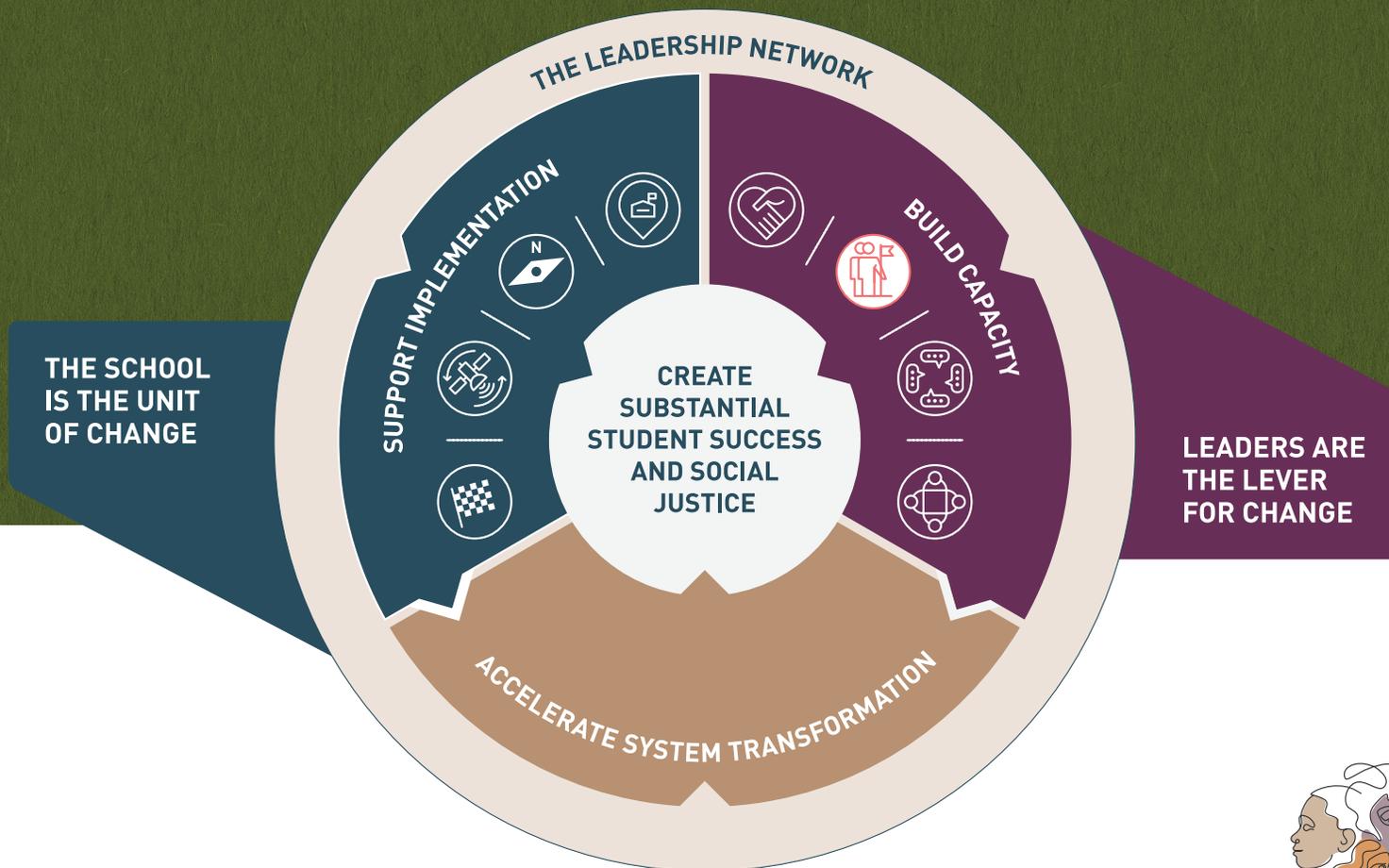


Effective Schools

Framework Overview



EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

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EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

The NTC Effective Schools Framework helps leaders bring coherence to school practices that make the most difference for student achievement. The framework is especially useful in supporting implementation of rigorous standards and focuses attention on critical academic, social, and emotional learning conditions. It provides common language and clarity about the characteristics and practices of effective schools that will substantially improve the learning environment and school community as a whole.

The Effective Schools Framework focuses on describing schools where substantial student success and social justice are the norm. By articulating specific practices that lead to improvement, the framework supports any leader, irrespective of prior experience or individual strengths or challenges, to move forward. This growth is accelerated when the framework is used in concert with district expectations and leadership competency guidelines. The alignment helps clarify what the leader needs to do to effectively lead their school community to embrace effective and sustainable practices.

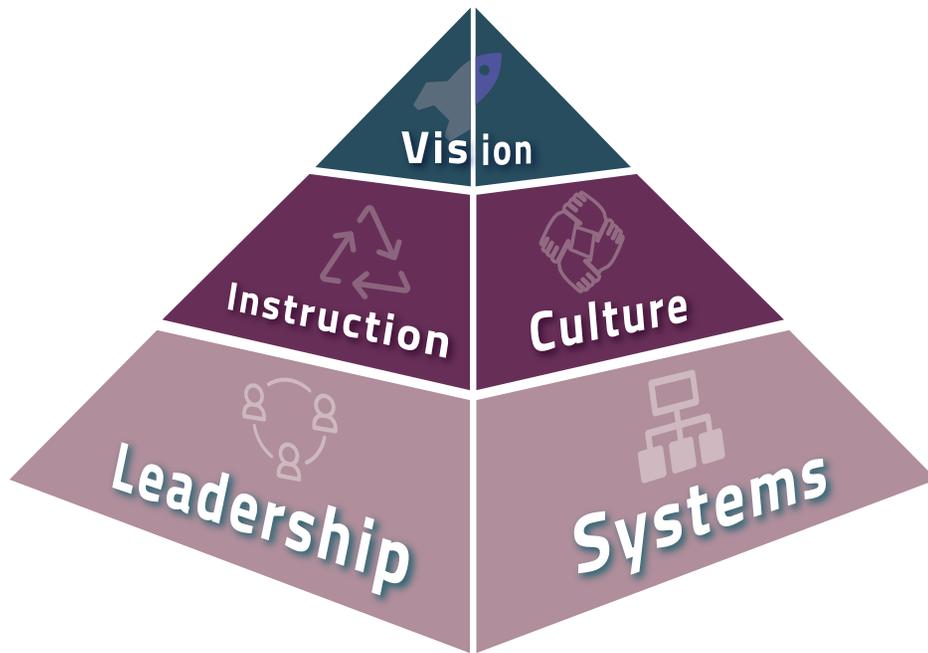
The framework illustrates how school practices—and student outcomes—can be improved through persistent and integrated attention to five priority areas (referred to as domains). Within each domain are research-based descriptions of school practice at various levels.

The framework is based on data from two decades of principal effectiveness research by the Wallace Foundation, including projects in 24 states and numerous school districts and nearly 100 reports and publications. The research identifies correlations between particular types of leadership practice and student achievement, which were used to determine the five domains of the Effective Schools Framework.



Courtesy of Allison Shelley/The Verbatim Agency for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW



The rubric that follows describes in concrete detail school characteristics across five leadership domains:

- **VISION, MISSION, AND GOALS:** Is every stakeholder actively supportive of a vision, mission, and key goals whose outcome is equitable academic and social excellence?
- **INSTRUCTION:** Is every teacher continuously improving their instruction? Is every student provided equitable opportunities to work to their highest capabilities?
- **CULTURE:** Does the school provide intellectually and emotionally stimulating communities that cultivate belonging and foster learning for every teacher and student?
- **TEACHER LEADERSHIP:** Does every teacher say there is strong teacher ownership of and opportunities for important leadership?
- **SYSTEMS:** Are the systems of the school creating optimal and equitable conditions for quality teaching and learning to occur?

Each performance area has two components:

1. Essential Question: The core question(s) to answer about the particular performance area. In an effective school, the answer to each Essential Question is “yes.”

2. Descriptor Language: Descriptions of the essence of each performance area are used to differentiate five levels of performance: Emerging, Developing, Effective, Strategic, and Transformative. The Effective Schools Framework descriptors focus primarily on observable characteristics at the school.

When leaders use the NTC Effective Schools Framework, they select the performance level where the combination of descriptors most closely describes their school’s performance, using a preponderance of evidence for each performance area.



DEFINING A VISION, MISSION, and GOALS focused on equity and access to ensure academic success for every student

Emerging	Developing	Effective	Strategic	Transformative
<p>1. School leader independently establishes instructional vision, mission, and goals that are based on personal beliefs and values rather than data; these might be shared with some stakeholders but are rarely reviewed or revised</p> <p>2. The instructional vision is initially shared with staff, students, and families, but they are unaware of the roles they need to play to achieve the goals; responsibility for achieving school goals and targets rests primarily with the school leader</p> <p>3. High expectations are held primarily for well-prepared, well-behaved students</p> <p>4. Teachers are focused on their own interests and have relatively low expectations of most students</p> <p>5. For any school initiative, there is no formal process to bring about school change and improvement; any change is seen negatively by staff</p>	<p>1. Instructional vision, mission, and goals are developed, reviewed, and revised with some stakeholder input and discussion; limited data inform this process; common definitions of key concepts developed (e.g.–stakeholders, equity)</p> <p>2. The vision is communicated periodically with stakeholders; department-level goals are created and implemented by the school leader and some staff members; goal attainment rests primarily with a small instructional leadership team; staff has limited awareness of their role in goal attainment</p> <p>3. There are variable learning expectations for students; many teachers believe every student can achieve</p> <p>4. Teachers demonstrate emerging confidence in their ability to meet the needs of every learner; most of staff assumes responsibility for the achievement of their students</p> <p>5. The school leader drives the change process with support from some core staff; resisters significantly hamper the progress of any change initiative</p>	<p>1. Instructional vision, mission, and goals are informed by data, ensure key stakeholder engagement, and promote a commitment to shared purpose, instructional focus, and direction with those included; these are annually reviewed and revised</p> <p>2. Stakeholders are knowledgeable about the instructional vision; school leader and leadership team implement school-wide plans; goal attainment rests primarily with an instructional leadership team and staff; most staff members are aware of their role in goal attainment</p> <p>3. Learning expectations are mostly consistent and leadership owns ensuring application to every student</p> <p>4. Teachers have initial confidence to meet the needs of every learner; every staff member assumes responsibility for the achievement of their students</p> <p>5. The school leader and leadership team oversee the change process; action steps are consistently generated and monitored by the team; there is mixed support for any change initiative, and resisters somewhat negatively impact the process</p>	<p>1. A shared instructional vision, mission, and goals are informed by data and high expectations for all and developed inclusively with stakeholder groups; school goals set ambitious, achievable targets for academic and social outcomes; these are regularly revised</p> <p>2. Administrative team achieves buy-in from key stakeholders, including families, to work together to achieve school goals and targets; there is collective responsibility for school-wide teaching and learning goals</p> <p>3. Learning expectations are consistent, and applied to every student while pathways to achievement are differentiated</p> <p>4. The school community sees itself as an agent of change, reflecting the perception that the staff as a whole can execute required actions to impact student achievement; staff feel responsible for every student school-wide</p> <p>5. The leadership team oversees the change process; stakeholders inform change efforts and widely embrace change; leaders at every level minimize negative impact of change resisters</p>	<p>1. A shared instructional vision, mission, and goals are informed by data, beliefs, and values and play a defining and dynamic role in the school's culture and instructional improvement efforts; campus-wide sense of urgency serves as a call to action to all stakeholders that fosters a commitment to change and innovation</p> <p>2. Instructional vision and goals drive all action plans, school priorities, and planning; among stakeholders, there is a collective will and energy to work towards achieving shared goals</p> <p>3. There is collective ownership of high learning expectations for every learner</p> <p>4. There is a high level of empowerment and self-efficacy campus-wide; teachers, leaders, and students attempt challenging activities and persist in the face of setbacks</p> <p>5. The leadership team, with faculty input, artfully navigates the change process; stakeholders collaboratively plan, define, and take action; every stakeholder engages in ongoing monitoring and course corrections; results are sustainable</p>



Is every stakeholder actively supportive of a vision, mission, and key goals whose outcome is equitable academic and social excellence?

IMPROVING INSTRUCTION through clear expectations and analysis grounded in evidence



