

How School Leaders Create a Results-Focused Learning Environment

One of the most significant roles – and biggest challenges – of a school leader is to create and maintain a results-focused learning environment. Schools and school districts are facing initiative overload. It takes determined leadership and clear communication to deal with the implementation of higher academic standards, new evaluation systems and other demands on school leaders' time and efforts. Creating and maintaining a results-focused learning environment is more important than ever to raise student achievement and to eliminate achievement gaps.

Key Ideas:

1. Schools should develop a culture of public practice regarding student and school data.

A culture of public practice and reflective practice is essential for effective instructional leadership and the improvement of instructional practice.

Practice of sophisticated endeavors only improves when it is open for public scrutiny.

Guiding/Reflective Questions:

- What is the level of trust established in the school?
- What are the structures in place to discuss and display student and school data?

High leverage next steps:

2. A collaborative culture and structure where data is discussed and acted upon should be present.

Instructional leadership must reside with a team of instructional leaders of which the principal serves as the “leader of leaders.”

Through collaboration and shared leadership, staff, students and the school community embrace a vision of academic success for every student and work toward clear goals focused on student learning.

Guiding/Reflective Questions:

- How do the school leadership and community use evidence of student success and learning needs to drive collaboration?
- What are the collaborative structures in place at your school?
- How do collaborative groups use student data to improve student learning?

High leverage next steps:

3. A structure of continuous improvement is in place that goes beyond the typical school improvement planning cycle.

Based upon a shared vision of effective teaching and learning, school leaders establish a focus on learning; nurture a culture of continuous improvement, innovation and public practice; and monitor, evaluate and develop teacher performance to improve instruction.

Leadership teams use a continuous cycle of analysis to examine, assess and refine the effectiveness of programs and equitable use of resources.

Guiding/Reflective Questions:

- What are the structures in place that support continuous improvement?
- How often are the leadership team and other collaborative groups engaged in cycles of continuous improvement?

High leverage next steps: