

Sample Resource

Contact ACB Consulting for the Comprehensive Toolkit

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COMPLETE TOOLKIT

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Part One: Our Approach

About ACB Consulting

ACB Consulting was established in 2012 by owner Ann Cummins Bogan. Ann is a former educator passionate about the need to continually refine systems and practices to meet the increasingly diverse needs of all students.

Ann has worked with many experienced researchers and consultants who served as mentors and thought partners. As a result, consulting services provided by ACB Consulting are grounded in theory and research about organizational change, systems effectiveness, and pedagogy.

Core Beliefs that drive our work:

- ❖ Equity is foundational to excellence and must be embedded in all aspects of the system, it is not a separate initiative.
- ❖ All systems can improve.
- ❖ Continuous improvement is a journey, and no matter where you are, there is a path forward.
- ❖ Collaboration and shared decision-making are critical for authentic engagement and mutual accountability of all responsible for meeting the needs of students.

Purpose of the Toolkit

This toolkit was designed to provide a clear plan for establishing or refining a leadership team focused on *continuous school improvement*. Guidance to teams to clarify their purpose and refine team operations and logistics is included. Regardless of where school leadership teams are in the continuous improvement journey, this resource will help to increase the intentionality of their work in establishing student-centered goals, developing indicators of success, and implementing aligned strategies to achieve desired outcomes.

Our Assumptions

ACB Consulting works from the following assumptions:

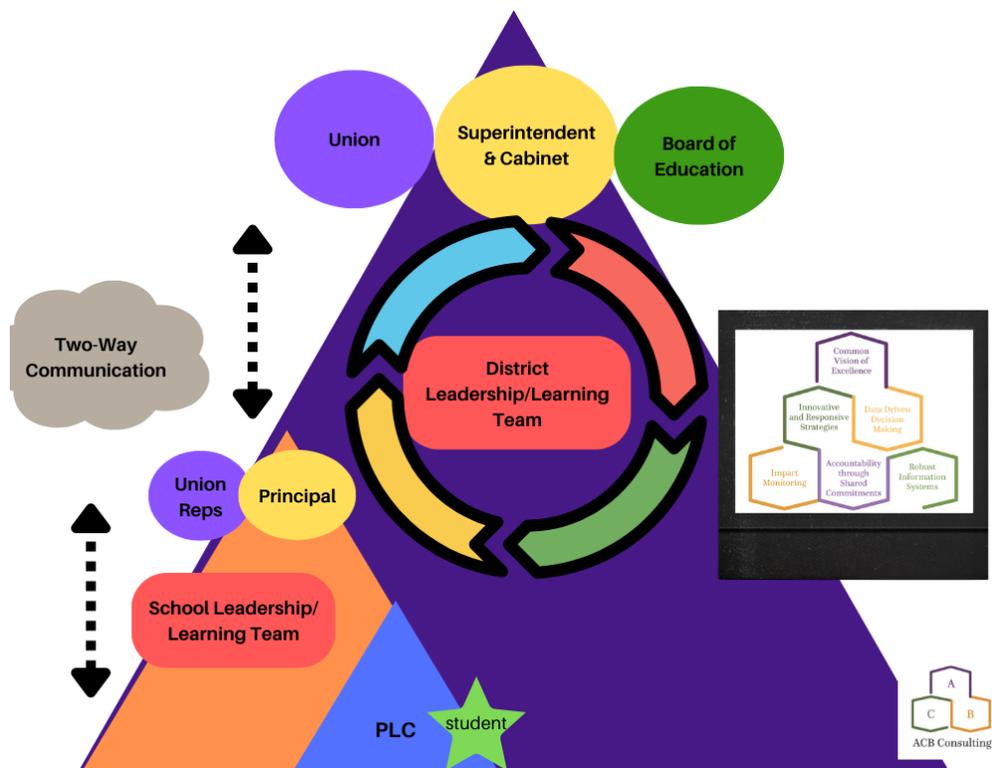
- ❖ The primary focus of schools is to ensure all students are authentically engaged in learning experiences that are designed to positively impact their learning and overall well-being.
- ❖ Each school has a unique set of demands driven by student needs and the capacity of school administration, faculty, and support staff to address the needs of their students.
- ❖ The most effective strategies for addressing the needs of students are intentional and data-driven, and require collaboration and shared decision-making.
- ❖ Engaging diverse partners in determining school priorities and strategies for improvement and monitoring impact of action steps toward goals fosters mutual accountability for student outcomes.
- ❖ Typically information about goals and strategies is known by the leaders of the system and is not widely broadcasted or known among all members of the school community.

