CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR (CSF) PLANNING GUIDE
LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

DISTRICT COMMITMENTS

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

TEACHER QUALITY

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY

CAPACITY AND RESOURCES

SCHOOL CLIMATE

DISTRICT-WIDE OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

FAMILY/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNICATIONS

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

INCREASED LEARNING TIME

SENSE OF URGENCY

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

PROCESSES/PROCEDURES

CLEAR VISION AND FOCUS

USE OF QUALITY DATA TO DRIVE INSTRUCTION

ACCELERATED ACHIEVEMENT

SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

SUSTAINABILITY

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

CSF PLANNING GUIDES ARE INTENDED TO

- Present supporting research that strengthens your knowledge and understanding of the CSF.
- Provide examples of processes and/or strategies to support your implementation of the Texas Accountability and Intervention Strategies (TAIS) framework to strengthen the CSFs on your campus.
- Assist with strategies to determine your strengths and weaknesses for each CSF.
- Identify specific next steps to implement on your campus.

BEFORE GETTING STARTED

- If you are working as a group, designate someone to take notes during the discussions to collect ideas and thoughts for your next steps.
- Assign an individual to lead the action plan for leadership effectiveness.
- Use the activities in the Next Steps section to gather data, identify problems, and determine root causes.

AFTER REVIEWING THIS GUIDE, RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING

- What new knowledge do I have about this CSF and how does this information influence my thinking?
- In what ways are the practices at my district/school aligned with strengthening this CSF?
- What do we want to improve and what plan of action is needed to improve?

CALL TO ACTION

- Organize an instructional leadership team meeting.
- To understand the team's current understanding of this CSF, ask team members what they know about it and record their responses.
- Read this guide using a jigsaw or other text discussion protocol.
- Respond to questions or discussion prompts listed throughout the guide.
- Determine how you want to initiate learning more about the CSF in relation to the TAIS framework. For instance, you could assign team members to read and facilitate the discussions for the different sections of this guide.
- Utilize the TAIS Guidance Documents at www.tcdss.net as a resource. They include details and specifics for the process.

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

The TAIS framework for school improvement states:
Leadership effectiveness targets the need for leadership on campus to exhibit characteristics and skills known to promote and implement positive educational change. Of the elements proven to have the greatest degree of impact on student achievement, school leadership is second only to classroom instruction. Examples of successful school turnaround efforts without effective leadership are rare.

"Leadership is not about personality; it's about behavior" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).[1]

The expectations for America's public schools have never been higher. In the past, public schools served as "sorting machines," where only a few students were prepared for a postsecondary education, while most received a basic skills education.[2,3] But the basic skills needed in the twentieth century will not prepare citizens for success in the twenty-first century. New standards and accountability pressures are forcing leaders to think about implementing changes to school organization.[4] The transition of the primary function of the school leader from glorified building manager to professional learning leader is well documented. Within school organizations, research shows that leaders are second only to teachers in influencing learning.[5]

This planning resource addresses leadership effectiveness in these six sections:
- What is leadership effectiveness?
- What do effective leaders do?
- How do you measure leadership effectiveness?
- How do you increase leadership effectiveness?
- Reflection
- Next steps

SECTION 1
WHAT IS LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS?

According to Reeves, "Educational Leadership is more than a spot on a hierarchical organization chart."[6] Failing to consider leadership beyond the organization chart blinds us to what effective leadership truly is. Consider the following points taken from source material devoted to educational leadership. As you do, look for any common themes that emerge:

- Sergiovanni argues that leadership is not about a specific individual and his or her traits. Rather, it is the norms, beliefs, and principles that the staff commits to and uses to form the culture of the school.[7]

- The successful educational leader today must understand that building a teacher learning community is necessary to reform the current system.[8, 9, 10]

- A deeper concept of leadership distributed across the expertise of the district/school builds the learning organization.[11, 12, 13]

- The "hero model" prevalent in our image of school leadership is not sustainable. Establishing collaborative teams provides the structure to support sustainable school improvement.[14]

- Donaldson offers a leadership model that is built on a collective relationship whereby each person in the school grows and learns from the others. Leadership is based on a relationship that mobilizes team members to accomplish the goals and purpose of the school or district.[15]

- Linda Darling-Hammond stresses that the new professionalism in schools is building collective relationships and replacing the lone individual as the core of leadership.[16]

- Knapp et al. define leadership for learning improvement as shared work and commitment that connect the effort and energy of multiple leaders to influence the direction of the school.[17]

CALL TO ACTION

Consider and discuss these statements and questions:

- What common themes were identified regarding effective leadership?

- What leadership behaviors or practices on your campus or district are in place to build relationships to mobilize the staff?

- Describe the current behaviors or practices that indicate your staff members are not only responsible for their individual jobs, but share in the responsibility over school-wide concerns.

- In what ways do your campus or district leadership practices align with thoughts on leadership effectiveness reflected above?

- How could leadership be further developed and distributed in your organization?

SECTION 2
WHAT DO EFFECTIVE LEADERS DO?

A growing number of studies highlight that leadership practices better meet the needs of twenty-first century schools. These practices complement reform efforts in which active research guides the conversation and staff members are willing to try new practices to replace ineffective ones.[18] In this culture of inquiry, data becomes the spark for action and the foundation for collaboration. And in these kinds of learning communities, leadership is shared.

Leithwood et al. identify three sets of practices that make up the core of successful leadership:[19]

- Setting directions
- Developing people
- Redesigning the organization

In the next few paragraphs look for examples of these core practices.

In his book, *Leverage Leadership*, Bambrick-Sontoyo asserts that two major practices move schools: The first is a relentlessness about spending time on the most important things. The second is doing things obsessively well.[20] Wagner affirms this second point: "Choose a priority and stay relentlessly focused on it."[21] Bambrick-Sontoyo describes seven "levers" and explains how they correspond to the fundamental question of what effective leaders should do, and how and when they should do it. These levers also apply to district leadership.[22]

The Seven Levers

INSTRUCTIONAL LEVERS
1. Data-driven instruction. Define the road map for rigor and adapt teaching to meet students' needs.
2. Observation and feedback. Give all teachers professional, one-on-one coaching that increases their effectiveness as instructors.
3. Instructional planning. Guarantee every student well-structured lessons that teach the right content.
4. Professional development. Strengthen both culture and instruction with hands-on training that sticks.

CULTURAL LEVERS
5. Student culture. Create a strong culture where learning thrives.
6. Staff culture. Build and support the right team for your school.
7. Managing school leadership teams. Train instructional leaders to expand your impact across the school.

The seven levers and tools for implementing them are addressed individually in Bambrick-Santoyo's book. Note the alignment with the TAIS framework's tenets of data analysis to drive instruction, improvement planning for instruction and professional development, as well as the CSFs to improve school climate, increase teacher quality, and increase the use of quality data to drive instruction.

The process of building shared leadership teams is often called distributed leadership.[23] The idea is that leaders should be distributed throughout the school. If leadership is influence, then dispersing leadership would mean more people are wielding influence to support reform efforts throughout the school.

Distributed leadership requires abandoning the hero or charismatic model and relying on the concept of influence to rally the school around the goals for meaningful change.[24,25] Research supports the value of distributed leadership. Spillane et al., Copland, and Wagner, however, caution that the process takes time.[26,27,28] It starts with small groups of teachers talking about curriculum and student work, moves to observing other classrooms, and then moves to using data to inform changes in classroom practice.

Again, there are specific leadership practices that will influence and guide this development. As shared leadership expands, the faculty should come to "own" the work of reform, rather than merely "buying in." Wagner says leaders need the skills to create an atmosphere for all of the faculty members to gain a new understanding of their craft.[29] They create the work, and as a result, they own the work.

Effective leaders also adopt a learner-centered approach that acknowledges the significant influence quality teaching has on student learning.[30] The findings on learner-centered leadership can be divided into two sets: behavioral and organizational. Behaviors that characterize learner-centered leaders are modeling, monitoring, and dialogue. These behaviors are what teachers say they value and expect in an effective leader. The organizational aspects are defined by the structures and systems that the leaders design and deploy to ensure that the learning organization created in the school is sustainable.[30] Fullan says that leadership training for teachers can be more effective when the principal participates as a learner, too.[31]

CALL TO ACTION

Consider these questions to guide a discussion about how effective leadership relates to your school's or district's situation:

- What specific research-based practices can be developed in school leaders?

- How do you think distributed or shared leadership would work in your school?

- Of the leadership practices in your organization, which are effective and which could be strengthened or more fully developed?

- Which practices discussed in this guide might be worthwhile for your campus or district to adopt?

- How do you think learner-centered leadership could increase leadership effectiveness in your school?

- What would be needed to build the practice of distributed/shared leadership at your school? (Examples might be shared time, meeting spaces, or other resources.)

SECTION 3
MEASURING LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

The Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS) and The Texas Education Agency (TEA) developed the Principal Retention Framework. Though its primary purpose is to evaluate the behaviors and practices of principals at schools with an "improvement required" rating, it offers effective guidelines for improving leadership effectiveness in all school leaders, regardless of school rating. (You can download the document at www.tcdss.net/tcdss/docs/TAIS%20Multi%20Year%20Training%20Materials%202014/ACCT_Principal_Retention_Framework.pdf. It is crucial that districts develop and support these practices to foster school improvement and success.

The Principal Retention Framework addresses the TAIS CSFs as well as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Turnaround Principles. School performance profiles and outcomes (and thus leadership effectiveness) are measured through:

- **Academic measures:** Include STAAR, EOC, and Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA) and/or Benchmark Results.

- **Teacher Effectiveness:** Includes the extent to which the principal takes actions (as described in the framework) to initiate dramatic improvement efforts in the school.

- **Key Turnaround Leader Actions:** Include the extent at which the principal has engaged in specific actions defined in the framework. The Turnaround Leaders Actions include:

DRIVING FOR RESULTS

Concentrate on Big, Fast Payoffs in Year 1: Turnaround leaders concentrate on a few changes to achieve early, visible wins. They do this to achieve success in an important area, motivate others for further change, and reduce resistance by those who oppose change.

Implement Practices Even if They Require Deviation: Turnaround leaders depart from organization norms or rules when needed to achieve early wins. In a failing organization, existing practices often contribute to failure. This shows that changes can lead to success.

Require All Staff to Change: When turnaround leaders implement an action plan, change is mandatory, not optional.

Make Necessary Staff Replacements: Successful turnaround leaders typically do not replace all or most staff but often replace some senior leaders. After initial turnaround success, staff members who do not make needed changes either leave or are removed by the leader.

Focus on Successful Tactics and Halt Others: Successful turnaround leaders quickly discard tactics that do not work and spend more money and time on tactics that work. This pruning and growing process focuses limited resources where they will best improve results.

Do Not Tout Progress as Ultimate Success: Turnaround leaders are not satisfied with partial success. They report progress, but keep the organization focused on high goals. When a goal is met, they are likely to raise the bar. Merely better is not good enough.

INFLUENCING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE ORGANIZATION

Communicate a Positive Vision: Turnaround leaders motivate others to contribute their discretionary effort by communicating a clear picture of success and its benefits.

Help Staff Personally Feel Problems: Turnaround leaders use various tactics to help staff members empathize with–or "put themselves in the shoes of"–those whom they serve. This helps staff members feel the problems that the status quo is causing and feel motivated to change.

Gain Support of Key Influencers: Turnaround leaders gain support of trusted influencers among staff and community and then work through these people to influence others.

Silence Critics with Speedy Success: Early, visible wins are used not just for success in their own right, but to make it harder for others to oppose further change. This reduces leader time spent addressing "politics" and increases time spent managing for results.

MEASURING, AND REPORTING (AND IMPROVING)

Measure and Report Progress Frequently: Turnaround leaders set up systems to measure and report interim results often. This enables rapid discarding of failed tactics and increasing successful tactics essential for fast results.

Require Decision Makers to Share Data and Problem Solve: Turnaround leaders share key staff results visibly to highlight those who do not change and reward those who do and succeed. This shifts meetings from blaming and excuses to problem solving.

