and targeted training that are aligned to school needs to support evidence-based and standards-aligned instruction. • The district provides resources and academic supports to ensure all students with special education and language development needs access evidence-based, grade-level, and standards-aligned instruction.	• The district monitors the effectiveness of all schools' implementation of evidence-based programs and instructional strategies, and monitoring processes include an analysis of gaps in student outcomes. • The district provides resources and targeted training that are aligned to school needs to support evidence-based and standards-aligned instruction; support prioritizes the highest-need students, staff, and schools. • The district provides resources and academic supports to ensure all students with special education and language development needs access evidence-based, grade-level, and standards-aligned instruction, as a result, there is evidence of students' progress towards learning goals.

PRACTICE 6: Build the capacity of central office and school building administrators as instructional leaders to effectively monitor, supervise, and support high-quality teaching and learning

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
• District leadership has not yet defined a clear vision of central office and school building administrators as instructional leaders. • The district does not have systems and structures in place to support school leaders with developing, implementing, and monitoring plans; planning is the sole responsibility of the school. • Limited or no resources, training, and coaching is available to develop school and district leaders' ability to improve teacher practice. • Limited or no resources and training are available to build school-level capacity to use student assessment data to inform high-quality instruction.	• District leadership demonstrates efforts to define a clear vision of central office and school building administrators as instructional leaders; communication of this vision is inconsistent and/or there is not yet an emphasis on continuous improvement for all. • The district ensures that schools have plans for continuous improvement; there is limited evidence of support for school leaders to develop and implement plans aligned to specific school needs. • Some resources, training and coaching are available to develop school and district leaders' ability to improve teacher practice but supports are inconsistent and/or there is limited evidence of alignment to district and school priorities. • Resources and training are available to build school-level capacity to use student assessment data to inform high-quality instruction but use of data to inform school-level decisions around teacher support is inconsistent.	• District leadership defines and regularly communicates a clear vision of central office and school building administrators as instructional leaders, with an emphasis on a mindset of continuous improvement for all. • The district provides support for school leaders to develop, implement and monitor school-based plans for continuous improvement aligned to specific school needs. • A variety of resources, training, and coaching are available to develop school and district leaders' ability to improve teacher practice (through high-quality feedback, coaching, and professional development, etc.); the district attempts to align support to district and school priorities. • Resources and training are available to build school-level capacity to use student assessment data to inform high-quality instruction, resulting in school leaders' consistent use of data to inform school-level decisions around teacher support and instruction.	• District leadership defines and regularly communicates a clear vision of central office and school building administrators as instructional leaders, with an emphasis on a mindset of continuous improvement for all; most central office and school-level administrators self-identify as instructional leaders. • The district provides support for school leaders to develop, implement and monitor school-based plans for continuous improvement; district policies and practices empower school leaders to prioritize areas of need and drive plan development and monitoring. • Formal and coherent systems and processes are implemented to develop school and district leaders' ability to improve teacher practice (through high-quality feedback, coaching, and professional development, etc.), based on an analysis of data and aligned to district and school priorities for student achievement goals. • Resources and training to build school-level capacity to use student assessment data to inform high-quality instruction, resulting in leaders' and teachers' consistent use of data to inform instruction through formal systems and protocols.

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CONDITION:

Provide Student-Centered Supports to Ensure That All Students are Ready to Learn

District leadership supports school communities to remove barriers to learning and enhance opportunities for academic success, social and emotional development, and the health and wellness of all students. The district provides ongoing guidance and support to schools to maintain a positive climate conducive to learning.

PRACTICE 7: Coordinate and monitor supports aligned with students' and families' needs

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
• The district has limited or no systems for gathering and reporting data on student academic, attendance, and behavioral outcomes to assess student, family and school needs. • The district provides limited services to meet students' attendance, behavior, and academic needs and/or support is not coordinated and easily accessible to schools and families. • The district provides limited services to meet students' mental health and health and wellness needs and/or support is not coordinated and easily accessible to schools and families. • The district does not provide schools with resources and supports to effectively promote positive school culture in all schools.	• The district has a system for gathering and reporting data on student academic, attendance, and behavioral outcomes. The data is not yet disaggregated to assess student, family and school needs or is not accessible to district and school staff. • There is some evidence that the district provides and coordinates services to meet students' attendance, behavior, and academic needs. • There is some evidence that the district provides and coordinates services to meet students' mental health and health and wellness needs. • The district provides schools with some resources and supports to effectively promote positive school culture. • The district has a plan to support schools to implement evidence-based strategies for family engagement at the school level.	• The district has a system for gathering and reporting data on student academic, attendance, and behavioral outcomes that can be disaggregated in a variety of ways to assess student, family and school needs (e.g., individual student, student group, course, grade level, school). The system is accessible to district and school staff. • The district provides access to a comprehensive, accessible array of services to meet students' attendance, behavior, and academic needs, to students, families and schools. • The district provides access to a comprehensive, accessible array of services to meet students' mental health and health and wellness needs to students, families and schools. • The district provides schools with resources and supports to effectively promote a positive school culture. • The district provides some support for schools to implement evidence-based strategies for family engagement at the school-level. • The district implements some district-wide family engagement strategies; but there are not yet systems and structures in place to monitor these strategies.	• The district has a system for gathering and reporting data on student academic, attendance, and behavioral outcomes that can be disaggregated in a variety of ways to assess student, family and school needs (e.g., individual student, student group, course, grade level, school). The system is accessible to, widely utilized by, and continuously improved upon by, district and school staff. • The district provides access to a comprehensive, accessible array of services to meet students' attendance, behavior and academic needs to students, families and schools; the district prioritizes support for the highest-need students, families, and schools. • The district provides access to a comprehensive, accessible array of services to meet students' mental health and health and wellness needs to students, families and schools; the district prioritizes support for the highest-need students, families, and schools. • The district provides schools with resources and supports aligned to school needs to effectively promote a positive school culture, resulting in clear, operational procedures that are integrated into daily practice in all schools through communication, interaction, respect, and high-quality learning environments. • The district supports schools to implement evidence-based strategies for family engagement at the school level. • There is evidence of monitoring and evaluation of implementation and impact of district-wide family engagement strategies.

PRACTICE 8: Partner with local businesses, employers, community organizations, and other agencies to meet the needs of the district			
NOT YET EVIDENT	**EMERGING**	**OPERATIONAL**	**EXEMPLARY**
• The district has limited or nonexistent partnerships with outside resources and organizations to better meet the needs of the schools. • The work/purpose of partnerships is not actively defined or managed towards desired outcomes.	• The district has some partnerships with local businesses, employers, community organizations, and other agencies. Partnerships may be fragmented and/or it is not evident how all partnerships contribute to aspects of student learning and overall success. • There is a clear scope of work for partnerships, but roles and responsibilities and desired outcomes may not be formally defined.	• The district is partnered with local businesses, employers, community organizations, and other agencies for the purpose of increasing aspects of student learning and overall success. • Partnerships explicitly outline the role of community partners in helping to achieve specific results, including clear roles, scope of work, and desired outcomes.	• The district is partnered with local businesses, employers, community organizations, and other agencies for the purpose of increasing aspects of student learning and overall success; there is a plan to strengthen district-wide partnerships to meet district priorities. • Partnerships explicitly outline the role of community partners in helping to achieve specific results, including clear roles, scope of work, and desired outcomes; the district assesses partnerships effectiveness and responsiveness to changing needs.

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CONDITION:

Implement Data-Driven Human Capital Strategies

The district implements and maintains a performance management system that maximizes the effectiveness of district leaders, teachers, and other staff to ensure optimal learning for all students. District leaders, school leaders, teachers, and support staff acquire, enhance, and refine the knowledge, skills and practices necessary to create and support high levels of learning for all students through high-quality, embedded professional learning opportunities.

PRACTICE 9: Recruit and retain fully credentialed, experienced and high-quality teachers

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
• There is limited or no evidence of how the district recruits a diverse workforce of credentialed, experienced and effective teachers for its highest needs areas. • District policies and procedures do not account for school needs in staff selection and/or severely limit schools' abilities to select staff. • The district implements limited or no strategies to improve teacher retention; and/or district-wide retention teacher retention may be low. • Personnel evaluation practices do not consistently identify strengths and areas for improvement.	• There is evidence that the district attempts to recruit a diverse workforce of credentialed, experienced and effective teachers for its highest needs areas. • District policies and procedures account for school needs in staff selection, but may not yet support schools to select staff. • The district is exploring or planning for strategies to improve teacher retention. • Personnel evaluations strive to identify strengths and areas for improvement, but personnel evaluation and feedback processes may vary.	• The district actively recruits a diverse workforce of credentialed, experienced and effective teachers for its highest needs areas. • District policies and procedures support schools in identifying needs and selecting staff. • The district implements strategies to improve teacher retention. • Personnel evaluations are consistently implemented, result in the identification of strengths and areas for improvement, and inform professional development.	• The district actively recruits and places a diverse workforce of credentialed, experienced and effective teachers in its highest need areas by incentivizing those positions. • District policies and procedures enable schools to move early and quickly in identifying needs and selecting staff, prioritizing the highest needs schools. • The district implements strategies to retain credentialed, effective, and experienced teachers in its neediest schools, resulting in strong district-wide teacher retention. • Personnel evaluations are consistently implemented, result in the identification of strengths and areas for improvement, and inform professional development; teachers report that feedback is supportive.

PRACTICE 10: Support the development, professional learning, and advancement of central office and school leaders and staff in alignment with district and school mission, vision, goals, and priorities

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
• The district has limited processes to recruit and develop a diverse pool of experienced and effective school leaders. • The district does not use data to understand staff development needs and ensure staff have access to high-quality professional learning opportunities (e.g., district, school, or partner-led). • There is limited or no evidence or how district-provided opportunities for professional learning align to district and school goals or the district does not provide opportunities for professional learning. • The district does not monitor data on the effectiveness of professional learning opportunities. • The district provides limited or no opportunities for staff's professional progression and career development.	• There is evidence that the district attempts to recruit and internally develop a diverse pool of experienced and effective school leaders. • The district uses limited data (e.g., anecdotal data) to understand staff development needs and ensure staff have access to high-quality professional learning opportunities (e.g., district, school, or partner-led). • District-provided opportunities for professional learning do not consistently align to district and school goals. • Some data are used to monitor the effectiveness of professional learning opportunities, but data may not be consistently connected to student and staff needs. • The district provides some staff development and progression opportunities, but opportunities are not yet systematic.	• The district actively recruits and internally develops a diverse pool of experienced and effective school leaders. • The district uses data to understand staff development needs and ensure staff have access to high-quality professional learning opportunities (e.g., district, school, or partner-led). • District-provided opportunities for professional learning are aligned to district and school goals. • Data are used to monitor the effectiveness of professional learning opportunities in order to meet the needs of students and staff. • The district implements staff development and progression pathways to increase teachers' and leaders' demonstrated expertise and capacity.	• The district actively recruits and internally develops a diverse pool of experienced and effective school leaders, prioritizing and incentivizing placement to highest-need schools. • The district uses data to understand staff development needs and ensure staff have access to high-quality professional learning opportunities (e.g., district, school, or partner-led) that meet their needs and align to school and district priorities. • District-provided opportunities for professional learning are aligned to district and school goals and differentiated based on staff and school needs. • Data are used to monitor the effectiveness of professional learning opportunities in order to meet the needs of students and staff, resulting in improved professional and instructional practice. • The district implements formal staff development and progression pathways to increase teachers' and leaders' demonstrated expertise and capacity, including incentives for helping coach or mentor others.

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CONDITION:

Organize and Allocate Resources and Services Strategically and Equitably

The district is organized and allocates resources (money, staff, professional learning, materials, and additional support) to schools based on the analysis of a variety of data that is disaggregated by student groups to determine district and school needs. Fiscal resources from local, state, and federal programs are used strategically and equitably to achieve the district's goals and priorities.

PRACTICE 11: Allocate resources, including money, staff, professional learning, materials, and support to schools based on the analysis of a variety of data

NOT YET EVIDENT	EMERGING	OPERATIONAL	EXEMPLARY
• Resource allocation decisions do not follow a formal, annual process. • There is limited or no evidence that annual resource allocations to schools align school and student needs. • There are limited or no policies and procedures for schools to access resources when unforeseen needs arise.	• There is a formal, annual process to make resource allocation decisions, but it is not evident how decisions are informed by disaggregated student data and individual student needs. • Annual resource allocations to schools sometimes/inconsistently align to school and student needs. • There are some policies and procedures for schools to access resources, but resources are not consistently accessible when unforeseen needs arise.	• There is a formal, annual process to make resource allocation decisions based on data disaggregated by student groups and individual school needs. • There is evidence to show that annual resource allocations to schools align with data indicating school and student needs, as well as school improvement and academic plans. • There are policies and procedures for schools to access resources when unforeseen needs arise.	• There is a formal, annual process to make resource allocation decisions based on data disaggregated by student groups and individual school needs, and the district monitors allocations throughout the year to make mid-course improvements. • There is evidence to show that annual resource allocations to schools align with data indicating school and student needs, as well as school improvement and academic plans, and allocations prioritize the highest-need schools and student populations. • Policies and procedures allow schools to quickly and flexibly access resources when unforeseen needs arise.