A Systems Approach

The refinement of leadership structures at the site level is most impactful when they exist as part of a systems approach, and the goals and priorities of the school district are integrated into the work of the school leadership teams. The integration of district goals and school goals creates coherence, alignment, and a common vision for engaging all voices.

In a district-wide system approach for continuous improvement, the SLT interprets district priorities and initiatives to develop school-level goals and implementation plans. These goals are driven by data and clearly reflect the diverse needs of students at the school. Members of the SLT develop processes to focus collaborative conversations centered on school goals among teachers and support staff in collaborative grade-level and department teams.

Two-way information systems are intentional and ensure progress toward goals is being shared effectively from grade-level and department teams to the school leadership team, which informs school-level professional learning and targeted support for educators. In some schools, these grade level or department teams are referred to as *Professional Learning Communities*. Data-driven cycles of inquiry focused on instruction in these teams or PLCs serve as the driver of continuous improvement in high performing schools.



ACB's Building Blocks of Excellence

ACB's *Building Blocks of Excellence* provide a framework focused on six key components to effectively drive the design and progress monitoring of school leadership teams to ensure continuous improvement, accountability, and impact. These six components serve as the foundation to design, assess, and continually improve School Leadership Teams throughout this toolkit.



A clearly defined picture of excellence encompassing values and diverse perspectives throughout the system is essential in realizing a common vision.



Leaders must know where they are headed, what they hope to accomplish, and the tools, strategies, and pathways that will get them to their destination. Aligning goals and integrating time, resources, and talent must be intentional to impact change and to improve systems.

Defining shared expectations for collaboration and teamwork builds trust. A common vision fosters a mutually supportive environment and shared accountability that maximizes engagement of all team members.

The word “data” has become a trigger for many educators and is often perceived as a judgment rather than a driver for excellence. Team members must understand that “data” simply refers to information that is necessary to design actions that will impact change. A growth mindset and spaces for vulnerability foster an authentic and critical examination of data to drive improvement.



Working collaboratively to identify accessible data sources, develop authentic artifacts that reflect progress toward goals, and build structures and processes for examining data to drive improvement, reinforces a common focus and shared priorities.

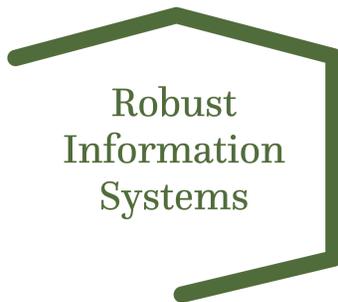


The ongoing need to develop authentic ways to engage learners has never been more urgent. Research and theory about the most effective ways to accelerate learning for all students are readily available. Still, they are not always accessible to truly transform instructional practices to impact student learning positively.

Educators need time and discretion to clarify learning outcomes, develop success metrics that inform assessment, and design engaging and relevant learning experiences for students.

Accountability is critical when working to continually refine and adapt the way we work collaboratively to achieve goals. The most effective strategies for establishing shared accountability is ensuring all parties know the intended purpose of the work, and establishing the roles and responsibilities of team members.

Establishing standard practices to assess the work of the team, reflect on individual strengths and challenges, and create mutually supportive feedback loops ensures personal and team commitment to the work.



Typically information about goals and strategies is known by the leaders of the system and is not widely broadcasted or known among all members of the school community. Robust two-way information systems intentionally seek diverse perspectives to inform the decision-making. provide timely updates on progress toward goals.

When these structures exist in a school, the goals and plans for continuous improvement are meaningful, relevant, practical and reflect the experiences and perspectives of those most closely connected to students and families.

In order for collaboration and teamwork to be effective, there must be ongoing reflection on the impact of initiatives and strategies to achieve goals.

Result oriented cycles of inquiry with established intervals for analyzing impact, drive the flexibility and responsiveness needed to address the complexities associated with teaching and learning.

Establishing and communicating processes for teams to evaluate the impact of their work informs potential refinements to strategies, and helps prioritize intentional support for impactful professional growth and development.





Part Two: Assessing Your Work and Developing a Theory of Action

A Theory of Action

Shifting Leadership from Logistics to Learning

School leadership teams are common in schools. Typically, these teams focus on logistics and one way information sharing from the principal to the team members. In a systems approach to continuous improvement, these teams must be refined to focus on priorities for teaching and learning.

