

# Five Critical Practices Framework

## 1. Focus on the direction.

Leaders provide guidance in identifying and developing an understanding of the core beliefs and mission of the organization. The core beliefs guide the work and all decisions of the organization. Consensus among faculty and staff about students and the school's role in student learning is critical to maintaining the focus of the organization.

<b>Knowledge</b>  <b>Critical Practice 1:</b> <b>Focus on the Direction</b>	<b>Leadership Team Look Fors</b> <b>(Circle indicators and note areas of strength)</b>	<b>Faculty/Staff Look Fors</b> <b>(Circle indicators and note areas of strength)</b>	<b>Student Look Fors</b> <b>(Circle indicators and note areas of strength)</b>
1.1. Creating an organizational culture	Developing positive and productive relationships with all stakeholders	Nurturing positive and productive relationships with students, families, and colleagues	Demonstrating positive and productive relationships with peers and faculty/staff
	Facilitating conversations among all stakeholders	Initiating and engaging in stakeholder conversations	Engaging in conversations
	Encouraging and modeling conversations and actions that build trust	Modeling conversations and actions that build trust	Modeling conversations and actions that build trust
	Creating a shared understanding of caring, communication, and collaboration	Demonstrating care, communication, and collaboration	Demonstrating care, communication, and collaboration

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1.2 Working with others to support, encourage, or require high-quality performance	Working with others to set expectations that promote high levels of performance in every area	Creating common expectations within grade levels and across school	Reflecting and responding to feedback, direction, and support  Articulating common expectations
	Ensuring that everyone has strategic and actionable short-term and long-term improvement goals	Writing and implementing improvement goals  Facilitating students' development of improvement goals	Writing and implementing individual/group/class improvement goals
	Establishing follow-up processes to monitor implementation of expectations and goals	Using follow-up processes to self-monitor implementation of expectations and goals  Modeling use of processes for self-monitoring	Using follow-up processes to self-monitor implementation of expectations and goals
	Providing feedback, direction, and support to strengthen performance	Reflecting and responding to feedback, direction, and support	

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1.3 Using a vision, mission, and strategic plan to make decisions and inform actions	Collaborating with others to develop a mission, vision, and strategic plan that reflect the beliefs, values, ethics, and focus of the organization	Collaborating in developing and enacting the mission, vision, and strategic plan	Collaborating in developing and enacting the mission, vision, and strategic plan
	Ensuring that current and future practices are consistent with the vision and mission and are based on the strategic plan	Ensuring that instructional practices are consistent with the vision and mission in the strategic plan	
	Engaging in ongoing discussions and investigations, looking outside the norm for more effective ways of integrating the mission, vision, and strategic plan	Participating in ongoing discussions and investigations, looking outside the norm for more effective ways of integrating the mission, vision, and strategic plan	Participating in focus groups on the integration of the mission, vision, and strategic plan
	Routinely redirecting or reframing collegial conversations to support the direction of the organization through the realization of vision and mission		

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### 2. Build a powerful organizational structure.

Leaders build a community of learners and supporters through knowledge sharing with faculty, staff, and community. Ongoing informal and formal communication surrounding the status of the school, including successes and challenges, encourages productive discussions and fosters collaborative development of practices to enhance the effectiveness of the school and continuously increase student learning.

<b>Knowledge</b>  <b>Critical Practice 2:</b> <b>Build a Powerful</b> <b>Organizational</b> <b>Structure</b>	<b>Leadership Team Look Fors</b> <b>(Circle indicators and note</b> <b>areas of strength)</b>	<b>Faculty/Staff Look Fors</b> <b>(Circle indicators and note</b> <b>areas of strength)</b>	<b>Student Look Fors</b> <b>(Circle indicators and note</b> <b>areas of strength)</b>
2.1 Working with others to create a powerful organizational structure	Collaborating with faculty and staff to diagnose the current condition of the school organization	Participating in formal and informal conversations regarding the school environment	Collaborating and providing honest feedback about the current condition of the school organization (surveys, focus groups, interviews, exit slips)
	Creating and communicating order within the school	Taking responsibility for creating and communicating order within the classroom as well as across the school	Taking responsibility for creating and communicating order within the classroom as well as across the school