PRACTICE 12: Coordinate fiscal resources from local, state, and federal programs to achieve the district's goals and priorities			
NOT YET EVIDENT	**EMERGING**	**OPERATIONAL**	**EXEMPLARY**
• The district has no centralized plan for allocating and coordinating fiscal resources across programs, departments, and schools. • The district struggles to spend state and federal funds in a timely and compliant manner.	• The district has a plan for coordinating use of fiscal resources across programs, departments, and schools, but there are gaps in coordination. • The district occasionally struggles to spend state and federal funds in a timely manner.	• The district has a process to coordinate and align local, state and federal funding streams toward district's goals and priorities and school needs. • The district always spends state and federal funds in a timely and compliant manner.	• The district has a process to coordinate and align local, state, and federal funding streams toward district's goals and priorities and school needs, and equitably distributes funds to meet the biggest school and district needs. • The district always spends state and federal funds in a timely and compliant manner, and all schools within the district spend state and federal funds in a timely and compliant manner.

Last revised November 2019.

Appendix B.

QUICK REFERENCE:

Pennsylvania Essential Practices for Districts
Quick Reference Guide

CONDITION:

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

District leadership establishes a vision for continuous improvement and cultivates a culture of collective responsibility to provide the conditions for all students to be college, career, and community ready. There is a shared commitment to collaboratively identify, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and communicate the conditions necessary to continuously improve student learning and outcomes.

	PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
EMPOWER LEADERSHIP FOR DISTRICT CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	Practice 1: Foster a vision and culture of high expectations for success for all stakeholders	• Have we defined a district vision that clearly articulates high expectations for all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, family background, or individual needs? • How do we ensure that all stakeholders understand and commit to attaining the vision of our district? How do we know it is working? • To what extent do our stakeholders believe in and trust our district leadership? Do we have a way to measure this? How do we know? • What actions do we take to build trust, shared responsibility, and a positive district culture? How do we know it is working?	

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- ☐ District-wide vision statement
- ☐ Vision-specific communication materials
- ☐ Communications around improving outcomes for all students
- ☐ District meeting agendas and minutes
- ☐ Stakeholder surveys (e.g., board members, central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)
- ☐ Stakeholder focus groups (e.g., board members, central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)
- ☐ District and state assessment measures, by student group (e.g. achievement, growth)
- ☐ District on-track and college/career ready measures (e.g., attendance, early indicators of success, pass rates, credits and credit recovery, EL growth/attainment, graduation rates, industry-based learning, post-secondary transition to school/military/work, by student group)

	PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
EMPOWER LEADERSHIP FOR DISTRICT CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	Practice 2: Establish and maintain a focused system for continuous improvement and ensure organizational coherence	• How do we work to understand the biggest district priorities and needs? What data informs this process and what do we do with it? • How do we develop our comprehensive plan and ensure our plan aligns to school needs and plans? • How do we monitor our plan implementation? How do we know if our plan is having the desired impact and what do we do next? • How do we organize central office and other support systems (e.g., local colleges/universities or other service organizations/agencies, Intermediate Unit, PaTTAN, etc.) to support schools? How do we align our efforts to ensure organizational coherence towards our vision and school needs? • How do we evaluate and continuously improve our efforts to ensure success for all students, educators, and families?	

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- ☐ Current district comprehensive plan
- ☐ Current school improvement plans
- ☐ District data reports (e.g., ESSA Report Card, Future Ready PA Index; other attendance, behavior, academic, college and career readiness/on-track indicators, graduation rates, etc.)
- ☐ District data analysis protocols
- ☐ Planning processes/protocols
- ☐ District meeting agendas and minutes
- ☐ Stakeholder surveys (e.g., board members, central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)
- ☐ Stakeholder focus groups (e.g., board members, central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)
- ☐ Communication about organizational changes

For larger districts:

- ☐ *Central office organization chart*
- ☐ *Central office staff job descriptions*
- ☐ *Central office staff interviews*

	PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
EMPOWER LEADERSHIP FOR DISTRICT CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	Practice 3: Engage in meaningful two-way communication with stakeholders to establish and sustain shared responsibility for student learning across the district	• How do we involve multiple stakeholders in our district planning and implementation monitoring processes? How do we share information about progress, how often, and with whom (e.g., board, community, and district and school stakeholders)? • What opportunities do we provide to gather input from all district stakeholders and communicate information in a way that sustains shared responsibility for student learning across the district? • How do we incorporate family and community feedback into decision-making, and how do we communicate about this with stakeholders?	
	POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE		
	☐ District/school events calendars ☐ District/school websites ☐ District/school meeting agendas and minutes ☐ District/school planning documents (e.g., committee lists, processes for community engagement, board updates, etc.) ☐ District/school communication materials (e.g., district progress updates, follow up to feedback, etc.) ☐ Stakeholder surveys (e.g., board members, central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians) ☐ Stakeholder focus groups (e.g., board members, central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)		

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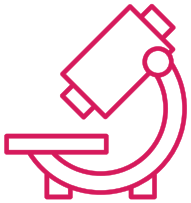
CONDITION:

Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction

District leadership ensures access to tools, systems, and structures to ensure effective, standards-aligned instructional programs that are evidence-based, differentiated, individualized, and informed by data-based planning and reflection.



FOCUS ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION

PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
Practice 4: Ensure effective, standards-aligned curriculum and assessment	• Is it clear what all students should learn, know, and be able to do by grade-level and content-area? • Are all of our schools effectively using standards-aligned curriculum and assessments? How do we know? Where are there gaps? • How do we ensure educators implement curriculum and assessments effectively? What tools, resources, and supports do we offer? • How do we ensure all school leaders and teachers have access to high-quality curricular materials and standards-aligned assessment data? • To what extent do our schools regularly gather and assess data to understand student learning of the grade-level and content-area standards?	

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- ☐ District curriculum and assessment documents (e.g., curriculum maps, assessment calendar, list of approved and aligned resources, etc.)
- ☐ District-led process/policies for curriculum audit/review
- ☐ School-level instructional materials (e.g., unit/lesson plans, formative assessments, etc.)
- ☐ Classroom, PLC and school visits
- ☐ District professional learning calendar
- ☐ School calendars and master schedules
- ☐ District and state assessment measures, by student groups (e.g. achievement and growth)
- ☐ District on-track and college/career ready measures (e.g., attendance, early indicators of success, pass rates, credits and credit recovery, EL growth/attainment, graduation rates, industry-based learning, post-secondary transition to school/military/work, by student group)
- ☐ Processes and protocols for analyzing school and district-wide assessment data
- ☐ Central office staff, school leader and school staff surveys
- ☐ Central office staff, school leader and school staff focus groups

FOCUS ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION	PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
	Practice 5: Support schools in implementing evidence-based instructional strategies and programs to ensure all students have access to rigorous, standards-aligned instruction	• To what extent are all our schools providing rigorous, standards-aligned instruction to all students? How do we know? Where are gaps and needs? • How do we support schools in implementing high-impact instructional strategies and programming for all students? What tools, resources, and supports do we offer? • What supports and resources do we provide specifically to ensure that students with language development needs and/or special education needs can access grade-level, standards-aligned content? What impact are the supports and resources having on student progress and outcomes?	

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- ☐ District and state assessment measures, by student groups (e.g.. achievement and growth)
- ☐ District on-track and college/career ready measures (e.g., attendance, early indicators of success, pass rates, credits and credit recovery, EL growth/attainment, graduation rates, industry-based learning, post-secondary transition to school/military/work, by student group)
- ☐ Data analysis protocols
- ☐ Resources, supports, and plans for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- ☐ Resources, supports, and plans for English Language Development (ELD)
- ☐ Professional learning materials and tools related to evidence-based instructional strategies
- ☐ Classroom and school visits (e.g., using aligned walkthrough/instructional rounds forms)
- ☐ Stakeholder surveys (e.g., central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)
- ☐ Stakeholder focus groups (e.g., central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)

	PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
FOCUS ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION	Practice 6: Build the capacity of central office and school building administrators as instructional leaders to effectively monitor, supervise, and support high-quality teaching and learning	• How do we define and develop instructional leadership? How do we create an environment that allows central office and school building administrators to build their capacity as instructional leaders? • How do we support principals with school-level planning and continuous improvement? • How do we develop school and district leaders' ability to strengthen teacher practice through high-quality PD, teacher feedback, and coaching? • How do we build the capacity of school-based staff to utilize data in a meaningful way to strengthen the quality of instruction?	

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- ☐ Documentation of district's vision of instructional leadership
- ☐ District comprehensive planning documents
- ☐ School improvement planning processes/protocols
- ☐ Differentiated professional development plan for school and district leaders
- ☐ Professional learning plans and materials
- ☐ Data analysis protocols
- ☐ Classroom visit protocols
- ☐ Schedule of individual conferencing with school leaders
- ☐ Schedule of individual and team conferencing with teachers
- ☐ Stakeholder surveys (e.g., central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)
- ☐ Stakeholder focus groups (e.g., central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)
- ☐ Classroom student growth data (e.g., teacher-specific growth data, benchmark assessment data, etc.)

Last revised November 2019.

CONDITION:

Provide Student-Centered Supports to Ensure That All Students are Ready to Learn

District leadership supports school communities to remove barriers to learning and enhance opportunities for academic success, social and emotional development, and the health and wellness of all students. The district provides ongoing guidance and support to schools to maintain a positive climate conducive to learning.

	PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
PROVIDE STUDENT-CENTERED SUPPORTS	Practice 7: Coordinate and monitor supports aligned with students' and families' needs	• How do we identify student and family needs to match them to supports or resources in a timely manner? How do we support the whole child? • How do we prioritize support for our highest-need students and families? • How do we define the components of a positive school culture, ensuring all stakeholders feel welcome, safe, and supported? How do we communicate this to schools and to other stakeholders? • How do we use a variety of tools/approaches to reach and include all families as integral parts of our learning community? • How do we support schools to implement evidence-based family engagement strategies?	

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- ☐ Data and data analysis protocols for student and family needs (e.g., academic, attendance, on-track, behavior, mental health, health and wellness, etc.)
- ☐ District/school websites, newsletters, and communications plans
- ☐ Staff/student/family handbooks
- ☐ Board-approved student policies (e.g., discipline, attendance, behavioral, mental health, health and wellness, Special Education, English Language Development, etc.)
- ☐ District professional learning materials related to student and family supports
- ☐ Building visits/walk-throughs
- ☐ District/school events calendars
- ☐ District and school plans for evidence-based strategies to increase family engagement
- ☐ Student and family support program/activity materials (e.g., for attendance, behavior, academics, mental health, health and wellness, etc.) highlighting a range of family engagement opportunities
- ☐ Stakeholder surveys (e.g., central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)
- ☐ Stakeholder focus groups (e.g., central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians

	PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
PROVIDE STUDENT-CENTERED SUPPORTS	Practice 8: Partner with local businesses, employers, community organizations, and other agencies to meet the needs of the district	• How do we invite and involve community partners to support student success? • To what extent have we defined clear roles, scopes of work, and desired outcomes for our partnerships? • How do we assess partnership effectiveness and responsiveness to changing needs?	

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- ☐ District/school websites
- ☐ District community newsletter
- ☐ District/school events calendars
- ☐ District/partner meeting agendas/minutes
- ☐ District/partner plan and memos of understanding/contracts (e.g., health services community, social service organizations, business partners, industry employers, post-secondary programs)
- ☐ Stakeholder surveys (e.g., board members, central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)
- ☐ Stakeholder focus groups (e.g., board members, central office, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians)

Last revised November 2019.

CONDITION:

Implement Data-Driven Human Capital Strategies

The district implements and maintains a performance management system that maximizes the effectiveness of district leaders, teachers, and other staff to ensure optimal learning for all students. District leaders, school leaders, teachers, and support staff acquire, enhance, and refine the knowledge, skills and practices necessary to create and support high levels of learning for all students through high-quality, embedded professional learning opportunities.