Districts committed to raising student achievement make an equally strong commitment to finding and developing skilled school leaders. They identify competencies for practice and use those competencies to shape supervision, evaluation, and professional development.[32]

CALL TO ACTION

- Discuss the turnaround practices identified in the Principal Retention Framework. Identify behaviors that would be evidence for each indicator.
- Which practices or behaviors listed in the framework are employed at your school or district?
- How do the practices identified in the framework align with the TAIS framework?
- The framework focuses on the principal. How might shared/ distributed and learner-centered leadership assist in meeting the indicators listed?

SECTION 4
HOW DO YOU INCREASE LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS?

School improvement is not a single transformative event; it is a process. Effective leaders understand the importance of this process. John Kotter studied leaders and organizations for over three decades and found that effective leadership is rooted in eight stages of change that build on each other to form a process for leading transformational change. Kotter also identified the predictable pitfalls that can undermine each stage.[33] The following table presents Kotter's Eight Stages of Change. An additional column highlights actions in the TAIS continuous improvement process that align with each stage. Review the table and then see the Call to Action that follows.

KOTTER'S STAGES	ACTIONS NEEDED	TAIS ACTIONS	PITFALLS
Establish a sense of urgency.	Examine market and competitive realities for potential crisis and untapped opportunities. Convince at least 75% of your managers that the status quo is more dangerous than the unknown.	Understand the state accountability system and the rigor of STAAR relative to your current performance. Collect data and conduct a data analysis. Conduct a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) and develop problem statements.	Underestimating the difficulty of driving people from their comfort zones. Becoming paralyzed by risks.
Form a powerful guiding coalition.	Assemble a group of people with shared commitment and enough power to lead the change effort. Encourage them to work as a team outside the normal hierarchy.	Organize a group of people with the will and skill to lead the change. Identify problems, perform a needs assessment, and identify root causes. Distribute and share leadership to increase effectiveness.	No prior experience and or norms for teamwork.
Create a vision.	Create a vision to direct the change effort. Develop strategies for realizing that vision.	Create a vision and develop annual goals and strategies to achieve the vision (the TAIS Improvement Plan).	Creating/presenting a vision that's too complicated or vague to be communicated in 5 minutes.
Communicating the vision.	Use every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies for achieving it. Teach new behaviors by the example of the guiding coalition.	Utilize the team to model behaviors to reach the goals. Constantly communicate the vision, goals, and strategies through ongoing monitoring and data displays.	Undercommunicating the vision. Behaving in ways antithetical to the vision.

KOTTER'S STAGES	ACTIONS NEEDED	TAIS ACTIONS	PITFALLS
Empower others to act on the vision.	Remove or alter systems or structures that undermine the vision. Encourage risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions.	Implement and monitor strategies aimed at reaching goals (the TAIS Improvement Plan). Use successes to reinvigorate the change process. Encourage risk taking.	Failing to remove powerful individuals who resist the change effort.
Plan for and create short-term wins.	Define and engineer visible performance improvements. Recognize and reward employees' contributions to those improvements.	Monitor effective use of data. Celebrate all progress and recognize those who are making the progress.	Leaving short-term successes to chance; failing to score successes early enough.
Consolidate improvements and produce more change.	Use increased credibility from early wins to change systems, structures, and policies that undermine the vision. Hire, promote, and develop employees who can implement the vision. Reinvigorate the change process with new projects and change agents.	Utilize successes to inspire needed progress in each of the Critical Success Factors. Build and recognize teacher quality.	Declaring victory too soon, with the first improvement. Allowing resisters to convince "troops" that the war has been won.
Institutionalize new approaches.	Articulate connections between new behaviors and corporate success. Create leadership development and succession plans consistent with the new approach.	Articulate connections between new behaviors, adult learning, and students' success. Use TAIS improvement plan quarterly reports to examine the impact of the interventions. Increase leadership capacity.	Not creating new social norms and shared values consistent with changes. Promoting people into leadership positions who don't personify the new approach.

