# 4 Dimensions of Instructional Leadership™

## INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK 2.0

Among school-related factors, school leadership is second only to teaching in its potential influence on student learning. Instructional leadership is a critical component of school leadership. The work of instructional leaders is to ensure that every day, in every classroom, every student has a powerful learning experience. Doing so requires that instructional leaders *lead for the improvement of instruction and the improvement of student learning.* This framework is not the sum total of the work of instructional leaders. Rather, it is a description of the most salient aspects of instructional leadership. Five core beliefs undergird the concepts of this framework and therefore drive our school leadership work here at the Center for Educational Leadership.

**Instructional leadership:**

1. Is learning-focused, strengths-based and measured by improvement in instructional practice and in the quality of student learning.

2. Must reside with a team of instructional leaders of which the principal serves as the "leader of leaders."

3. Requires a culture of public practice and reflective practice.

4. Must address the cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and learning diversity of the school community.

5. Is grounded in the relentless pursuit of equity and the use of data as levers to eliminate the achievement gap.

| 4D™ | SUBDIMENSION | THE VISION | GUIDING QUESTIONS |
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| **Vision, Mission and Learning-focused Culture** | **Vision and Mission** | • Engage staff, students and the school community in developing a vision and mission that provide a clear direction for academic success for every student.<br>• Align stakeholders' decisions and actions to the vision and mission of the school and demonstrate a growth mindset. | • What do the school's environment and day-to-day interactions among students, staff and families say about what is valued in the school community?<br>• How do school leaders communicate and drive the school's instructional goals?<br>• How do school leaders organize the learning environment to respond to diversity (e.g., race, class, language and disability) and the varying learning needs of students?<br>• How do school leaders and the school community use evidence of student success to continuously drive improved achievement?<br>• How do school leaders develop and encourage leadership within others to support and drive the vision, mission and culture of learning throughout the school?<br>• How do school leaders use data to instill urgency around student learning and the role of a learning-focused culture in improving student achievement? |
| | **Learning-focused Culture** | • Establish measurable goals aligned to the vision and mission of academic success for every student.<br>• Engage with stakeholders to foster culturally responsive learning that ensures individual students' learning needs are met.<br>• Create and maintain a results-focused learning environment based on clearly established data-driven goals that underscore high expectations for every student and every adult. | |

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| **Improvement of Instructional Practice** | **Shared Vision of Effective Instruction** | • Use an instructional framework to establish a common language and shared vision of effective instruction.<br>• Ensure that content standards drive instruction. | • How do school leaders use observational data and student learning products to identify trends in teacher practice and student performance to determine problems of learning?<br>• How do school leaders use an instructional framework to observe, analyze and give feedback to the whole staff and individual teachers about instructional practice?<br>• How do school leaders use instructional practice and student learning data to identify, plan, implement and assess all types of professional development?<br>• How do leaders and teachers use an inquiry- and strengths-based stance to give feedback to teachers and leaders around instructional practice?<br>• How do school leaders and teachers use cycles of inquiry to identify professional development needs and grow teaching practice? |
| | **Observation and Analysis** | • Use an instructional framework to observe and analyze teaching practice.<br>• Use instructional practice data to engage staff in the assessment and improvement of teacher and leader practice.<br>• Use classroom observation data to determine next steps for instructional leadership practice. | |
| | **Support for Teacher Growth** | • Support teacher growth using ongoing feedback, professional development, coaching and professional learning communities.<br>• Use evidence of student learning to plan and implement individual and whole-staff professional development. | |
| **Allocation of Resources** | **Marshaling Resources** | • Use data of student learning and teacher practice, aligned with the school's vision and mission, to determine needs.<br>• Identify and leverage the resources of time, money, technology, space, materials, expertise and partnerships innovatively and equitably for maximum benefit to all students.<br>• Creatively and proactively access additional resources that support strategic priorities. | • How is the equitable distribution of resources (e.g., time, money, technology, space, materials and expertise) related to improved teaching and learning in this school? What evidence do you have?<br>• How do school leaders use instructional coaches, mentors and other teacher leaders to help improve instructional practice?<br>• How do school leaders address gaps in resources?<br>• How do school leaders make decisions about staff allocation and interventions to ensure that the varying needs of students are met? Who participates in the decision making?<br>• How do school leaders use staff time and collaborative structures to drive the instructional program?<br>• How does the school schedule support the needs of all students?<br>• What evidence exists that the school leader prioritizes time for the improvement of teaching practice and student learning?<br>• How does the leadership team monitor and adjust implementation plans? |
| | **Deploying Resources** | • Articulate clear decision-making processes and procedures for instructional programming and the equitable allocation of resources.<br>• Plan for and align resources to support the implementation of instructional initiatives.<br>• Use a continuous cycle of analysis with leadership teams to examine, assess and refine the effectiveness of programs and equitable use of resources. | |
| **Management of Systems and Processes** | **Talent Management** | • Use data to establish priorities for recruiting, selecting, inducting, supporting, evaluating and developing staff.<br>• Engage in ongoing succession planning. | • What evidence exists that the school leadership implements strategic efforts to recruit, hire, retain, induct, support, develop and evaluate staff?<br>• How do school leaders use the evaluation process to make personnel decisions?<br>• What data and processes does the school leadership use in planning for instructional and school improvement?<br>• What evidence is there of a comprehensive assessment system?<br>• What evidence exists of the staff's access to professional growth opportunities?<br>• How is the leader using performance management systems for staff growth?<br>• How do leaders establish structures to support critical processes such as curriculum development, comprehensive assessment, school improvement and performance management? |
| | **Professional Growth** | • Create and maintain supportive working environments with time and space for collaboration.<br>• Identify and provide multiple types of professional development based on identified needs. | |
| | **Structures of Support** | • Employ critical processes such as planning, implementing, advocating, supporting, communicating and monitoring of all leadership responsibilities including curriculum, instruction, assessment and school improvement planning.<br>• Use data to assess and monitor system performance on a regular basis to ensure viable support for staff and students. | |