IMPLEMENT DATA-DRIVEN HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGIES	PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
	Practice 9: Recruit and retain fully credentialed, experienced and effective teachers	• How do we define "effective teachers"? • How do we recruit and retain highly-qualified teachers, especially to our highest-need schools? To what extent do we consistently fill talent needs? • How do we ensure we are recruiting and hiring from a diverse pool of teacher candidates that reflect the diversity of our district? • To what extent do we support schools leaders to be human capital managers, including to identify needs and make staffing decisions? What are potential barriers and opportunities to do this? • How do we retain effective teachers? Is it working? How do we know? • How do we implement an evaluation process that results in continued improvement in instructional effectiveness and ensures differentiated professional learning and growth for teachers?	
	POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE		
	☐ District and school staffing data (e.g., teacher vacancies, turnover, positive retention, effectiveness, demographics, preparation program and certification data, observations, etc.) ☐ District recruitment and hiring plan, policies, and procedures ☐ Teacher job descriptions ☐ Teacher incentive program materials ☐ District-wide teacher retention plan ☐ Differentiated professional development plan ☐ Personnel evaluation materials ☐ School surveys and focus groups (e.g., principals, teachers, etc.)		

	PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
IMPLEMENT DATA-DRIVEN HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGIES	Practice 10: Support the development, professional learning, and advancement of central office and school leaders and staff in alignment with district and school mission, vision, goals, and priorities	• How do we recruit and develop experienced and effective school leaders, especially to our highest-need schools? • How do we ensure we recruit and develop from a diverse pool of school leaders that reflect the diversity of our district? • How do we use a variety of data sources to identify districtwide and differentiated professional learning needs? • How do we create opportunities for differentiated professional learning? To what extent are professional learning opportunities consistently aligned to school and staff needs? • How do we monitor the effectiveness of professional learning? Does it positively impact student achievement? How do we know? • Do we provide leadership/career pathways, mentorship/coaching programs, or other avenues to increase teachers' and leaders' expertise and capacity? Are theses pathways effective and how do we know?	

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- ☐ District recruitment and hiring plan, policies, and procedures
- ☐ School leader job descriptions
- ☐ Criteria for selection of cooperating teachers, mentors, department and lead teachers, instructional/peer coaches, committee members, etc.
- ☐ School leader staffing data (e.g., demographics, retention, student achievement data, etc.)
- ☐ Student success data (e.g., assessments, on-track, college and career ready, etc.)
- ☐ Data analysis protocols
- ☐ Differentiated professional development plan and materials
- ☐ Samples of staff development goals
- ☐ Documentation of leadership/career pathways, mentorship programs, etc.
- ☐ Central office staff, school leader and school staff surveys
- ☐ Central office staff, school leader and school staff focus groups

Last revised November 2019.

CONDITION:

Organize and Allocate Resources and Services Strategically and Equitably

The district is organized and allocates resources (money, staff, professional learning, materials, and additional support) to schools based on the analysis of a variety of data that is disaggregated by student groups to determine district and school needs. Fiscal resources from local, state, and federal programs are used strategically and equitably to achieve the district's goals and priorities.

ORGANIZE AND ALLOCATE RESOURCES AND SERVICES STRATEGICALLY AND EQUITABLY

PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
Practice 11: Allocate resources, including money, staff, professional learning, materials, and support to schools based on the analysis of a variety of data	• How do we ensure equity of resource allocation in support of student success? • How do we ensure resource allocations align with school needs? Do allocations prioritize the highest-need schools and student populations? • What data informs our resource allocation decisions? Who is involved in this process? • How do we monitor and revisit resource allocations? • How can schools access resources when unforeseen needs arise?	

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- ☐ District/school budgets aligned to school and district needs
- ☐ Data to inform resource allocations (e.g., enrollment, class size, student/teacher ratio, school/support ratio, admin/teacher ratio, school performance data, etc.)
- ☐ Board-approved policies and district/school procedures for budgeting, staffing and resource allocations, etc.
- ☐ Systems and processes for review and approval of expenditures
- ☐ District leadership meeting agendas
- ☐ Master schedules/staff assignments
- ☐ Stakeholder surveys (e.g., board, district staff, principals, school staff, etc.)
- ☐ Stakeholder focus groups (e.g., board, district staff, principals, school staff, etc.)

ORGANIZE AND ALLOCATE RESOURCES AND SERVICES STRATEGICALLY AND EQUITABLY

PRACTICE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	NOTES
Practice 12: Coordinate fiscal resources from local, state, and federal programs to achieve the district's goals and priorities	• How do we coordinate fiscal resources from all funding sources to maximize impact on student success? • To what extent do we consistently spend state and federal funds in a timely and compliant manner? How do we know?	

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- ☐ District/school budgets
- ☐ District comprehensive plan
- ☐ Systems and processes for review and approve of expenditures
- ☐ District fiscal policies and procedures
- ☐ Local, state, and federal compliance reports
- ☐ Data to inform resource allocations (e.g., enrollment, class size, student/teacher ratio, school/support ratio, admin/teacher ratio, school performance data, etc.)
- ☐ District budget meeting agenda and minutes

Last revised November 2019.

Appendix C. Pennsylvania Essential Practices for Districts

Indicators of Operational Implementation

CONDITION:

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

District leadership establishes a vision for continuous improvement and cultivates a culture of collective responsibility to provide the conditions for all students to be college, career, and community ready. There is a shared commitment to collaboratively identify, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and communicate the conditions necessary to continuously improve student learning and outcomes.

PRACTICE 1: Foster a vision and culture of high expectations for success for all students, educators, and families

LOOK-FORS:

- There is a documented district vision (e.g., via district websites, newsletters/handouts, and/or posters) that defines high expectations for learning and growth of all students, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background and/or family income.
- There is evidence that district leadership works collaboratively with stakeholders that are representative of the district/community to develop and refine the district's vision (e.g., visioning committee list, community meeting minutes, community feedback to the vision, etc.).
- District leaders articulate the vision during all meetings and interactions with internal and external stakeholders to ensure all decisions align back to the district's vision.
- District leaders create systems for engaging parents/guardians and all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success reflecting the district's vision.
- District and community stakeholders are aware of and understand the district's vision.
- District leaders cultivate a culture of professional norms for peer support, collaboration, and continuous learning, resulting in high levels of trust, shared responsibility, support, and growth-orientation among staff.
- The district/school community works actively to identify and revise/adjust policies, practices, and cultures that keep students of different backgrounds and races from achieving equitable outcomes.
- Measurable short- and long-term goals are clearly articulated for the district, as well as individual schools and student groups (especially students who are economically disadvantaged, students of color, students with disabilities, English Learners, and other student groups who are historically marginalized).
- District, school, and community stakeholders hold each other accountable for the success of all students, especially students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps.
- District, school, and community stakeholders have positive and trusting working relationships.

PRACTICE 2: Establish and maintain a focused system for continuous improvement and ensure organizational coherence

LOOK-FORS:

- District-wide data collection systems gather data on an array of metrics associated with student learning, including behaviors, attendance, assessment and academic data, college and career readiness and other on-track indicators (e.g., grade distribution, pass/fail rates, credit recovery), graduation rates, etc.
- The district gathers and reviews data that is aggregated and disaggregated in a variety of ways, including by individual student, student group, course, grade-level, content area, school and district-wide, etc.
- The data collection system is accessible to and utilized by district and school staff (e.g., according to formal and regular feedback structures and anecdotal feedback).
- District leadership regularly assesses the effectiveness and accessibility of the data systems through input from district and school staff.
- District leadership works collaboratively with stakeholders that are representative of the district/community to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a district comprehensive plan.
- Systems and processes to identify school needs are regularly and consistently implemented, including the identification of highest-needs schools.
- District planning documents and school improvement planning documents are intentionally aligned to ensure alignment to district's vision for continuous improvement.
- District and school planning documents include growth goals and achievement goals.
- Measurable short- and long-term goals are aligned to Future Ready interim targets for schools.
- District leadership maintains a consistent process for ensuring that the district's vision drives decisions and district- and school-level processes and practices. District policies and practices are aligned to the district's vision.
- A clear system has been developed to gather and analyze data on implementation and outcomes of the major components of the district's comprehensive plan.
- The district leadership team engages in formal, annual processes to review a variety of quantitative and qualitative data to assess progress toward the goals outlined in the district's comprehensive plan and make course-corrections based on data.
- District, school, and community stakeholders can articulate how the district's support aligns with school needs.
- District leadership and staff's roles and responsibilities related to supporting school improvement are clearly defined and communicated to district and school stakeholders.

For larger districts:

- *There is a documented organizational structure that efficiently and effectively organizes district staff to support schools.*
- *District leadership models continuous improvement practices by regularly gathering feedback and data on the quality of support available to schools (e.g., stakeholder surveys, focus groups, response time data, etc.) and adjust as needed in response to the feedback.*

PRACTICE 3: Engage in meaningful two-way communication with stakeholders to establish and sustain shared responsibility for student learning across the district

LOOK-FORS:

- There is evidence that families, students, and other stakeholders have meaningful opportunities to engage and contribute to the district's comprehensive planning, implementation, and monitoring processes.
- District leadership maintains a consistent process for evaluating the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement strategies and continuously improves upon engagement of stakeholders.
- District leadership formally and regularly communicates with multiple stakeholders about progress toward achieving district's goals for student learning (e.g., through district and school staff meetings, newsletters and website updates, board meetings, family/community meetings, media, etc.)
- District leadership provides regular and consistent opportunities for stakeholders across the district to engage in reciprocal communication with leaders (e.g., virtual or in-person opportunities for a two-way exchange of ideas).
- District leadership communicates how stakeholder feedback is incorporated into district decisions.
- Stakeholders believe they have opportunities to learn about district progress and provide input into district decisions.

Last revised November 2019.

CONDITION:

Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction

District leadership ensures access to tools, systems, and structures to ensure effective, standards-aligned instructional programs that are evidence-based, differentiated, individualized, and informed by data-based planning and reflection.

PRACTICE 4: Ensure effective, standards-aligned curriculum and assessment

LOOK-FORS:

- District leaders design and implement a formal process for vetting and identifying high-quality, standards-aligned, culturally relevant curricula for all content areas and grade levels within the district.
- School leaders have access to a formal, organized bank of district-sanctioned evidenced-based programs, instructional resources, and assessments.
- There is a formal and regular monitoring process to evaluate each school's implementation of the district-sanctioned curricula in order to ensure rigorous and culturally relevant instruction in all schools (e.g., informed by school and classroom walkthroughs, principal conversations, student academic data demonstrating proficiency in prioritized standards, etc.).
- District leaders ensure school leaders and teachers have access to implementation support directly aligned to district-sanctioned curricula and the vision of the district.
- District leaders identify and hold schools accountable for administering rigorous, standards-aligned assessments in all content areas and grade levels.
- Assessments yield data that are easily accessible to educators and leaders, aggregated/disaggregated (e.g., by school, grade-level, content-area, class, student group, and individual student), and allows for analysis to inform instructional decisions.
- District and school calendars provide sufficient time for educators to teach, assess for learning, analyze data, and make decisions about re-teach needs and daily instructional decisions.
- The district supports schools with implementing tools and opportunities to understand student learning and progress through purposeful formative classroom assessments to inform programs and instruction.
- District leaders provide professional learning opportunities to school administrators to support their ability to consistently monitor, evaluate, and improve implementation of the curriculum and assessments.

PRACTICE 5: Support schools in implementing evidence-based instructional strategies and programs to ensure all students have access to rigorous, standards-aligned instruction

LOOK-FORS:

- District leaders have a strong understanding of the quality of instruction across the district, including any gaps ins student subgroup performance, and use student outcome data to identify schools in need of additional instructional supports.
- There are formal systems and processes for monitoring, evaluating, and holding school leaders accountable to effectively implement evidence-based programs, instructional strategies, and assessments for all students.
- School leaders and educators have access to resources, tools, and model to better understand and implement district-sanctioned evidenced-based programs and instructional strategies.
- School and district leaders regularly identify teachers in need of additional instructional support and provides training targeted around specific evidence-based and standards-aligned instruction practices aligned to their needs.
- School leaders and staff express that the resources and training they receive help improve their implementation of evidence-based instructional strategies and programs in classrooms to ensure all students succeed.
- Systems for data collection at the school level include disaggregation by student group to ensure equitable access to rigorous, standards-aligned instruction and provide evidence of minimal gaps in student outcomes.
- There are resources and academic supports dedicated specifically to ensure all students have equitable access to evidence-based, standards-aligned instruction, including language development supports and supports for students with special education needs.