Emerging	Developing	Effective	Strategic	Transformative
<p>1. Instructional goals are listed in district- or school-wide planning documents</p> <p>2. Teacher professional learning (PL) occurs primarily as individual experiences. Teachers attend trainings and presentations with limited interest, coherence, sense of relevance, or opportunities to collaborate. PLCs are not established.</p> <p>3. Teachers have complete discretion to use curriculum that may or may not be aligned to state standards; there is wide variance of practice and rigor across classrooms; weak assessment results can be attributed to standards misalignment, undemanding curriculum, and low expectations for students</p> <p>4. Formal observation, supervision, and professional learning are conducted in accordance with district requirements as a perfunctory exercise; few teachers improve their instruction as an outcome of observations</p>	<p>1. Administrative team has an instructional focus and leads several opportunities for teachers to use data to plan and improve instructional practice</p> <p>2. Teacher PL is coherent, relevant, and connected to school vision and goals; PLCs meet and inconsistently use student work to analyze and improve instruction. Some teachers find value in the PLC structure.</p> <p>3. Some self-driven students are held to high expectations, rigorous instruction, and appropriately demanding curriculum; aligned instruction and benchmarks vary across teachers</p> <p>4. The administrative team, using a formal teacher evaluation system, conducts classroom observations to monitor and give feedback on instructional content and practices with little differentiation given for varying levels of teachers' performance; leaders rarely follow up with teachers to track responsiveness to feedback</p>	<p>1. The leadership team has an instructional focus that establishes common expectations for college- and career-aligned instruction; some teachers use data to improve instructional practice</p> <p>2. Teacher PL is coherent, relevant, and aligned to goals and yields demonstrable changes in teacher practice that results in improved student learning outcomes. Teachers meet on a regular basis in PLCs, using student work to analyze and improve instruction; many teachers perceive this to be a valuable use of time</p> <p>3. There is school-wide adoption of standards-aligned texts and district-recommended scope and sequence; some common benchmark assessments are in place; the curriculum is adopted, and standards-based instruction is appropriately demanding in many classrooms</p> <p>4. Within the formal teacher evaluation system, most teachers receive feedback and coaching that has the potential to improve instructional practice and student learning; observation and feedback drive the design of professional learning and collaborative planning</p>	<p>1. The instructional focus of the school is developed and driven by a broad base of leaders and teachers; consistent use of data improves instructional practice; focus may be informed by participation in leadership network improvement communities (NIC)</p> <p>2. Teacher PL is driven by teacher leaders and is deliberately designed to address inequitable student outcomes. Teachers collaborate in well-organized PLCs, using common, interim, standards-aligned benchmarks and student work to adapt curriculum, instructional resources, and instructional practices; the work of PLCs regularly informs subsequent instruction</p> <p>3. School uses a comprehensive vertical and horizontal scope and sequence of standards-based units and lessons, which lead to rich, relevant, and rigorous instruction anchored in equity; most teachers use common periodic benchmarks</p> <p>4. The leadership team implements both a formal observation and a feedback system to ensure that frequent classroom observations with every teacher are conducted; immediate, actionable coaching focused on developing a growth mindset and using an aligned observation tool deliberately shapes teaching practice</p>	<p>1. Rigorous and shared instructional focus and progress monitoring drives and improves instructional practice school-wide; students are included in goal-setting; school aligns work through active NIC engagement</p> <p>2. Teacher PL addresses inequity and results in significantly narrowing or eliminating of inequitable student outcomes. Collaboration permeates every aspect of the school; teachers see PLCs as essential to cultivating deep understanding of student achievement precisely in order to continuously refine instruction so that every student reaches accelerated goals</p> <p>3. A rigorous, standards-based curriculum is adopted school-wide, and common assessments that align to college and career ready standards set and track ambitious goals for both teachers and students that dramatically increase student achievement</p> <p>4. The leadership team extends the classroom observation and feedback system and professional learning schedule by including a peer observation process that allows teachers to share practices and engage in instructional dialogue and coaching</p>



Is every teacher continuously improving their instruction? Is every student provided equitable opportunities to work to their highest capabilities?

CREATING CULTURE that drives continuous improvement and is grounded in trusting, respectful, and collaborative relationships



