



Leadership System

The Leadership System focuses on decision-making, operational management, and upholding the vision, mission, and goals of the district over time. A district's leadership system addresses how the district, as a whole, will engage the students, staff, and the community, as well as the process for implementing the district's strategic plan through day-to-day operations. The leadership system provides the structures to develop the capacity of the adults within the district to utilize their skills and behaviors to positively impact teacher and leader performance, and to support student learning. One definition of a system is "interconnected people and processes to accomplish a particular function." In this, leaders are the "designers" and "managers" of these interconnections. Effective leaders use their skills to navigate the interconnections of people and processes, including the beliefs and emotions of the people involved.

Research centered on the leadership system identifies a set of evidence-based practices around key areas of focus implemented by leaders throughout the system. Each practice has actions for central office leaders who are making district-wide decisions for all, as well as actions taken by building leaders who are establishing norms and routines for individual buildings within the district. These areas of focus start with Shaping the District's Identity and Building Positive Relationships with the people in the district, including students, staff, and the broader community. These both lead to the third area, Developing the Desired District Climate and Culture, which utilizes the practices of the previous areas through policies and practices. All of these set the stage for the next area, Developing Capacity for Instruction and Student Support to ensure that district systems are addressing the needs of learners. The fifth area addresses the key operational levers available to leaders - Allocating Resources to Support the District Mission. Once all of these are functioning, the final area of Managing District Systems for Continuous Improvement and Compliance maintains and sustains the various systems over time. The research highlights the need for these focus areas to be addressed by district and building leaders, and HOW leaders address these areas WELL. Two common elements are that strong leaders focus on the emotional and intellectual needs of staff and students in the schools while also engaging in systemic change. As such, research suggests that successful leaders rely on listening to and leveraging the actions of individuals within the district to promote the change process for the collective district community.

Shape the District's Identity

1. District leaders establish the identity of the district through the creation and implementation of a student-centered vision and mission.
2. District and building leaders communicate district identity and focus through their actions, decisions, and deliberate messaging.

Research-Based Practices

Build Positive Relationships

3. District and building leaders engage with students, staff, and community through formal and informal communications to share ideas and build trust.
4. District and building leaders establish communications networks to share information with students, staff, and the community and gather feedback to inform practice.
5. District and building leaders leverage students, staff, and community to strengthen relationships, develop messaging, and promote the goals and actions of the district.

Develop the Desired District Climate and Culture

6. District and building leaders establish, model, and promote expectations for safety, support, and equity for all.
7. District and building leaders establish norms for engagement, dialogue, and response to address challenging issues and actions.
8. District and building leaders implement protocols for decision-making and discourse and policies to promote the desired district climate and culture.

Develop Capacity for Instruction and Student Support

9. District and building leaders develop and communicate models of instruction and student support that reflect the identity, vision, and mission of the district.
10. District and building leaders support and leverage the work of effective and innovative educators within the district to shape and model instruction and student support.
11. District and building leaders regularly monitor instruction and student support efforts to ensure effective implementation and continuous improvement.
12. District and building leaders engage in and foster partnerships, coaching, and mentoring of educators and staff to support practices of the instructional and student support systems.

Allocate Resources to Support the District Mission

13. District and building leaders develop and implement financial and other resource allocation decisions to support the mission and welfare of the district as an organization.
14. District leaders forecast multiple scenarios and conditions to support the long-term viability of district resources, programming, and infrastructure.
15. District and building leaders schedule time and personnel to ensure effective implementation of district systems to best support the district vision and mission.

Manage District Systems for Continuous Improvement

16. District and building leaders generate, collect, and analyze a variety of data sources to identify needs and priorities for programming and policy aligned to the district vision and mission.
17. District and building leaders regularly monitor process and outcome indicators of practices and systems to determine actions for people and processes.
18. District and building leaders seek critical perspectives to inform decisions and actions to support the district vision and mission.
19. District and building leaders manage the change process for people and processes to ensure that systems are resulting in desired outcomes.