PRACTICE 6: Build the capacity of central office and school building administrators as instructional leaders to effectively monitor, supervise, and support high-quality teaching and learning

LOOK-FORS:

- District leadership defines a clear vision of what it means to be an instructional leader at the district and school level, reinforcing that all leaders are constantly learning and improving.
- School and district instructional leaders express clarity around their role in improving instruction and have a shared understanding of the specific actions instructional leaders should take to drive improvement at all levels.
- School and district instructional leaders set professional goals and demonstrate a commitment to continuously improve their knowledge, skills and expertise. School and district leaders can share how their instructional leadership has grown over time.
- District leaders regularly evaluate the effectiveness of district and school instructional leadership toward supporting high-quality teaching and learning (e.g., informed by student learning outcomes, overall school and district performance data, progress towards professional goals, etc.)
- District leaders use data on instructional leadership capacity to identify strengths and areas of need and to inform supports for district and school leaders.
- District leaders identify, and encourage others to seek out, research-based instructional leadership development opportunities for all district and school leaders.
- Professional learning opportunities for district and school leaders focus on providing high-quality feedback, coaching, and professional development to improve teacher's instructional practice and ability to support student academic needs, as well as barriers to learning (e.g., behavior and social-emotional needs).
- District leaders provide guidance, thought-partnership, and resources to school leaders and/or leadership teams to support and annual school improvement planning process.
- Annually, school leaders and/or leadership teams collaborate with district leaders to review data to understand specific school and student needs and develop goals and strategies to address those needs.
- School leaders and/or leadership teams work collaboratively with district leaders to monitor implementation of school-level plans and progress towards defined goals, as well as make course corrections as needed.
- There are formal protocols, structures, and tools for supporting school-level instructional leaders to analyze and utilize data to inform instructional decision-making (e.g., walkthrough forms, professional learning communities protocols, data dive materials, etc.).
- District and school leaders use student academic data to understand teachers' instructional needs and to provide aligned supports.
- District and school leaders learn from one another and develop innovative practices that maximize success of adults and students.

Last revised November 2019.

CONDITION:

Provide Student-Centered Supports to Ensure That All Students are Ready to Learn

District leadership supports school communities to remove barriers to learning and enhance opportunities for academic success, social and emotional development, and the health and wellness of all students. The district provides ongoing guidance and support to schools to maintain a positive climate conducive to learning.

PRACTICE 7: Coordinate and monitor supports aligned with students' and families' needs

LOOK-FORS:

- District leadership has clearly defined the elements of a safe, supportive learning environment, including stakeholder engagement and inclusion; physical and emotional safety; and the physical, academic and disciplinary environment.
- There is a formal system for monitoring, evaluating, and supporting school leadership's capacity to implement the defined elements of a safe, supportive learning environment.
- District and school buildings maintain appropriate facilities, well-managed offices and classrooms, and make available supports to ensure access to all stakeholders.
- District leadership regularly communicates and celebrates efforts toward improving and maintaining safe, supportive learning environments with all district stakeholders.
- District-wide data collection systems gather data on a wide variety of metrics associated with whole-student needs (e.g., behavior, attendance, mental health, health and wellness, family needs, etc.).
- The district gathers and reviews data that is aggregated and disaggregated in a variety of ways, including by individual student, student group, course, grade-level, content area, school and district-wide, etc.
- The data system is accessible to and widely utilized by district and school staff, according to formal and regular feedback structures.
- District leadership regularly assesses the effectiveness and accessibility of the data systems through input from district and school staff.
- There is a formal, district-wide process for identification of individual student needs and connecting those students and families to supports to ensure a well-coordinated system of support for the whole child.
- This system is clearly and regularly communicated to all stakeholders, including students, families, community members, school level staff and central office staff. Stakeholders express understanding of this system.
- District leaders design and implement a formal process for identifying, vetting and approving community partners to provide services to meet the educational, physical, social and emotional needs of its students.
- District and school leaders and staff have access to high-quality, approved providers of support for students' educational, physical, social and emotional needs.
- There is a system for monitoring the quality and equity of student supports.
- There is a district-wide statement of philosophy regarding family engagement that supports and guides each school to develop their own plan for family engagement, based on the unique needs of their students and families.
- District leadership designs and provides regular formal opportunities for development and support for school level leaders to ensure effective and equitable implementation of evidence-based family engagement strategies.
- District leadership, in collaboration with a diverse array of community stakeholders, curates a bank of evidence-based family engagement strategies and documents to support school level implementation.
- District leaders and school level leaders regularly communicate the outcomes of family engagement strategies, goals for improvement and opportunities for stakeholder input.
- There is a system in place to monitor and evaluate family engagement at the district and school level.

PRACTICE 8: Partner with local businesses, employers, community organizations, and other agencies to meet the needs of the district

LOOK-FORS:

- The district has a plan for building and strengthening partnerships with local businesses, employers, community organizations, and other agencies that explicitly outlines the role of community partners in helping to achieve specific results.
- The district has several effective, strategic partnerships aligned to school and district needs and goals. These partnerships include documented, agreed-upon and defined partner roles, scope of work, and desired outcomes.
- Partners can articulate how their work aligns to school and district needs and goals.
- There is a formal and regular process for assessing partnerships and their impact on student/school success.
- Partnerships are held accountable to being responsive to changing needs.

Last revised November 2019.

CONDITION:

Implement Data-Driven Human Capital Strategies

The district implements and maintains a performance management system that maximizes the effectiveness of district leaders, teachers, and other staff to ensure optimal learning for all students. District leaders, school leaders, teachers, and support staff acquire, enhance, and refine the knowledge, skills and practices necessary to create and support high levels of learning for all students through high-quality, embedded professional learning opportunities.

PRACTICE 9: Recruit and retain fully credentialed, experienced and high-quality teachers

LOOK-FORS:

- The district collects, reviews, and monitors district-wide and school-level data related to its teaching workforce, including vacancies, turnover, positive retention, diversity, credentials/certifications, and effectiveness.
- There is a documented and structured system of recruiting and screening a diverse pool of potential teaching candidates, including passive recruitment strategies (e.g., website, job board, etc.) and proactive strategies (e.g., hiring fairs, partnerships/pipelines, etc.).
- District practices ensure that teachers are credentialed, effective, and experienced with the skills necessary to meet specific district and school needs through evidence-based practices.
- There are specific and documented efforts to place and retain credentialed, experienced, and effective teachers in the highest-need schools (e.g., priority placement, monetary or other incentives, mentorship and leadership opportunities, etc.).
- School leaders receive support during recruitment and hiring processes to identify individual school teacher workforce needs and select staff that meet those needs.
- District recruitment and hiring processes efficiently and effectively place teaching staff prior to the start of the school year and minimize vacancies.
- There is a documented and structured plan for monitoring and improving teacher retention strategies, especially in priority areas, to ensure high teacher retention districtwide.
- Personnel evaluation processes include multiple sources of information and data (e.g., student outcomes, classroom observations, progress towards professional goals, other artifacts of progress, etc.).
- Teachers understand their strengths and areas for improvement based on personnel evaluations.
- Personnel evaluation results are used to support ongoing teacher professional development.
- There is a formal system for gathering input from school leaders and teachers regarding the evaluation process, supporting district leaders to make the process as supportive as possible.

PRACTICE 10: Support the development, professional learning, and advancement of central office and school leaders and staff in alignment with district and school mission, vision, goals, and priorities

LOOK-FORS:

- The district collects, reviews, and monitors district-wide and school-level data related to school leadership, including vacancies, turnover, positive retention, diversity, credentials/certifications, and effectiveness.
- There is a documented and structured system of recruiting and screening a diverse pool of potential school leadership candidates, including internal development of promising teacher leaders and recruitment of credentialed, experienced, and effective external candidates.
- The district provides differentiated support, coaching, and development opportunities to school principals to develop school leadership capacity.
- Principals express having positive and supportive relationships with their principal supervisors/mentors.
- District leadership implements formal and regular systems and structures to gather data to understand overall staff development needs in the district (e.g., student academic data, staff effectiveness, stakeholder surveys, classroom walkthrough, other data related to district priorities, etc.).
- District and school leaders have formal conversations to identify district-wide and school-level staff professional development needs and to provide opportunities to fulfill those needs and align to district priorities.
- School-based staff have access to multiple high-quality professional learning opportunities through district-vetted and approved partners and/or provided by the district or school.
- District-provided opportunities for professional learning are aligned to district vision and differentiated to accommodate staff needs.
- Central office staff have, and are encouraged to seek out, opportunities to develop their professional skills in alignment with district priorities.
- District leaders support school leaders in developing a structured plan for school-based professional development aligned with district and school mission, vision, goals, priorities and staff needs.
- District leaders monitor multiple indicators and data sources in order to continuously improve the effectiveness of professional learning opportunities.
- There are formal pathways to leadership development, differentiated by specific areas of need, for district and school staff, such as specific pathways for teachers, teacher leaders/mentor teachers, school leadership roles, and district leadership roles.
- Staff are aware of leadership development pathways and what it takes to successfully progress.

Last revised November 2019.

CONDITION:

Organize and Allocate Resources and Services Strategically and Equitably

The district is organized and allocates resources (money, staff, professional learning, materials, and additional support) to schools based on the analysis of a variety of data that is disaggregated by student groups to determine district and school needs. Fiscal resources from local, state, and federal programs are used strategically and equitably to achieve the district's goals and priorities.

PRACTICE 11: Allocate resources, including money, staff, professional learning, materials, and support to schools based on the analysis of a variety of data

LOOK-FORS:

- There is a documented and systematic process for gathering a variety of disaggregated student data to inform decision-making around resource allocation across the district.
- District leaders, in collaboration with a variety of district stakeholders, develop and implement annual processes for determining resource allocation, prioritizing highest-need schools.
- School budget and staff allocations are equitable and aligned to school needs, as well as improvement and academic plans.
- Professional learning, programmatic and instructional materials, and district supports are equitably allocated and aligned to school needs, as well as improvement and academic plans.
- School leaders articulate how their resource allocations are aligned to school needs, as well as improvement and academic plans.
- Resource allocations are continuously evaluated and refined to improve district operations, ensure critical learning needs of students are met, and to support highest-need schools.
- School leaders can request and seek out additional or different resources throughout the year based on their needs, and the district accommodates requests when possible.

PRACTICE 12: Coordinate fiscal resources from local, state, and federal programs to achieve the district's goals and priorities

LOOK-FORS:

- District leaders have access to a complete and updated list of local, state, and federal funding sources.
- District leaders intentionally organize and align multiple funding sources to district goals, priorities, and needs.
- There are documented systems for directly aligning funding allocation to district goals and priorities, monitoring, and adjusting to ensure school and district needs are met.
- The district has a documented and ongoing process to evaluate and improve the use of fiscal resources and collaboration among programs and departments that are responsible for various funding sources.
- Systems for ensuring compliance with state and federal funds spending requirements are documented, implemented, and monitored for effectiveness.
- District leaders/staff understand what is required for state and federal funding source/grant compliance and seek additional information/support as needed to remain compliant.

Last revised November 2019.

Potential District/Central Office Staff Survey Questions

Document Overview

This document is part of the Pennsylvania Essential Practices for Districts Self-Assessment toolkit. This document provides potential district staff survey questions for district review teams to issue central office surveys during the data collection and analysis portion of their self-assessment.

Survey questions are organized by the five core conditions outlined in the Essential Practices for Districts Rubric. Districts may choose to customize the survey questions and/or the order of these questions if needed.

Guidance for Using these Survey Questions

1. **Issue surveys, using these questions, in a platform that the district can access and is familiar with:**
    a. Paper-based surveys;
    b. Google forms;
    c. SurveyMonkey; or
    d. Other survey programs.
2. **Ensure surveys maintain confidentiality, e.g., do not ask for names or personal identifiers.**

    If any of the proposed background questions may reveal a participant's identity, please delete the question(s) from your survey or make them optional.
3. **If your district is engaging in both school assessments and district self-assessments, consider combining surveys into a streamlined version. For example, a district could:**
    a. Identify gaps/overlaps between the school assessment survey questions and the district assessment survey questions listed in this document;
    b. Create and issue a single streamlined survey by consolidating all questions into one survey for school staff and eliminating similar or duplicate questions;
    c. Use survey data as evidence to inform both school assessments and a district self-assessment.
4. **If your district has recently issued other district surveys, consider opportunities to streamline the district self-assessment survey to avoid over-surveying stakeholders.**

Overview

Our school district is gathering information and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders in order to evaluate district systems, policies, and processes in several key areas. Please take a moment to complete the following survey. Please note that all survey responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Thank you in advance for sharing your experience and feedback.

Background Information

Please indicate the office in which your position is housed:

- ☐ Academics, Curriculum and/or Instruction
- ☐ Building and Grounds
- ☐ Business Office
- ☐ Federal Programs
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Human Resources
- ☐ Operations
- ☐ Special Programs
- ☐ Special Education
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

How long have you worked for the district?