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	<p>Engaging all stakeholders in formal and informal conversations regarding the school environment</p>	<p>Collaborating and providing honest feedback about the current condition of the school organization</p> <p>Providing processes for students to participate in focused conversations regarding the school environment</p>	<p>Participating in formal and informal conversations regarding the school environment</p>
	<p>Collaborating with all internal and external stakeholders to monitor the status of the school environment and effectiveness of processes and procedures</p>	<p>Monitoring and reporting the status of the school environment and effectiveness of processes and procedures</p> <p>Providing processes for students to report on the status of the school environment and effectiveness of processes and procedures</p>	<p>Monitoring and reporting the status of the school environment and effectiveness of processes and procedures</p>

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2.2 Leading an organization in becoming agile and flexible	Modeling and engaging others in reflective processes (listening, responding, debating, collaboratively making decisions)	Modeling and engaging others in reflective processes (listening, responding, debating, collaboratively making decisions)	Participating in reflective processes and in examining solutions to problems
	Creating risk-free opportunities for others to engage in examining solutions to problems	Providing a risk-free environment in which students can engage in reflective processes, examine solutions, and share ideas	
	Encouraging open and professional dialogue among others to confront internal barriers or obstacles that stall progress	Providing honest and professional feedback concerning internal barriers or obstacles that stall progress	
	Engaging all stakeholders in discussions for out-of-the-box answers to difficult problems	Initiating and engaging in discussion to provide out-of-the-box answers to difficult problems	Sharing ideas and solutions to difficult problems within the classroom and/or across the school

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2.3 Leading others in developing, maintaining, and improving processes that increase the effectiveness of the organization	Engaging all stakeholders in straightforward discussions of programs, processes, and performance effectiveness for ongoing quality improvement in all areas	Participating and providing honest feedback about programs, processes, and performance effectiveness for ongoing quality improvement  Providing an environment and structures in which students can give honest feedback about programs, processes, and performance effectiveness for ongoing quality improvement	Participating and providing honest feedback about programs, processes, and performance effectiveness for ongoing quality improvement
	Facilitating conversations among others identifying areas that matter most and are worth measuring		

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	Engaging others in identifying and developing processes and tools that accurately measure improvement in areas previously highlighted as most important	Collaborating to identify and develop processes and tools that accurately measure improvement in areas previously highlighted as most important	
	Modeling and leading others in the process of analyzing data to make mid-course adjustments toward the goal of continuous improvement	Analyzing data to make mid-course adjustments toward the goal of continuous improvement  Providing structure to gather feedback from students regarding mid-course adjustments	Providing feedback and participating in the process of analyzing data to inform faculty regarding mid-course adjustments



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### 3. Give life to data.

Leaders share with all stakeholders critical data related to student learning and school effectiveness. Gaining a solid understanding of data analysis through thoughtful conversations with parent groups, faculty, and staff encourages careful examination of student performance in response to instructional practices.

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3.1 Ensuring that key data are analyzed in a deliberate manner	Establishing and protecting a schedule that provides continuous opportunities to analyze key data collaboratively	Effectively using the allocated time for data analysis  Providing opportunities for students to analyze data	Providing honest and open feedback about strengths and areas for growth
	Emphasizing the importance of analyzing data by modeling the elimination of barriers to collaborative work	Identifying barriers to collaborative work and sharing with leadership	
	Encouraging honest and open dialogue on the use and effectiveness of tools for analyzing key data	Providing honest and open feedback on data analysis tools	Analyzing data using various tools

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	Creating and protecting opportunities for colleagues to support peers collaboratively in meeting the needs of the organization	Listening to, mentoring, leading, and collaborating with peers to meet the needs of the organization	

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3.2 Using data and current research to improve student learning	Routinely facilitating faculty and staff conversations that lead to guided reflection on connections between actual classroom practices and student data	Initiating and participating in dialogue relevant to actual practices and student data  Providing time and space to listen and learn from students about their content learning (such as exit slips, conferences)	Providing honest and open feedback about strengths and areas for growth
	Ensuring the provision of professional learning opportunities for all faculty and staff to develop classroom strategies and practices in response to the data	Using professional learning opportunities to identify needs, evaluate practices, and implement revised and/or additional strategies when appropriate	Providing feedback about the effectiveness of new strategies (such as exit slips, surveys, focus groups, reflection sheets)
	Leading faculty and staff growth and development through collegial conversations focused specifically on recent research in the field and implications for classroom instruction	Participating in conversations, investigating research, and studying implications through actual classroom practices	

