

# Five Critical Practices

---

## Outline

## **Five Critical Practices Principals Who Improve Student Learning**

### **1. Focus on direction.**

#### 1.1. Creating an organizational culture

- *Developing positive and productive relationships with all stakeholders*
- *Facilitating conversations among all stakeholders*
- *Encouraging and modeling conversations and actions that build trust and support diversity*
- *Creating a shared culture of caring, communication, and collaboration*

#### 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*
- *Ensuring that everyone has strategic and actionable short-term and long-term improvement goals*
- *Establishing follow-up processes to monitor implementation of expectations and goals*
- *Providing feedback, direction, and support to strengthen performance*

#### 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*
- *Ensuring that current and future practices are consistent with the vision and mission and are based on 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*
- *Routinely redirecting or reframing collegial conversations about vision and mission to support the direction of the organization*

## 2. Build a powerful organizational structure.

### 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*
- *Creating and securing order within the school*
- *Engaging all stakeholders in formal and informal conversations regarding the school environment*
- *Collaborating with all internal and external stakeholders to monitor the effectiveness of processes and procedures*

### 2.2: Leading an organization in becoming agile and flexible

- *Modeling and engaging others in reflective processes (listening, responding, debating, discussing, collaborating)*
- *Creating risk-free opportunities for others to engage in examining solutions to problems*
- *Encouraging open and professional dialogue to confront internal barriers or obstacles that stall progress*
- *Engaging all stakeholders in discussions for out-of-the-box answers to difficult problems*

### 2.3 Leading others in developing, maintaining, and improving processes that increase the effectiveness of the organization

- *Engaging all stakeholders in discussions of programs, processes, and performance effectiveness for quality improvements in all areas*
- *Facilitating conversations among others identifying areas that matter most and are worth measuring*
- *Engaging others in identifying and developing processes and tools that accurately measure improvement in areas identified as most important*
- *Modeling and leading others in the process of analyzing data to make mid-course adjustments*

### 3. Give life to data.

#### 3.1 Ensuring that key data are analyzed in a deliberate manner

- *Establishing and protecting a schedule that provides continuous opportunities to collaboratively disaggregate and analyze key data*
- *Eliminating barriers to collaborative data analysis*
- *Ensuring the use of effective tools to collaboratively analyze key data*
- *Creating and protecting opportunities for colleagues to support peers in meeting the needs of the organization*

#### 3.2 Using data and current research to improve student learning

- *Routinely facilitating faculty and staff conversations about connections between actual classroom practices and student data*
- *Ensuring professional learning opportunities for all faculty and staff to develop classroom strategies and practices in response to the data*
- *Leading collegial conversations focused specifically on recent research in the field and implications for classroom instruction*
- *Engaging faculty and staff in weekly discussions reflecting on current research practices that address classroom instructional changes in response to student performance*

#### 3.3 Communicating key data to all stakeholders

- *Routinely providing recognition and support for improvements and encouragement and support for areas of continuing need*
- *Leading collegial conversations focused on developing a common understanding of the implications of key data*
- *Ensuring transparency and clarity of the data*
- *Establishing routine processes for all stakeholders to reflect on and develop an understanding of key data*

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

##### 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*
- *Providing opportunities for faculty and staff to recalibrate and ensure that the focus of the work is learning for all students*
- *Facilitating faculty and staff collaboration in developing processes that support student learning*
- *Supporting faculty and staff in routine peer and self-monitoring of practices that maintain a student learning focus*

##### 4.2. Providing instructional leadership

- *Modeling and coordinating continuous learning experiences for faculty and staff that enhance learning for all*
- *Facilitating collegial conversations regarding challenging, attainable learning experiences*
- *Modeling and encouraging mutual respect among all stakeholders and high expectations for all students*
- *Ensuring growth in the collective knowledge and application of best teaching practices that result in high levels of learning*

##### 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*
- *Leading faculty and staff in developing active, experiential classroom learning opportunities for students*
- *Engaging faculty and staff in an ongoing analysis and identification of the essential skills and knowledge students must learn for the year*
- *Creating opportunities for faculty to collaborate on lessons, units, and assessments to ensure meeting essential standards*

## 5. Lead learning.

- 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*
  - *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 learning*
  - *Rewarding formal and informal collaboration and knowledge sharing*
  - *Maintaining systematic processes for sharing knowledge*
- 5.2 Challenging the status quo and working with others to achieve change goals
- *Inviting different perspectives from others by asking the right questions and listening to the answers*
  - *Creating a sense of urgency about positive change and improvement in every area*
  - *Empowering others to remove barriers to change*
  - *Encouraging conversations about new ideas for improvement*
- 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*
  - *Working with others to develop innovation goals and systematic processes so that innovation is part of the culture*
  - *Celebrating new ideas and recognizing the efforts of others who try new ideas, even if the outcomes are not always successful*
  - *Investing resources in supporting innovation in programs, services, and processes to create new value for stakeholders*