- ☐ Less than 2 years
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

Overall, how would you characterize the supports and services provided by the district's central office to schools?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

Please note:

Districts should ensure anonymity in surveys. If any background questions may reveal a participant's identity, please delete the question(s) from your survey or make them optional. For example, in a district with a small central office team, the background questions (left) may risk non-anonymity and should be removed, generalized, or made optional.

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

For the following questions, please select your level of agreement with each statement below.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
The district has a clear and compelling vision for district and school continuous improvement articulates expectations for the success of all students, including students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps.	○	○	○	○	○
The district has a strong culture of trust and shared responsibility amongst stakeholders across the district.	○	○	○	○	○

The district has established a manageable set of priorities informed by school data and student needs.	○	○	○	○	○
I am clear about my role, responsibilities, and expectations for my work.	○	○	○	○	○
Central office roles and responsibilities are aligned to the vision for district and school continuous improvement.	○	○	○	○	○
The central office communicates effectively with stakeholders to keep them fully informed on matters affecting them.	○	○	○	○	○
Schools and community stakeholders have an opportunity to provide feedback on the nature and quality of central office services.	○	○	○	○	○

Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction

For the following questions, please select your level of agreement with each statement below.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Central office services and operations allow school-based educators to focus on teaching and learning.	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides sufficient, aligned, standards-based curricular resources to schools.	○	○	○	○	○
Schools have assessments that are aligned with the standards outlined in the curriculum framework.	○	○	○	○	○
The district system for analyzing and reporting student assessment data is accessible and useful.	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides support to leaders, teachers, and school staff to improve and refine instructional practice.	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides an equitable, high-quality education for all students, including specific student groups (special education, ELs, students categorized as economically disadvantaged, race/ethnicity, gifted learners).	○	○	○	○	○
The district has a support structure that develops the instructional leadership of district and school leaders.	○	○	○	○	○

The district supports the development of school improvement plans that focus on the highest impact causes of low performance.	○	○	○	○	○
The district supports teachers and school leaders in accessing and analyzing the data they need to inform instruction.	○	○	○	○	○
The district has a system that holds schools accountable for their results.	○	○	○	○	○

Provide Student-Centered Supports to Ensure All Students are Ready to Learn

For the following questions, please select your level of agreement with each statement below.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
District information systems are accurate, accessible, and useful; allowing school and district staff to determine specific school, student, and family needs.	○	○	○	○	○
District information systems provide information to support the progress monitoring of multiple data sources, including academic, behavior, discipline, on-track, graduation, mental health, and health and wellness data.	○	○	○	○	○
District information systems allow for the progress monitoring of all student groups (i.e., provides data by race/ethnicity, special education, ELs, students categorized as economically disadvantaged, gifted learners, and other prioritized subgroups).	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides access to a comprehensive array of services to meet the needs of the whole child.	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides support and resources to ensure schools are safe and welcoming.	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides support and resources to ensure families can be effective partners in their children's learning.	○	○	○	○	○
The district maintains effective partnerships with community organizations that align to school and district priorities.	○	○	○	○	○

Implement Data-Driven Human Capital Strategies

For the following questions, please select your level of agreement with each statement below.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Recruitment and placement processes intentionally seek diverse staff.	○	○	○	○	○
Recruitment and placement decisions prioritize lowest performing schools.	○	○	○	○	○
Principals can select from several quality candidates for each vacancy.	○	○	○	○	○
The district and schools work collaboratively to retain talented staff.	○	○	○	○	○
Evaluation of all staff focuses on building strengths and addressing weaknesses to improve performance.	○	○	○	○	○
The district has systems for recruiting and developing potential school leaders	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides district-wide professional development opportunities aligned to district and school needs.	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides formal development and progression pathways to increase teachers' and leaders' career options and expertise.	○	○	○	○	○

Organize and Allocate Resources and Services Strategically and Equitably

For the following questions, please indicate your agreement with each statement below.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
The district implements a formal system to make resource allocation decisions aligned with student needs and school plans.	○	○	○	○	○
Central office services prioritize low performing or high need schools in allocating and delivering services.	○	○	○	○	○
Financial resources are aligned to district priorities.	○	○	○	○	○

Principals have sufficient influence on how financial resources are used to meet school needs.	○	○	○	○	○

Is there anything else you think we should know that can help us continue to improve?

Potential School Staff Survey Questions

Document Overview

This document is part of the Pennsylvania Essential Practices for Districts Self-Assessment toolkit. This document provides potential school staff survey questions for district review teams to issue school surveys during the data collection and analysis portion of their self-assessment.

Survey questions are organized by the five core conditions outlined in the Essential Practices for Districts Rubric. Districts may choose to customize the survey questions and/or the order of these questions if needed.

Guidance for Using these Survey Questions

1. **Issue surveys, using these questions, in a platform that the district can access and is familiar with:**
    a. Paper-based surveys;
    b. Google forms;
    c. SurveyMonkey; or
    d. Other survey programs.
2. **Ensure surveys maintain confidentiality, e.g., do not ask for names or personal identifiers.**

    If any of the proposed background questions may reveal a participant's identity, please delete the question(s) from your survey or make them optional.
3. **If your district is engaging in both school assessments and district self-assessments, consider combining surveys into a streamlined version. For example, a district could:**
    a. Identify gaps/overlaps between the school assessment survey questions and the district assessment survey questions listed in this document;
    b. Create and issue a single streamlined survey by consolidating all questions into one survey for school staff and eliminating similar or duplicate questions;
    c. Use survey data as evidence to inform both school assessments and a district self-assessment.
4. **If your district has recently issued school surveys as part of a school assessment process, consider opportunities to streamline the district self-assessment survey to avoid over-surveying stakeholders.**

Overview

Our school district is gathering information and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders in order to evaluate the district's systems, policies, and processes in several key areas. Please take a moment to complete the following short survey. Please note that all survey responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Thank you in advance for sharing your experience and feedback.

Background Information

At what school do you currently work?

_____

What is your primary role in the school?

- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Support staff
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Other (please specify)_____

How long have you worked for the district?

- ☐ Less than 2 years
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

Overall, how would you characterize the supports and services provided by the district's central office to schools?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

Please note:

Districts should ensure anonymity in surveys. If any background questions may reveal a participant's identity, please delete the question(s) from your survey or make them optional. For example, in a district with a small central office team, the background questions (left) may risk non-anonymity and should be removed, generalized, or made optional.

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

For the following questions, please select your level of agreement with each statement below.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
The district has a clear and compelling vision for district and school success and models high expectations for the success of all students, including students who have historically experienced opportunity and achievement gaps.	○	○	○	○	○
The district has a strong culture of trust and shared responsibility amongst stakeholders across the district.	○	○	○	○	○
The district has established a manageable set of priorities informed by school data and student needs.	○	○	○	○	○

School-based staff can easily access appropriate central office staff with questions and concerns.	○	○	○	○	○
Central office roles and responsibilities are aligned to the vision for district and school continuous improvement.	○	○	○	○	○
The central office communicates effectively with stakeholders to keep them fully informed on matters affecting them.	○	○	○	○	○
Schools and community stakeholders have an opportunity to provide feedback on the nature and quality of central office services.	○	○	○	○	○

Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction

For the following questions, please select your level of agreement with each statement below.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Central office services and operations allow school-based educators to focus on teaching and learning.	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides sufficient, aligned, standards-based curricular resources to schools.	○	○	○	○	○
Schools have assessments that are aligned with the standards outlined in the curriculum framework.	○	○	○	○	○
The district system for analyzing and reporting student assessment data is accessible and useful.	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides support to leaders, teachers, and school staff to improve and refine instructional practice.	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides an equitable, high-quality education for all students including specific student groups (special education, ELs, students categorized as economically disadvantaged, race/ethnicity, gifted learners).	○	○	○	○	○
The district has a support structure that develops the instructional leadership of district and school leaders.	○	○	○	○	○
The district supports the development of school improvement plans that focus on the highest impact causes of low performance.	○	○	○	○	○

The district supports teachers and school leaders in accessing and analyzing the data they need to inform instruction.	○	○	○	○	○
The district has a system that holds schools accountable for their results.	○	○	○	○	○

Provide Student-Centered Supports to Ensure That All Students are Ready to Learn

For the following questions, please select your level of agreement with each statement below.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
District information systems are accurate, accessible, and useful, allowing school and district staff to determine specific school, student and family needs.	○	○	○	○	○
District information systems provide information to support the progress monitoring of multiple data sources, including academic, behavior, discipline, on-track, graduation, mental health, and health and wellness data.	○	○	○	○	○
District information systems allow for the progress monitoring of all student groups (i.e., provides data by race/ethnicity, special education, ELs, students categorized as economically disadvantaged, gifted learners, and other prioritized subgroups).	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides access to a comprehensive array of services to meet the needs of the whole child.	○	○	○	○	○

Implement Data-Driven Human Capital Strategies

For the following questions, please select your level of agreement with each statement below.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Recruitment and placement processes intentionally seek diverse staff.	○	○	○	○	○
Recruitment and placement decisions prioritize lowest performing schools.	○	○	○	○	○

Principals can select from several quality candidates for each vacancy.	○	○	○	○	○
The district and schools work collaboratively to retain talented staff.	○	○	○	○	○
Evaluation of all staff focuses on building strengths and addressing weaknesses to improve performance.	○	○	○	○	○
The district has systems for recruiting and developing potential school leaders	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides district-wide professional development opportunities aligned to district and school needs.	○	○	○	○	○
The district provides formal development and progression pathways to increase teachers' and leaders' career options and expertise.	○	○	○	○	○

Organize and Allocate Resources and Services Strategically and Equitably

For the following questions, please indicate your agreement with each statement below.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
The district implements a formal system to make resource allocation decisions aligned with student needs and school plans.	○	○	○	○	○
Central services prioritize low performing or high need schools in allocating and delivering services.	○	○	○	○	○
Financial resources are aligned to district priorities.	○	○	○	○	○
Principals have sufficient influence on how financial resources are used to meet school needs.	○	○	○	○	○

Is there anything else you think we should know that can help us continue to improve?

Interview and Focus Group Questions

Document Overview

This document is part of the Pennsylvania Essential Practices for Districts Self-Assessment toolkit. This question bank includes potential interview and focus group questions by stakeholder group for districts to use during the self-assessment process.

Appendix E.1. Master Question Bank

Questions in this document are organized as follows:

- Introductory questions
- Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement
- Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction
- Provide Student-Centered Supports so That All Students are Ready to Learn
- Implement Data-Driven Human Capital Strategies
- Organize and Allocate Resources and Services Strategically and Equitably
- Closing questions

Appendix E.2. Sample Questions by Stakeholder Group

Questions in this document mirror those in the master question bank but are organized by potential district stakeholder group and district functional areas.

- **Central Office Interviews/Focus Group Questions:**
  - District Functional Areas
    - Additional district leaders (e.g., Chief of Staff, Associate Superintendent, etc.)
    - Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction
    - Talent/HR/Human Capital
    - Finance and Operations
    - Family and Student Supports/Community Partnerships
    - Equity
- **Stakeholder Focus Group Questions:**
  - School Board Representatives
  - Principals
  - Families
  - Students

Guidance for Using these Questions in Focus Groups and Interviews

- **Districts do not need to ask all questions, ask them in the order that they appear, or ask them of every stakeholder.** These questions are recommendations to help districts gather evidence towards implementation of each essential practice.
- **Identify which stakeholders are best positioned to provide evidence regarding each essential practice** (e.g., Chief Financial Officer, or similar role, principals, and Board members can likely respond to questions related to budget and resource allocations; while families may not have information about district budgeting).
- **Customize questions based on the evidence gathered through other data sources and artifacts. Use focus groups and interviews to probe into areas where data reveal notable successes and challenges that require more in-depth exploration.** For example, if a review of survey data reveals that staff culture/trust is lacking districtwide, the district may want to focus on understanding the underlying "why" during focus groups/interviews.
- **Districts should customize and prioritize questions given their unique stakeholders.** Although, this guide specifies questions for specific functional areas and roles, districts should feel empowered to ask questions from any essential practice to any stakeholder depending on their unique function or role within the district.

Appendix E.1.

Master Question Bank

Introductory Questions

- How would you summarize the strengths of the school/district?
- What are some areas for improvement?