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	Engaging faculty and staff in weekly discussions reflecting on a common professional book or journal that addresses classroom instructional changes in response to student performance	Contributing to weekly professional discussions through a variety of modes (such as whole group, small group, on-line)	

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3.3. Communicating key data to all stakeholders	Routinely providing recognition and support for improvements and encouragement and support for areas of continuing need	Recognizing colleagues and students for improvement/growth and encouraging efforts in areas of continuing need	Recognizing peers for improvement/growth and encourage efforts in areas of continuing need
	Leading the disaggregation of data and collegial conversations focused on developing a common understanding of the resulting implications	Using the disaggregated data to develop common understandings and to discuss openly the implications for practice	
	Ensuring transparency and clarity of the data	Clearly articulating the implications of the data across the school	Communicating individual data and school status
	Establishing routine processes for all stakeholders to reflect on and develop an understanding of key data	Developing a process for students to reflect on their understanding of key data	Completing reflection process on their understanding of key data

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### 4. Ensure student-focused vision and action

Leaders protect time, allocate resources, and support personnel in creating and maintaining a focus on improving instructional practices that result in high levels of learning for all students. Safeguarding routine faculty collaborative time for lesson design and analysis of student work promotes student-centered practices.

<b>Knowledge</b>  <b>Critical Practice 4: Ensure Student- Focused Vision and Action</b>	<b>Leadership Team Look Fors (Circle indicators and note areas of strength)</b>	<b>Faculty/Staff Look Fors (Circle indicators and note areas of strength)</b>	<b>Student Look Fors (Circle indicators and note areas of strength)</b>
4.1 Creating a vision and a culture that focus on student learning and student needs	Collaborating with faculty and staff to craft a student-centered vision for the school and students	Engaging with others in crafting a student-centered vision  Articulating and demonstrating the vision in their daily school experiences  Facilitating student input in the development of visions, goals, and expectations for classrooms	Articulating and demonstrating the vision in their daily school experiences
	Providing opportunities for faculty and staff to recalibrate and ensure that the focus of the work is learning for all students	Reviewing the effectiveness of actions related to the vision to ensure student focus	Reviewing the effectiveness of actions related to the vision

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	Implementing ongoing professional learning that supports faculty and staff collaboration in developing processes that support student learning	Participating in ongoing professional learning that supports processes for student learning	
	Supporting faculty and staff in routine peer and self-monitoring of practices that maintain a student learning focus	Engaging in self-monitoring and peer monitoring of practices that maintain a student learning focus (such as conversations with colleagues, observations, lesson study)	

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4.2 Providing instructional leadership	Modeling and coordinating continuous learning experiences for faculty and staff that enhance learning for all	Coordinating and engaging in continuous learning experiences  Providing continuous engaging learning experiences throughout the class period	Participating in continuous learning experiences with peers
	Facilitating collegial conversations regarding challenging, attainable learning experiences	Initiating and participating in collegial conversations  Providing time and space for students to engage in focused instructional conversations with peers	Participating in instructional conversations with peers
	Modeling and encouraging experiences built on mutual respect among <u>all</u> stakeholders and high expectations for all students	Demonstrating respect for varying opinions across all stakeholders	Demonstrating respect for varying opinions across all stakeholders (such as Socratic Circles)  Seeking help to meet expectations



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		<p>Communicating expectations for all students to perform at high levels (such as conversations, one-on-one student conferences, specific feedback for improvement, providing additional tools and resources)</p> <p>Providing time and space for conversations and conferences with students</p>	
	<p>Providing faculty and staff with resources and time to expand the collective knowledge and application of best teaching practices that result in high levels of learning</p>	<p>Initiating discussions and implementation of best teaching practices</p>	

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4.3 Leading the development of guidelines and procedures for classrooms	Collaborating with faculty and staff to design standards-based classrooms that address the variety of student needs	Investigating, creating, implementing, and evaluating standards-based classrooms	Providing input for designing tools and processes to enhance the implementation of standards-based classrooms
	Leading faculty and staff in developing active, experiential classroom learning opportunities for students	Investigating, creating, implementing, and evaluating standards-based classrooms which are active and experiential	Collaborating with faculty in designing guidelines and procedures for active, experiential learning
	Engaging faculty and staff in an ongoing analysis and identification of the essential skills and knowledge students must learn for the year	Continuously reflecting and analyzing within and across grade levels the content students must know and need to be able to do	
	Creating opportunities for faculty to collaborate on lessons, units, and assessments to ensure meeting essential standards	Effectively using the time allocated to collaborate on student needs and meeting standards	

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### 5. Lead learning

Leaders model life-long learning and provide routinized time and resources for faculty and staff to learn, collaborate, and reflect on student learning and the implications for instructional practices. Leaders challenge and support faculty and staff as they innovate and examine barriers to meaningful change. Leaders also create a sense of immediacy of the need for improvement in all areas of learning.