CALL TO ACTION

Thoughts and questions for discussion:

- Compare Kotter's Eight Stages of Change to the characteristics of a turnaround leader identified in the Principal Retention Framework. What concepts overlap?

- Describe areas of strength at your school/district that will support turnaround practices aligned with Kotter's Eight Stages of Change.

- How might the Eight Stages of Change and the turnaround characteristics support increasing leadership effectiveness?

- Which of the pitfalls Kotter lists might be encountered in your district or school?

Discuss the following quote as you think about the change process and the current situation in your district or school. How does addressing the CSF to increase leadership effectiveness address the challenges noted in the quote?

"To lead is to live dangerously because when leadership counts, when you lead people through difficult change, you challenge what people hold dear—their daily habits, tools, loyalties and ways of thinking—with nothing more to offer perhaps than a possibility. People push back when you disturb the personal and institutional equilibrium they know. And people resist in all kinds of creative and unexpected ways that can get you taken out of the game; pushed aside, undermined, or eliminated."[34]

SECTION 5
REFLECTION

Doug Reeves stresses the value of building networks of teacher leaders within the school. He asserts that principals who develop such leadership networks realize that effective leadership is about influence and not job titles.[35] Teachers don't just have influence over students; they have influence over fellow teachers and school leaders as well. Teacher leaders are the seeds that help schools grow beyond the "lone ranger" approach to leadership to a more effective model centered on collaborative teacher learning communities. Schools that are dependent on the principal as the sole leader are vulnerable if the principal should leave. If a principal builds leadership capacity, the organization continues to thrive even if the principal leaves. In other words, shared/distributed leadership increases the sustainability of healthy collaborative learning communities. Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond support the view that developing distributed leadership is the most appropriate way to develop leadership effectiveness.[36]

CALL TO ACTION

Read the quote below and discuss its relevance for your school or district:

> *"The principal's role is to lead the school's teachers in a process of learning to improve their teaching, while learning alongside them about what works and what doesn't. The nature of this new, much more powerful leadership role is becoming increasingly clear."*[37]

SECTION 6
NEXT STEPS

- Review the Principal Retention Framework and Kotter's Eight Stages of Change.
- List the practices outlined in them that are present in your school or district and those that you wish were present.
  - Prioritize and list those that you plan to improve or implement.
- Review the prioritized list you created and identify the top two or three priorities.
- Use the TAIS resource guide to complete a needs assessment to determine your root causes.
- Based on the root causes you identified, determine an overall strategy and then establish an annual goal.
- The Improvement Planning Template provides a tool for determining interventions to support achieving your goal. Refer to the *Guidance for the Texas Accountability Intervention System: Improvement Plan Guidance* as a resource. It includes details and specifics of the process. The resource can be found at www.tcdss.net.

MAKING CONNECTIONS
TO OTHER CSFS

- Improve Academic Performance
- Increase the Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction
- **Increase Leadership Effectiveness**
- Increase Parent and Community Involvement
- Increase Learning Time
- Improve School Climate
- Increase Teacher Quality

NOTES

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11. Peter M. Senge et al., *Schools That Learn: A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents and Everyone Who Cares About Education* (New York: Doubleday, 2000).

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14. Wayman, Midgley, and Stringfield, "Leadership for Data-Based."

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19. Kenneth Leithwood et al., "Executive Summary: How Leadership Influences Student Learning," The Wallace Foundation, last modified 2004, http://www.wallacefoundation.org.

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24. J. Norton, *Academies in the Lead: State Academies Must Prepare School Leadership Teams With the Skills and Staying Power to Raise Achievement* (Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, 2003).

25. Wagner, "Leadership for Learning."

26. Spillane, "Forms of Capital."

27. Copland, "Leadership of Inquiry."

28. Wagner, "Leadership for Learning."

29. Ibid.

30. Anita Woolfork Hoy and Wayne Kolter Hoy, *Instructional Leadership: A Learning-centered Guide* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2005).

31. Fullan, *The Principal*.

32. Alexander Platt et al., *The Skillful Leader II, Confronting Conditions That Undermine Learning* (Acton, MA: Ready About Press, 2008).

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