Empower Leadership for District Continuous Improvement

Practice 1: Foster a vision and culture of high expectations for success for all students, educators, and families

- What is the district's vision?
  - How does it address gaps in student achievement?
  - How does it set high expectations for student achievement, school and district performance?
- How was the vision developed? How is the vision communicated and shared with stakeholders?
- What actions has district leadership taken to build shared responsibility for achieving the vision?
- How does the district prioritize the success of all students?
  - What subgroup inequities/disproportionalities currently exist in the district? What contributes to these?
  - How does the district address any inequities/disproportionalities throughout the district? or In what ways does the district address any inequities/disproportionalities throughout the district?
  - How do district policies and practices acknowledge that some groups of students have less access to equitable educational opportunities? Can you provide an example of a specific policy or practice in place?
  - What intentional steps/actions/policies has the district taken to address these disparities in equitable educational opportunities?
- Do all staff believe that all students can succeed? How do you know? What policies and practices ensure that staff believe all students can succeed? or To what extent do all staff believe that all students can succeed?

Practice 2: Establish and maintain a focused system for continuous improvement and ensure organizational coherence

- What are the district's current improvement priorities? How were they identified?
- What is the district's continuous improvement planning process? Who is involved? What is the timeline?
  - How are school needs considered in plan development?
  - Is this the right plan for the right time? Why or why not?
  - If the plan is implemented, what changes to inequitable student achievement outcomes do you anticipate?
  - Does the district have the capacity to implement the plan as designed?
- How is plan progress managed and monitored? Who, how, when/how often?
  - How is progress shared? With whom?

- What happens when data reveals that progress is not being made?
- What data and indicators does the district look at on a regular basis? How is this data review connected to the district's strategy?
- How often is data reviewed and what is the process for making adjustments to the plan?
- What are the strengths and areas of need of the district's current data management systems?
- What do you see as the primary function of central office? or Describe the role of the central office.
  - How does central office respond to the needs of schools?
  - What central office services are working to support schools? What central office services are barriers to schools getting what they need/focusing on the work?
- What is the management structure of the district? How does district leadership determine who reports to who and who is responsible for what work stream?
- Describe cross-functional or departmental collaboration in central office.
- How does the district office measure its effectiveness?
- How do schools/principals know how to get what they need from central office?

Practice 3: Engage in meaningful two-way communication with families, students, and other stakeholders to establish and sustain shared responsibility for student learning across the district

- How and when does the district communicate with families and community stakeholders, and local governing bodies? About what (e.g., planning, plan progress, student outcomes, equity, etc.)?
  - How does the district share priorities and progress with families and community stakeholders?
  - How does the district ensure this information is accessible to all families and stakeholders? (i.e. available in native languages)
- How does the district solicit input and feedback from families and community stakeholders (e.g., annual surveys)?
  - Are there opportunities for two-way, reciprocal communications?
  - How does this input inform decision making?
- How does the district communicate with and solicit input from school-based staff?
  - How does the district share priorities and progress with school staff?
  - How does this input inform decision making?

Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction

Practice 4: Ensure effective, standards-aligned curriculum and assessment

- To what extent do all schools utilize high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum, instructional materials, and assessments in all content areas and grade-levels? How do you know?
- How are high-quality curricular resources and assessments selected? Can schools choose/create their own curricular resources and assessments?
- How does the district support schools with using high-quality curricular resources and assessments? What happens if schools aren't implementing these resources or struggle to implement them?

- How does the district report and utilize student assessment data?
- Is data disaggregated by student group? How is it disaggregated?
- Who has access to data?
- What are district expectations/protocols for analyzing student assessment data?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the district's system for reporting student assessment data?

Practice 5: Support schools in implementing evidence-based instructional strategies and programs to ensure all students have access to rigorous, standards-aligned instruction

- What is the instructional vision/focus of the district? What are the current district-wide instructional priorities? How were these developed/determined?
- Are there specific evidenced-based instructional strategies and programs that all schools should be using? If so, how are these identified? Where are you seeing schools needing support?
- How does the district support schools to effectively implement evidence-based instructional strategies and programs?
- How would you characterize the quality of instruction in your district? What are the district's strengths and areas for improvement pertaining to its academic programming?
- How is the district monitoring gaps in student outcomes? Are there gaps (e.g., for students with disabilities, English-language learners, historically disadvantaged student populations)?
  - How is the district working to close opportunity and achievement gaps?
  - What do you see as barriers to closing these gaps?
- What district supports or resources exist to support school staff in ensuring all students with special education and language development needs have access to rigorous, standards-aligned instruction?
- Are the district's procedures for assessing students, developing IEPs and providing and coordinating services for special needs and ELL students meeting both legal standards and families' expectations? What gaps exist?
- Are the district's procedures and supports meeting the needs of English language learners or students with disabilities/exceptionalities? How do you know?

Practice 6: District leadership builds the capacity of central office and school building administrators as instructional leaders to effectively monitor, supervise, and support high-quality teaching and learning

- How does the district define instructional leadership? Who are the district's instructional leaders?
- How does the district instill a commitment to continuous improvement of instruction?
  - How are principals held accountable for student achievement?
  - How do you know if schools are effectively providing high-quality instruction for all students?
- How are school improvement plans developed and monitored for implementation and impact? How do schools measure and monitor their progress?
  - What indicators do they look at?
  - What data or processes are used to identify root causes of low performance?
  - How does the district support principals with school-based planning?
  - How are principals held accountable for implementing their plan?
- Describe how schools are managed. What does principal support and management look like in this district?
  - How does communication flow between principals, supervisors, and central office regarding school needs?

- Are these relationships positive and supportive?
- How does the district develop the instructional leadership capacity of principals and central office staff?
- How does the district support principals to develop teachers' capacity (e.g., through PD, feedback, coaching, PLCs, etc.)?
- How does the district build school-level capacity to use data to inform instruction?
  - What are the district expectations for teachers to use data to inform instruction?
  - How is timely access to data to schools ensured?
  - How is time for this built into school/teacher schedules?
  - What data analysis guidance, protocols, and schedules does the district provide?
  - Do central office and school staff have the capacity to make effective decisions based on the results of their data analysis? What is working? Are there gaps?

Provide Student-Centered Supports to Ensure All Students are Ready to Learn

Practice 7: Coordinate and monitor supports aligned with students' and families' academic, physical, social, and emotional needs

- In what ways does the district use data to drive decisions about the needs of specific schools, students and families?
  - What types of data does the district review? Who does this and how often?
  - Is this data accessible to both district and school staff?
- Does the district implement a multi-tiered system of supports to identify and connect students and families to supports? How does this process work?
- What support services (e.g. counseling, guidance, social work, health services, etc.) does the district provide (directly or in partnership) to support student readiness to learn?
  - What supports or resources does the district provide to schools regarding positive behavior support?
  - How does the district support student attendance and academic needs?
  - How does the district support students' mental health, health, and wellness needs?
- How do you track whether students are on track to graduate? What opportunities are available for remediation? For acceleration/enrichment?
- How are supports and resources differentiated for schools or students based on identified needs? (e.g. staffing allocations, hiring practices, wraparound services for students and families, partnerships for additional or specialized counseling, social work, health services, etc.)
  - How are resources allocated to ensure students who have had less educational opportunities are prioritized?
- How does the district support schools to promote a positive school culture for all students and families?
- How is the district currently engaging families and community members?
- How is the district supporting schools in engaging family and community members?
- How does the district monitor and improve family and community engagement?

Practice 8: Partner with local businesses, community organizations, and other agencies to meet the needs of the district

- What partnerships does the district have with businesses, employers, community organizations, or other agencies?
- How do these partnerships align with district and school needs and priorities?
- What is the process for initiating and developing community partnerships?
  - How are roles and responsibilities/scopes of work developed?
- How is the district monitoring the impact of these partnerships?
  - Are desired outcomes defined and reviewed?
- Can you give an example of a partnership shifting its role in response to changing needs?
- Are there additional district needs that partnerships could help address? Are there specific partnerships you would be interested in seeing come to life?

Implement Data-Driven Human Capital Strategies

Practice 9: Recruit and retain fully credentialed, experienced and high-quality teachers

- What is the district's teacher recruitment strategy and process? To what extent is the district able to hire and retain a diverse pool of credentialed, experienced, and effective teachers?
  - How does the recruitment process ensure availability of high-quality candidates?
  - How does the district recruit a diverse candidate pool?
  - In what ways/areas does the district struggle to find quality candidates?
  - How does the staffing/hiring timeline support the district's ability to fully staff schools for the 1st day of the school year?
- How does the district prioritize hiring and placement of experienced, credentialed, and effective teachers at high-need or low-performing schools? What are examples of this?
- Describe how the district works with principals to identify and address staffing needs and fill open positions.
  - What authority do principals have to hire the staff for their building?
- Describe the evaluation process for teachers.
  - To what extent do teachers find evaluation processes supportive in understanding their strengths and opportunities for development?
  - How is evaluation data used to inform decision making and support to teachers?
- How does the district work to retain high-performing staff?
  - How does the district support retention at the highest-need schools?
  - How do district policies support the removal of low performing staff?
- Describe the district's relationship with collective bargaining units.
  - How does this help/hinder the hiring process?
- What is the district's greatest challenge in recruiting, hiring, developing and retaining talented staff?

Practice 10: Support the development, professional learning, and advancement of central office and school leaders and staff in alignment with district and school mission, vision, goals, and priorities

- How does the district recruit high-quality and experienced school leaders?
  - How does the recruitment process ensure availability of high-quality candidates?
  - How does the district recruit a diverse candidate pool?
  - In what ways/areas does the district struggle to find quality candidates?
- How does the district internally identify and develop potential school leaders (e.g., principals, APs, department chairs, etc.)?
- How does the district help build the leadership capacity if its principals? What opportunities do principals have for professional learning, coaching, networking, etc.?
- Are there formal leadership pathways for teachers? For leaders? For central office staff?
  - How are individuals identified, selected, and progressed through these pathways?
- How does the district support the professional learning of all staff (e.g., district or partner provided PD, coaching, PLC support, etc.)?
  - What additional support is provided to new teachers and staff?
- What is the focus/topics of district-provided PD? Why and how was this determined?
  - How is district PD differentiated to meet staff needs?
- How does the district monitor the impact and effectiveness of professional learning opportunities?

Organize and Allocate Resources and Services Strategically and Equitably

Practice 11: Allocate resources, including money, staff, professional learning, materials, and support to schools based on the analysis of a variety of data

- Describe the school and district budget process and timeline.
  - How are funds allocated?
  - How are schools and school needs prioritized during the budget process?
  - How are stakeholders engaged during the budget process? Who and how?
  - How does the district ensure the budget process is clear and transparent to schools? to the community? to the board?
  - What happens when unforeseen needs arise? Are there opportunities to adjust budget allocations during the year? How and when would this happen?
- How are flexible Title funds used strategically to address student needs? How are flexible Title funds used/allocated at the school-level?
  - What level of discretionary authority do principals have over their budgets?
  - In what ways can principals allocate resources to meet school needs?
  - In what ways are principals restricted in the budgeting process?
  - Do principals understand the budgeting process and their allowances and restrictions? or How are these authorities and restrictions communicated with principals?

- How are staffing allocations determined?
  - How does the district anticipate/project staffing needs?
  - What data informs staffing allocations?
  - Who makes these decisions? Who else provides input?
  - Is there an annual process?
- How are program and instructional materials allocated to schools?
  - What data is used?
  - Who makes these decisions? Who else provides input?
- How do district staff allocate their time to schools?
  - What data is used?
  - Who makes these decisions? Who else provides input?
- Does the district employ any strategies to prioritize funding, staffing, and materials resources the highest needs schools and students?
- What happens if a school experiences an unforeseen resource need? Can they ask for additional resources mid-year or when needs arise? What does this process look like?

Practice 12: Coordinate fiscal resources from local, state, and federal programs to achieve the district's goals and priorities

- What grants or other external funding sources does the district pursue?
  - What determines which grants or funding sources the district applies for?
  - How is funding consistent or supportive of district priorities/strategies?
- How is the district strategic in seeking out and coordinating/aligning multiple funding sources to meet school and district needs? Share examples.
- Is the district currently in compliance with local, state, and federal funding requirements? Why or why not?

Closing Questions:

- What is one recommendation for the district for the short-term? For the long-term?
- Is there anything else we should know as we close and speak to other stakeholder groups? Is there anything else we should have asked?