Emerging	Developing	Effective	Strategic	Transformative
<p>1. Staff is indifferent to negative language and actions of colleagues and ignores outward demonstrations of bias toward student differences and learning</p> <p>2. Staff relationships are congenial; staff interactions tend to focus on topics other than the improvement of teacher practice</p> <p>3. School leaders strive to maintain a safe and orderly campus, attending to complaints; there are few systems to include teachers in decision-making</p> <p>4. Staff works in isolation outside of mandatory professional learning that could be described as “sit and get”</p> <p>5. Students experience a focus on discipline; they are acknowledged for good or bad behavior</p>	<p>1. Most staff and leaders can be described as working to serve the needs of self-driven and well-prepared students; there is some collaborative discussion about learner variability</p> <p>2. Staff relationships are collegial and non-confrontational, tending to focus on student behavior or skill deficits</p> <p>3. School leaders share previously made decisions with staff on a need-to-know basis; teachers are engaged in decisions that concern them personally</p> <p>4. All staff attends mandatory professional learning that could be described as collaborative and personalized to a small degree; some staff initiate collaborative work with peers</p> <p>5. Student success, with a focus on achievement, is celebrated periodically</p>	<p>1. The school is focused on improving equitable outcomes for students through intentionally targeted practices with impact measures</p> <p>2. Workplace conditions are perceived to be positive, fair, respectful, and collaborative; there is risk-taking and open communication of needs, concerns, expectations, equity, and practices among pockets of staff, students, and families</p> <p>3. Shared decision-making between staff and school leaders occurs primarily on less critical matters such as student assignment or ancillary material purchases</p> <p>4. Professional learning is collaborative, relevant, and engaging for many teachers; staff occasionally extend professional learning outside of school environment</p> <p>5. Students are occasionally acknowledged and celebrated formally with a focus on achievement, progress, and civic engagement; teachers are acknowledged as a collective unit or larger group</p>	<p>1. The school’s culture is the central driver of efforts to improve instruction and achieve growth for every student</p> <p>2. School atmosphere is non-bureaucratic, welcoming, upbeat, and solution-oriented; it is not uncommon for people to confront biased beliefs and practices with the intent to change behaviors</p> <p>3. Shared decision-making by faculty and leadership is regular practice and primarily addresses critical instructional matters and student behavior practices</p> <p>4. Professional learning and adult learning are emphasized and valued; there is an expectation, embraced by staff, that everyone engages in continuous learning</p> <p>5. Students are regularly acknowledged and celebrated formally and informally with a focus on achievement, progress, and civic engagement; there is some acknowledgement of individual teacher or team growth</p>	<p>1. The school’s culture amplifies energy and drives continuous improvement through collaboration and shared decision-making that contribute to the academic success of every student through multiple pathways</p> <p>2. A harmonious, vibrant environment exists wherein respect, trust, and equity are pervasive regardless of status or position as student, faculty, family, or community member</p> <p>3. The school collaboratively and systematically works to ensure the highest levels of stakeholder engagement and ownership in decision-making</p> <p>4. Staff independently seeks ongoing research-based and rigorous professional learning opportunities to remain current and to enhance instructional practice; highly valued professional learning is led by leaders and teachers and consistently transfers to improved practice</p> <p>5. Student and teacher mastery of academic and social skills, progress and goal attainment, and civic engagement are acknowledged and celebrated in formal and informal venues</p>

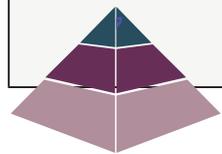


Does the school provide intellectually and emotionally stimulating communities that cultivate belonging and foster learning for every teacher and student?

PROMOTING LEADERSHIP in others so that everyone is engaged in school improvement and committed to student success and social justice



Emerging	Developing	Effective	Strategic	Transformative
<p>1. Staff's role in decision-making and in leadership is driven by district mandates</p> <p>2. Staff is involved in decisions that affect adult interests</p> <p>3. School leaders are valued primarily for their operational work and management skills; instructional decisions are left to individual teachers</p> <p>4. Professional learning for leadership is offered to school leaders at district-led meetings and from district supervisors; school leaders only build internal leadership capacity of staff through district-provided opportunities</p>	<p>1. Grade or dept. leaders, school teams, and a leadership team exist; the school leader drives their focus, roles, and responsibilities</p> <p>2. A few opportunities are provided for staff to participate in shared decision-making regarding needed changes based on data and school goals</p> <p>3. Staff rely on school leaders for general instructional support and are skeptical of the purpose of teacher leadership</p> <p>4. School leaders share best practices and their thinking behind decisions and actions in an effort to develop the leadership skills of a small subset of teachers (e.g. instructional leadership team)</p>	<p>1. Shared leadership is internalized throughout the school community as key stakeholders assume a variety of formal and informal leadership roles; teacher leaders weigh in on their focus, roles, and responsibilities</p> <p>2. Every staff member is encouraged to take an active role in regular decision-making</p> <p>3. Staff expects instructional leadership team members to engage in instructional leadership work directed by the school leader</p> <p>4. The school leader intentionally builds the leadership capacity of teachers and other school leaders to execute instructional leadership work</p>	<p>1. The instructional leadership team, including teacher leaders and school leaders, collaborate on their collective and individual foci, roles, and responsibilities</p> <p>2. There are participatory structures, dedicated time, and opportunities for staff to engage in instructional decisions</p> <p>3. Staff expects and appreciates the contributions of every leader to the instructional quality of the school in processes driven by an instructional leadership team</p> <p>4. The school leader builds leadership capacity of individuals based on individualized needs; school leader develops collective leadership capacity of the team; school leader periodically monitors and provides feedback on instructional leadership work</p>	<p>1. Leadership is practiced at every level of the school community, including teachers, students, and school leaders; roles and responsibilities are constructed to drive broad involvement and goal attainment</p> <p>2. Participatory structures supporting inquiry, reflection, and shared decision-making are consistently monitored and refined for instructional effectiveness and ability to drive goal attainment</p> <p>3. Expansive, collaborative leadership actions of teachers and school leaders serve as a driver that continually improves the quality of instruction, generating an optimal learning environment</p> <p>4. Leadership capacity in students, teachers, and school leaders is developed continuously; school leader consistently monitors and provides feedback on the instructional leadership work of others</p>