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5.1 Establishing an environment of daily learning and providing time for others to collaborate, reflect, and share knowledge.	Modeling collaboration, reflection, and knowledge sharing in daily practice and encouraging others to do the same (such as regular leadership team meetings, sharing resources, reflections on team’s work, engaging with others in school-wide study groups)	Effectively utilizing the protected time and documenting collaborative lesson design and planning, looking at student work, professional study, data analysis, inter-classroom visits, lesson study, lesson link (such as lessons, videos, units of study, data rooms, reflections of classroom visits and professional study)	Engaging in active learning that results from faculty collaborative design and planning (such as student products, notebooks, collections of learning over time)
	Providing protected time in the daily schedule for others to collaborate, reflect, and share knowledge, while shifting classroom work from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning	Utilizing norms and protocols within professional learning communities	Generating and utilizing class norms and protocols  Participating in student-led learning and self-monitoring

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		Continuously creating time and space for students to collaborate, reflect, and share	Engaging in a variety of interactions (such as student-to-student interactions, student-to-faculty interactions, student-to-leader interactions, and student reflections)
	Rewarding formal and informal collaboration and knowledge sharing (such as affirmations through notes, public recognition, special privileges, celebrations)	Maximizing formal and informal opportunities for collaboration (such as reflections, logs, agendas, journals, plans for next steps)	
	Maintaining systematic processes for sharing knowledge (such as lesson study, lesson link, looking at student work, classroom visits, walk-throughs)		

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5.2 Challenging the status quo and working with others to achieve change goals.	Inviting different perspectives from others by asking the right question and listening to the answers (such as providing protocols and structures for collegial conversations and community conversations - Some examples are Schlechty Organization protocols, Annenberg Foundation, and National School Reform Faculty)	Providing honest opinions and feedback  Inviting different perspectives from students (such as questions that evoke different perspectives, class meetings, student conferences, reflection, thumbs up, journals, minute card)	Providing honest opinions and feedback
	Creating a sense of urgency about positive change and improvement in every area (such as looking at student work, student focus groups, parent focus groups, graduate focus groups, sharing current research, student performance data, benchmarking with other schools)	Engaging in various focus groups to address identified issues across the school, apply current research, and look at root causes of issues	Engaging in student focus groups to address learning concerns and analyze root causes of areas of poor performance.

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	Empowering others to remove barriers to change (such as encouraging expeditious problem solving at all levels)	Initiating the removal of barriers to change that interfere with learning (such as creation of a new classroom physical and emotional environment, instructional strategies, system strategies, protocols, professional learning community decisions)	
	Encouraging conversations about new ideas for improvement	Initiating and engaging in conversations about research and best practices (such as dialogue with peers and students)	Providing input about best practices across the school

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5.3 Implementing methods to motivate, support, and/or encourage innovation.	Creating opportunities for others to work together in teams to generate new ideas and create significant meaningful change	Engaging in professional learning communities that focus on studying, implementing, and evaluating new ideas and the resulting changes  Providing time and space for students to utilize the new practices	Participating in a variety of innovative learning opportunities grounded in the implementation and research of best practices
	Working with others to develop innovation goals and systematic processes so that innovation is part of the culture	Collaboratively developing goals and processes for supporting the study, implementation, and evaluation of innovations  Including students in the development of new ideas and processes	Conversing with others about the effectiveness of the innovation
	Celebrating new ideas and recognizing the efforts others who try new ideas, even if the outcomes are not always successful	Initiating new ideas because the school culture supports innovation	Participating in the development of new ideas and innovative practices across the school

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	Investing resources in supporting innovation in programs, services, and processes to create new value for stakeholders	Requesting and using resources for the implementation of new research and best practices	