Appendix E.2.
Sample Questions by Stakeholder Group

Central Office Interviews/Focus Groups

Central Office Functional Area: District Leaders **Potential Related Roles:** Chiefs, Assistant Superintendents, or other similar district leadership roles	
Introductory Questions	
• How would you summarize the strengths of your school/district? • What are some areas for improvement?	
Essential Practice(s)	
Practice 1	• What is the district's vision? ○ How does it address gaps in student achievement? ○ How does it set high expectations for student achievement, school and district performance? • How was the vision developed? How is the vision communicated and shared with stakeholders? • What actions has district leadership taken to build shared responsibility for achieving the vision? • To what extent do all staff believe that all students can succeed?
Practice 2	• What are the district's current improvement priorities? How were they identified? • What is the district's continuous improvement planning process? Who is involved? ○ How are school needs considered in plan development? ○ Is this the right plan for the right time? Why or why not? ○ If the plan is implemented, what changes to inequitable student achievement outcomes do you anticipate? ○ Does the district have the capacity to implement the plan as designed? • How is plan progress managed and monitored? ○ How is progress shared? With whom? ○ What happens when data reveals that progress is not being made? • What data and indicators does the district look at on a regular basis? How is this data review connected to the district's strategy? ○ How often is data reviewed and what is the process for making adjustments to the plan? • What are the strengths and areas of need of the district's current data management systems? • What do you see as the primary function of central office? or Describe the role of the central office. ○ How does central office respond to the needs of schools? ○ What central office services are working to support schools? What central office services are barriers to schools getting what they need/focusing on the work? • Describe cross-functional or departmental collaboration in central office. • How do schools/principals know how to get what they need from central office?

Practice 3	• How and when does the district communicate with families and community stakeholders, and local governing bodies? About what (e.g., planning, plan progress, student outcomes, equity, etc.)?
	  ○ How does the district share priorities and progress with families and community stakeholders?
	  ○ How does the district ensure this information is accessible to all families and stakeholders? (i.e. available in native languages)
	• How does the district solicit input and feedback from families and community stakeholders (e.g., annual surveys)?
	  ○ Are there opportunities for two-way, reciprocal communications?
	  ○ How does this input inform decision making?
	• How does the district communicate with and solicit input from school-based staff?
	  ○ How does the district share priorities and progress with school staff?
	  ○ How does this input inform decision making?

Closing Questions

- What is one recommendation for the district for the short-term? For the long-term?
- Is there anything else we should know as we close and speak to other stakeholder groups? Is there anything else we should have asked?

Central Office Functional Area: Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction

Potential Related Roles: Chief Academic Officer; principal supervisor(s); curriculum, assessment, and instruction leads; other similar positions/functions

Introductory Questions

- How would you summarize the strengths of your school/district?
- What are some areas for improvement?

Essential Practice(s)

Practice 4	• To what extent do all schools utilize high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum, instructional materials, and assessments in all content areas and grade-levels? How do you know?
	• How are high-quality curricular resources and assessments selected? *Can schools choose/ create their own curricular resources and assessments?*
	• How does the district support schools with using high-quality curricular resources and assessments? What happens if schools aren't implementing these resources or struggle to implement them?
	• How does the district report and utilize student assessment data?
	  ○ Is data disaggregated by student group? How is it disaggregated?
	  ○ Who has access to data?
	  ○ What are district expectations/protocols for analyzing student assessment data?
	  ○ What are the strengths and weaknesses of the district's system for reporting student assessment data?

Practice 5	• What is the instructional vision/focus of the district? What are the current district-wide instructional priorities? How were these developed/determined?
	• Are there specific evidenced-based instructional strategies and programs that all schools should be using? If so, how are these identified? Where do schools need support?
	• How does the district support schools to effectively implement evidence-based instructional strategies and programs?
	• How would you characterize the quality of instruction in your district? What are the district's strengths and areas for improvement pertaining to its academic programming?
	• How is the district monitoring gaps in student outcomes? Are there gaps (e.g., for students with disabilities, English-language learners, historically disadvantaged student populations)?
	  ○ How is the district working to close opportunity and achievement gaps?
	  ○ What do you see as barriers to closing these gaps?
	• What district supports or resources exist to support school staff in ensuring all students with special education and language development needs have access to rigorous, standards-aligned instruction?
	• Are the district's procedures for assessing students, developing IEPs and providing and coordinating services for special needs and ELL students meeting both legal standards and families' expectations? What gaps exist?
	• Are the district's procedures and supports meeting the needs of English language learners or students with disabilities/exceptionalities? How do you know?

Practice 6	• How does the district define instructional leadership? Who are the district's instructional leaders?
	• How does the district instill a commitment to continuous improvement of instruction?
	  ○ How are principals held accountable for student achievement?
	  ○ How do you know if schools are effectively providing high-quality instruction for all students?
	• How are school improvement plans developed and monitored for implementation and impact? How do schools measure and monitor their progress?
	  ○ What indicators do they look at?
	  ○ What data or processes are used to identify root causes of low performance?
	  ○ How does the district support principals with school-based planning?
	  ○ How are principals held accountable for implementing their plan?
	• Describe how schools are managed. What does principal support and management look like in this district?
	  ○ How does communication flow between principals, supervisors, and central office regarding school needs?
	  ○ Are these relationships positive and supportive?
	• How does the district develop the instructional leadership capacity of principals and central office staff?
	• How does the district support principals to develop teachers' capacity (e.g., through PD, feedback, coaching, PLCs, etc.)?
	• How does the district build school-level capacity to use data to inform instruction?
	  ○ What are the district expectations for teachers to use data to inform instruction?
	  ○ How is timely access to data to schools ensured?
	  ○ How is time for this built into school/teacher schedules?
	  ○ What data analysis guidance, protocols, and schedules does the district provide?
	  ○ Do central office and school staff have the capacity to make effective decisions based on the results of their data analysis? What is working? Are there gaps?

Practice 7	• How do you track whether students are on track to graduate? What opportunities are available for remediation? For acceleration/enrichment?
	• How does the district prioritize the success of all students?
	  ○ What subgroup inequities/disproportionalities currently exist in the district? What contributes to these?
	  ○ How does the district address any inequities/disproportionalities throughout the district?
	  ○ How do district policies and practices acknowledge that some groups of students have less access to equitable educational opportunities? Can you provide an example of a specific policy or practice in place?
	  ○ What intentional steps/actions/policies has the district taken to address these disparities in equitable educational opportunities?

Closing Questions

- What is one recommendation for the district for the short-term? For the long-term?
- Is there anything else we should know as we close and speak to other stakeholder groups? Is there anything else we should have asked?

Central Office Functional Area: Talent/HR/Human Capital

Potential Related Roles: Chief Human Resources Officer, Chief Human Capital Officer, principal supervisor(s), or other similar roles

Introductory Questions

- How would you summarize the strengths of your school/district?
- What are some areas for improvement?

Essential Practice(s)

Practice 9

- What is the district's teacher recruitment strategy and process? To what extent is the district able to hire and retain a diverse pool of credentialed, experienced, and effective teachers?
  - How does the recruitment process ensure availability of high-quality candidates?
  - How does the district recruit a diverse candidate pool?
  - In what ways/areas does the district struggle to find quality candidates?
  - How does the staffing/hiring timeline support the district's ability to fully staff schools for the 1st day of the school year?
- How does the district prioritize hiring and placement of experienced, credentialed, and effective teachers at high-need or low-performing schools? What are examples of this?
- Describe how the district works with principals to identify and address staffing needs and fill open positions.
  - What authority do principals have to hire the staff for their building?
- Describe the evaluation process for teachers.
  - To what extent do teachers find evaluation processes supportive in understanding their strengths and opportunities for development?
  - How is evaluation data used to inform decision making and support to teachers?
- How does the district work to retain high-performing staff?
  - How does the district support retention at the highest-need schools?
  - How do district policies support the removal of low performing staff?
- Describe the district's relationship with collective bargaining units.
  - How does this help/hinder the hiring process?
- What is the district's greatest challenge in recruiting, hiring, developing and retaining talented staff?

Practice 10	• How does the district recruit high-quality and experienced school leaders?
	  ○ How does the recruitment process ensure availability of high-quality candidates?
	• How does the district recruit a diverse candidate pool?
	  ○ In what ways/areas does the district struggle to find quality candidates?
	• How does the district internally identify and develop potential school leaders (e.g., principals, APs, department chairs, etc.)?
	• How does the district help build the leadership capacity if its principals? *What opportunities do principals have for professional learning, coaching, networking, etc.?*
	• Are there formal leadership pathways for teachers? For leaders? For central office staff?
	  ○ How are individuals identified, selected, and progressed through these pathways?
	• How does the district support the professional learning of all staff (e.g., district or partner provided PD, coaching, PLC support, etc.)?
	  ○ What additional support is provided to new teachers and staff?
	• What is the focus/topics of district-provided PD? Why and how was this determined?
	  ○ How is district PD differentiated to meet staff needs?
	• How does the district monitor the impact and effectiveness of professional learning opportunities?

Practice 11	• What level of discretionary authority do principals have over their budgets?
	  ○ In what ways can principals allocate resources to meet school needs?
	  ○ In what ways are principals restricted in the budgeting process?
	  ○ Do principals understand the budgeting process and their allowances and restrictions? or How are these authorities and restrictions communicated with principals?
	• How are staffing allocations determined?
	  ○ How does the district anticipate/project staffing needs?
	  ○ What data informs staffing allocations?
	  ○ Who makes these decisions? Who else provides input?
	  ○ Is there an annual process?
	• How do district staff allocate their time to schools?
	  ○ What data is used?
	  ○ Who makes these decisions? Who else provides input?
	• Does the district employ any strategies to prioritize funding, staffing, and materials resources the highest needs schools and students?
	• What happens if a school experiences an unforeseen resource need? Can they ask for additional resources mid-year or when needs arise? What does this process look like?

Closing Questions

- What is one recommendation for the district for the short-term? For the long-term?
- Is there anything else we should know as we close and speak to other stakeholder groups? Is there anything else we should have asked?

Central Office Functional Area: Finance and Operations

Potential Related Roles: Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operations Officer, or other similar roles

Introductory Questions

- How would you summarize the strengths of your school/district?
- What are some areas for improvement?

Essential Practice(s)

Practice 11

- Describe the school and district budget process and timeline.
  - How are funds allocated?
  - How are schools and school needs prioritized during the budget process?
  - How are stakeholders engaged during the budget process? Who and how?
  - How does the district ensure the budget process is clear and transparent to schools? to the community? to the board?
  - What happens when unforeseen needs arise? Are there opportunities to adjust budget allocations during the year? How and when would this happen?
- How are flexible Title funds used strategically to address student needs? How are flexible Title funds used/allocated at the school-level?
- How reliable are revenue and expense projections?
  - In what ways do projections impact the budget process?
  - What is prioritized with budget projections?
  - What challenges or barriers exist in ensuring reliable revenue and expense projections?
- What level of discretionary authority do principals have over their budgets?
  - In what ways can principals allocate resources to meet school needs?
  - In what ways are principals restricted in the budgeting process?
  - Do principals understand the budgeting process and their allowances and restrictions? or How are these authorities and restrictions communicated with principals?
- How are staffing allocations determined?
  - How does the district anticipate/project staffing needs?
  - What data informs staffing allocations?
  - Who makes these decisions? Who else provides input?
  - Is there an annual process?
- How are program and instructional materials allocated to schools?
  - What data is used?
  - Who makes these decisions? Who else provides input?
- Does the district employ any strategies to prioritize funding, staffing, and materials resources the highest needs schools and students?
- What happens if a school experiences an unforeseen resource need? Can they ask for additional resources mid-year or when needs arise? What does this process look like?

Practice 12	• What grants or other external funding sources does the district pursue?
	  ○ What determines which grants or funding sources the district applies for?
	  ○ How is funding consistent or supportive of district priorities/strategies?
	• How is the district strategic in seeking out and coordinating/aligning multiple funding sources to meet school and district needs? Share examples.
	• Is the district currently in compliance with local, state, and federal funding requirements? Why or why not?

Closing Questions

- What is one recommendation for the district for the short-term? For the long-term?
- Is there anything else we should know as we close and speak to other stakeholder groups? Is there anything else we should have asked?

Central Office Functional Area: Family and Student Supports/Community Partnerships

Potential Related Roles: Depends on the district — This interview/focus group should be with someone who can speak about how the district (a) supports multiple student and family needs (e.g., attendance, behavior, academics, health, mental health, social-emotional, etc.) and (b) engages families and the community, and (c) engages in strategic partnerships to meet needs.

Introductory Questions

- How would you summarize the strengths of your school/district?
- What are some areas for improvement?