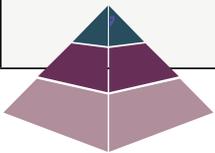


Does every teacher say there is strong teacher ownership of and opportunities for important leadership?

ALIGNING & MANAGING SYSTEMS to prioritize teacher development and accelerate student learning



Emerging	Developing	Effective	Strategic	Transformative
<p>1. School leader coordinates and directs the school program, and communication periodically flows from the school leader to staff</p> <p>2. The hiring process is undefined and inappropriately delegated; sometimes teachers are hired without school leader input or review</p> <p>3. School and staff schedules are designed to maximize convenience and attend to adult agendas (seniority, minimizing parental complaints, etc.)</p> <p>4. Teachers follow district-mandated processes to identify perfunctory performance goals</p> <p>5. School operations are not designed to align with student learning priorities, frequently interfering with instruction; instructional systems are vague or undefined; resource purchases and allocations are made by the school leader</p>	<p>1. Structures are in place to facilitate two-way regular communication between the leadership team and the school community</p> <p>2. New staff is interviewed and hired by school leader</p> <p>3. School schedule is designed to provide some opportunities for teacher collaboration; staffing decisions are made with some student needs in mind</p> <p>4. Underperforming teachers are reviewed and monitored with growth plans</p> <p>5. School-wide procedures exist for routine operations and are well known to staff; instructional systems are in place and used to some degree for both learning and resource expenditures</p>	<p>1. Ongoing two-way communication between leadership and staff is the norm</p> <p>2. The school leader and key staff members conduct hiring of new staff; the selection process results in mostly appropriate selections</p> <p>3. School schedule is designed to provide regular teacher collaboration; student needs are usually considered over adult needs in staffing and scheduling decisions</p> <p>4. Effective staff members are recognized and utilized; underperforming staff members are held accountable for growth by administrators</p> <p>5. School-wide procedures are designed to ensure smooth school operation with minimal instructional distraction; instructional systems rooted in data collection and analysis are utilized to support student learning; resources are allocated with some teacher leader input</p>	<p>1. School structures facilitate regular communication among all staff, enabling them to share and discuss critical information, to solve problems, and to strengthen working relationships</p> <p>2. Robust and defined selection process involving staff representatives is used to hire new staff; most candidates must demonstrate their skills as part of the process</p> <p>3. Scheduling is designed to accommodate weekly and consistent teacher collaboration; staffing efforts are made to match teachers to student populations based on student need</p> <p>4. Effective staff is critically deployed according to each individual's unique talents; the school leader works tirelessly to ensure underperforming teachers improve or are replaced by effective teachers</p> <p>5. School-wide procedures ensure the school operates with focus and purpose to maximize instructional time; instructional systems are deliberately and strategically used to support teacher growth and student learning; resources are allocated with significant teacher leader input</p>	<p>1. Multiple modes of strategic communication are used to reinforce priorities and key messages; staff regularly provides input about communication effectiveness</p> <p>2. The school pursues high-quality potential candidates who undergo a rigorous selection process that includes key stakeholder participation; onboarding and support systems lead to the development and retention of almost all high-performing staff</p> <p>3. Scheduling, developed with staff input, accommodates multiple opportunities weekly for teacher collaboration; artful, data-driven staffing and rostering results in targeted placement of teachers to ensure every student has the opportunity to meet grade-level expectations</p> <p>4. Performance management allows teachers to hold each other accountable to reach highest performance and pursue continuous improvement</p> <p>5. School-wide procedures are systematized, informed by school stakeholders, and ensure the school is maximized for instruction; robust instructional systems, utilized by all staff, drive systematic improvement for teaching and learning and resource allocation</p>



Are the systems of the school creating optimal and equitable conditions for quality teaching and learning to occur?