Essential Practice(s)

Practice 7	• In what ways does the district use data to drive decisions about the needs of specific schools, students and families?
	  ○ What types of data does the district review? Who does this and how often?
	  ○ Is this data accessible to both district and school staff?
	• Does the district implement a multi-tiered system of supports to identify and connect students and families to supports? How does this process work?
	• What support services (e.g. counseling, guidance, social work, health services, etc.) does the district provide (directly or in partnership) to support student readiness to learn?
	  ○ What supports or resources does the district provide to schools regarding positive behavior support?
	  ○ How does the district support student attendance and academic needs?
	  ○ How does the district support students' mental health, health, and wellness needs?
	• How do you track whether students are on track to graduate? What opportunities are available for remediation? For acceleration/enrichment?
	• How does the district prioritize the success of all students?
	  ○ What subgroup inequities/disproportionalities currently exist in the district? What contributes to these?
	  ○ What intentional steps/actions/policies has the district taken to address these disparities in equitable educational opportunities?
	  ○ How do district policies and practices acknowledge that some groups of students have less access to equitable educational opportunities? Can you provide an example of a specific policy or practice in place?
	• How are supports and resources differentiated for schools or students based on identified needs? (e.g. staffing allocations, hiring practices, wraparound services for students and families, partnerships for additional or specialized counseling, social work, health services, etc.)
	  ○ How are resources allocated to ensure students who have had less educational opportunities are prioritized?
	• How does the district support schools to promote a positive school culture for all students and families?
	• How is the district currently engaging families and community members?
	• How is the district supporting schools in engaging family and community members?
	• How does the district monitor and improve family and community engagement?

Practice 8	• What partnerships does the district have with businesses, employers, community organizations, or other agencies?
	• How do these partnerships align with district and school needs and priorities?
	• What is the process for initiating and developing community partnerships?
	  ○ How are roles and responsibilities/scopes of work developed?
	• How is the district monitoring the impact of these partnerships?
	  ○ Are desired outcomes defined and reviewed?
	• Can you give an example of a shift in partnership roles in response to changing needs?
	• Are there additional district needs that partnerships could help address? Are there specific partnerships you would be interested in seeing come to life?

Closing Questions
• What is one recommendation for the district for the short-term? For the long-term? • Is there anything else we should know as we close and speak to other stakeholder groups? Is there anything else we should have asked?

Central Office Functional Area: Equity

Potential Related Roles: Depends on the district — This interview/focus group should be with someone who can speak about how the district ensures that specific student groups have access to rigorous education, receive necessary supports, and progresses towards learning goals.

Introductory Questions
• How would you summarize the strengths of your school/district? • What are some areas for improvement?

Essential Practice(s)	

Practice 1	• What is the district's vision?
	  ○ How does it address gaps in student achievement?
	  ○ How does it set high expectations for student achievement, school and district performance?
	• Do all staff believe that all students can succeed? How do you know? What policies and practices ensure that staff believe all students can succeed? To what extent do all staff believe that all students can succeed?

Practice 4	• Does the district have standards and grade-level aligned curricular resources tailored to the needs of student groups? • What assessments do you use to track student progress? Who looks at the data? How often? What happens as a result?

Practice 5	• What is the instructional vision/focus of the district? What are the current district-wide instructional priorities? How were these developed/determined?
	• Are there specific evidenced-based instructional strategies and programs that all schools should be using? If so, how are these identified? Where are you seeing schools needing support?
	• How does the district support schools to effectively implement evidence-based instructional strategies and programs?
	• How would you characterize the quality of instruction in your district? What are the district's strengths and areas for improvement pertaining to its academic programming?
	• How is the district monitoring gaps in student outcomes? Are there gaps (e.g., for students with disabilities, English-language learners, historically underserved student populations)?
	  ○ How is the district working to close opportunity and achievement gaps?
	  ○ What do you see as barriers to closing these gaps?
	• What district supports or resources exist to support school staff in ensuring all students have access to rigorous, standards-aligned instruction?

Practice 7	• In what ways does the district use data to drive decisions about the needs of specific schools, students and families? ○ What types of data does the district review? Who does this and how often? ○ Is this data accessible to both district and school staff? • How does the district prioritize the success of all students? ○ What subgroup inequities/disproportionalities currently exist in the district? What contributes to these? ○ What intentional steps/actions/policies has the district taken to address these disparities in equitable educational opportunities? ○ How do district policies and practices acknowledge that some groups of students have less access to equitable educational opportunities? Can you provide an example of a specific policy or practice in place? • How are supports and resources differentiated for schools or students based on identified needs? (e.g. staffing allocations, hiring practices, wraparound services for students and families, partnerships for additional or specialized counseling, social work, health services, etc.) ○ How are resources allocated to ensure students who have had less educational opportunities are prioritized?
Closing Questions	
• What is one recommendation for the district for the short-term? For the long-term? • Is there anything else we should know as we close and speak to other stakeholder groups? Is there anything else we should have asked?	

Stakeholder Focus Groups

School Board	
Introductory Questions	
• How would you summarize the strengths of your school/district? • What are some areas for improvement?	
Essential Practice(s)	
Practice 1	• What is the district's vision? ○ How does it address gaps in student achievement? ○ How does it set high expectations for student achievement, school and district performance? ○ How is the vision communicated and shared with stakeholders? • What actions has district leadership taken to build shared responsibility for achieving the vision?

Practice 2	• What are the district's current improvement priorities? How were they identified?
	• How does the school board set goals?
	• How does the school board work with district leadership?
	• How would you describe the school board's role and relationship with district leadership?
	• What is the district's continuous improvement planning process? Who is involved? Timeline?
	  ○ How are school needs considered in plan development?
	  ○ Is this the right plan for the right time? Why or why not?
	  ○ If the plan is implemented, what changes to inequitable student achievement outcomes do you anticipate?
	• How is plan progress managed and monitored? Who, how, when/how often?
	  ○ How is progress shared? With whom?
	  ○ What happens when data reveals that progress is not being made?

Practice 3	• How does the board learn about district progress?
	• How and when does the district communicate with families and community stakeholders? About what (e.g., planning, plan progress, student outcomes, equity, etc.)?
	  ○ How does the district ensure this information is accessible to all families and stakeholders? (i.e. available in native languages)
	• How does the district solicit input and feedback from families and community stakeholders (e.g., annual surveys)?
	  ○ Are there opportunities for two-way, reciprocal communications?

Closing Questions	
• What is one recommendation for the district for the short-term? For the long-term? • Is there anything else we should know as we close and speak to other stakeholder groups? Is there anything else we should have asked?	

Principals

Introductory Questions	
• How would you summarize the strengths of your school/district? • What are some areas for improvement?	
Essential Practice(s)	
Practice 2	• How does central office respond to the needs of schools? ○ What central office services are working to support schools? What central office services are barriers to schools getting what they need/focusing on the work? • How do schools/principals know how to get what they need from central office?

Practice 4	• How does the district support schools with using high-quality curricular resources and assessments?
	  ○ How are high-quality curricular resources and assessments selected? Can schools choose/create their own curricular resources and assessments?
	  ○ What happens if schools don't implement them or struggle to implement them?
	• How does the district report and utilize student assessment data? What are district expectations/protocols for analyzing student assessment data?
	  ○ Is data disaggregated by student group? How is it disaggregated?
	  ○ Who has access to data?
	  ○ What are the strengths and weaknesses of the district's system for reporting data?

Practice 5	• What is the instructional vision/focus of the district? What are the current district-wide instructional priorities? • How does the district support schools to effectively implement evidence-based instructional strategies and programs? Are there specific evidenced-based instructional strategies and programs that all schools should be using? If so, how are these identified? • What district supports or resources exist to support school staff in ensuring all students with special education and language development needs have access to rigorous, standards-aligned instruction? ○ Are the district's procedures and supports meeting the needs of English language learners or students with disabilities/exceptionalities? How do you know?

Practice 6	• How does the district define instructional leadership? Who are the district's instructional leaders?
	• How does the district instill a commitment to continuous improvement of instruction?
	  ○ How are principals held accountable for student achievement?
	• How does the district support principals with school-based planning? How do schools measure and monitor their progress?
	  ○ What indicators do they look at?
	  ○ What data or processes are used to identify root causes of low performance?
	  ○ How are principals held accountable for implementing their plan?
	• What does principal support and management look like in this district?
	  ○ How does communication flow between principals, supervisors, and central office regarding school needs?
	  ○ Are these relationships positive and supportive?
	• How does the district develop the instructional leadership capacity of principals?
	• How does the district support principals to develop teachers' capacity (e.g., through PD, feedback, coaching, PLCs, etc.)?
	• How does the district build school-level capacity to use data to inform instruction?
	  ○ What are the district expectations for teachers to use data to inform instruction?
	  ○ How is timely access to data to schools ensured?
	  ○ How is time for this built into school/teacher schedules?
	  ○ What data analysis guidance, protocols, and schedules does the district provide?
	  ○ Do school staff have the capacity to make effective decisions based on the results of their data analysis? What is working? Are there gaps?

Practice 7	• How do you track whether students are on track to graduate? What opportunities are available for remediation? For acceleration/enrichment?
	• How does the district prioritize the success of all students?
	  ○ What subgroup inequities/disproportionalities currently exist in the district? What contributes to these?
	  ○ How does the district address any inequities/disproportionalities?
	  ○ How do district policies and practices acknowledge that some groups of students have less access to equitable educational opportunities? Can you provide an example of a specific policy or practice in place?
	• How are supports and resources differentiated or prioritized for schools or students based on identified needs? (e.g. staffing allocations, hiring practices, wraparound services for students and families, partnerships for additional or specialized counseling, social work, health services, etc.)
	• How does the district support schools to promote a positive school culture for all students and families?
	• How is the district supporting schools in engaging family and community members?

Practice 10	• How does the district help build the leadership capacity if its principals? What opportunities do principals have for professional learning, coaching, networking, etc.?
	• Are there formal leadership pathways for teachers? For leaders? For central office staff?
	  ○ How are individuals identified, selected, and progressed through these pathways?
	• How does the district support the professional learning of all staff (e.g., district or partner provided PD, coaching, PLC support, etc.)?
	  ○ What additional support is provided to new teachers and staff?
	• How is district PD differentiated to meet staff needs? How useful is district-PD? What is the focus/topics of district-provided PD? Why and how was this determined?

Closing Questions

- What is one recommendation for the district for the short-term? For the long-term?
- Is there anything else we should know as we close and speak to other stakeholder groups? Is there anything else we should have asked?

Families

Introductory Questions

- How would you summarize the strengths of your school/district?
- What are some areas for improvement?

Essential Practice(s)

Practice 3	• How does the district communicate with families? About what?
	  ○ Is the communication consistent, easy to understand, available in multiple platforms?
	  ○ How do you learn about what is happening in the district?
	• What is your understanding of the district's vision and main priorities now?
	• In what ways are you able to give feedback to your child's school and to the district?
	  ○ Do you feel like you have a say in district decision-making?
	• How does the district prioritize the success of all students in different groups (e.g., racial/ethnic, socio-economic, ability, etc.)? How does the district hold high expectation for all students?

Practice 5	• How would you characterize the quality of education at your child's school and/or across the district? • To what extent does the district ensure all students are college, career, and community ready?

Practice 7	• Does the district communicate ways for families and students to get the support services they need? Do you know how to access the supports and resources your child needs?
	• What kind of support services (e.g. counseling, guidance, social work, health services, etc.) does the district provide?
	  ○ What supports or resources does the district provide to support student's positive behavior, attendance and academic needs, mental health, health and wellness needs?
	• How do families know if their child is doing well in school and/or on track to graduate?
	  ○ What opportunities are available for remediation? For acceleration/enrichment?
	• Do you feel safe and welcome at your child's school and in district offices?
	• Do you feel like your child's school supports you in being an active participant in your child's education? Why or why not?

Practice 8	• Does the district have partnerships with businesses, employers, community organizations or other agencies they can refer you to if you are in need of support services?
	  ○ If so, which of these partnerships are most successful? What makes them successful?
	  ○ Which partnerships are less successful? Why?
	• Are there partnerships you would recommend the district seek out in order to better support students and families?

Closing Questions

- What is one recommendation for the district for the short-term? For the long-term?
- Is there anything else we should know as we close and speak to other stakeholder groups? Is there anything else we should have asked?

Students

Introductory Questions

- How would you summarize the strengths of your school/district?
- What are some areas for improvement?

Essential Practice(s)	
Practice 1	• How does your school or district hold high expectations for all students? • Do you believe your teachers believe you can succeed? How do you know? • How does your school or district helps student become college, career, and community ready? Does your school or district provide opportunities for advanced learning, college credit, technical education, internships, etc.?
Practice 3	• How does your district communicate with students and families? About what? • How do you learn about what your district is doing or how well your district is doing? • How does your school communicate with students and families? About what?
Practice 5	• Is your coursework challenging? Do you feel challenged in school? How do your teachers engage students in learning? • Do you think what you learn in school is relevant for college, career, and community success? Why or why not? • How do you think the district could better support schools?
Practice 7	• Do you feel safe at school and in your district? Why or why not? • Does the district provide supports to help students be ready to learn (e.g., academic, attendance, behavior, mental health, health and wellness, etc.)? How would a student access these supports if they need them? • How do you learn if you are on-track to graduate? What happens if you are off-track?

Closing Questions

- What is one recommendation for the district to improve learning for all students?
- Is there anything else we should know?