A Process for Continuous Improvement

Too often, we identify and implement strategies without fully understanding the root causes of the challenges we are working to address, and may not have a clear picture of the goals we are trying to achieve. While there may be short-term or random indicators of success, focusing on actions without knowing the goals for the actions does not support a systems approach for continuous improvement.

Assessing the current state of the school leadership team and the ways school goals drive their work, will inform a theory of action for continuous improvement. Clarifying current practice of school leadership teams, determining goals for improvement, and developing an action plan to realize the goals will ensure positive outcomes for student learning and system alignment.



**An Example of a Continuous Improvement plan for a School Leadership Team
Moving from Logistics to Learning**

Current State	Goals and Actions If we,	Desired State then...
<p>The SLT meets regularly and is made up of diverse partners..</p> <p>Agenda items focus on building operations or staff concerns.</p> <p>The primary function of the meeting is for the principal to disseminate information.</p> <p>The team does not regularly communicate with the rest of the staff.</p> <p>There is not a clear purpose for the team.</p>	<p>Develop a shared school mission, and establish shared school goals to positively impact outcomes for all students.</p> <p>Analyze school-level data to identify the comprehensive needs of students and identify resources for individual teacher data analysis to drive instruction.</p> <p>Define effective PLC practices and expectations for grade level or department collaboration.</p> <p>Refine the SLT agenda to ensure time is allotted for sharing from and across a collaborative grade level or department teams.</p> <p>Develop a calendar for professional learning utilizing staff meetings and other collaborative time.</p>	<p>The SLT sets the direction by articulating a clear mission and vision for the school.</p> <p>The team defines roles and responsibilities of its members and regularly evaluates the effectiveness of the team to ensure personal and collective commitment to the work.</p> <p>The team collaborates to identify and analyze data sources and develops school goals and action steps to maximize student development and growth so each and every student can succeed.</p> <p>The team establishes a mutually supportive and collaborative learning environment among all staff through results oriented cycles of inquiry with established intervals that fosters shared accountability .</p> <p>The team creates a two-way information system to gather the diverse perspectives and experiences of all staff that informs decision-making, goals and action plans, and provides timely updates on progress toward goals.</p>

Developing your Theory of Action

Step 1: Reflection on the Current State

This reflection tool can be used to assess the **current state** of your school as it relates to the **Six Building Blocks of Excellence**.

What is our current state?
School Team Self-Assessment

Building Blocks of Excellence	0 <i>Not Yet</i>	1 <i>Planned Not Implemented</i>	2 <i>Implemented</i>	3 <i>Implemented and Evaluated</i>
COMMON VISION				
1. The team has defined a common vision of excellence that encompasses school values and diverse perspectives.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
2. Specific goals, tools, and strategies have been developed, and implemented to drive intentional systems improvement.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
3. There is a shared understanding of collaboration and teamwork that are leveraged throughout the system to continually refine practice and achieve common goals.				

Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
4. There is a culture of trust and mutual accountability among members of the team.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
Building Blocks of Excellence	0 <i>Not Yet</i>	1 <i>Planned Not Implemented</i>	2 <i>Implemented</i>	3 <i>Implemented and Evaluated</i>
DATA DRIVEN DECISION MAKING				
5. The team works collaboratively to determine data sources and develop authentic artifacts to inform goals and monitor continuous improvement.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
6. The team established a process that regularly analyzes data to inform practice, and reinforce a common focus and shared priorities.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
7. Growth mindset and spaces for vulnerability are established to foster an authentic and critical examination of data to drive improvement.				

Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
8. Data analysis informs support for staff and students, and refinements to goals and strategies when appropriate.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
Building Blocks of Excellence	0 <i>Not Yet</i>	1 <i>Planned Not Implemented</i>	2 <i>Implemented</i>	3 <i>Implemented and Evaluated</i>
INNOVATIVE RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES				
9. There are common expectations for robust Tier 1 instruction that is appropriately challenging and relevant for all students to engage in learning.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
10. Educators have time and discretion to clarify learning outcomes and design lessons that are reflective of the standards of the discipline and appropriate to students' levels of knowledge.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
11. There are school wide expectations that foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all staff and students.				

Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
12. Educators are engaged in school level data analysis and use aligned formative assessments to monitor student learning and make refinements to instruction.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
Building Blocks of Excellence	0 <i>Not Yet</i>	1 <i>Planned Not Implemented</i>	2 <i>Implemented</i>	3 <i>Implemented and Evaluated</i>
ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH SHARED COMMITMENTS				
13. All staff know the intended purpose of the work, the roles and responsibilities for team members, and are invested in school goals and strategies				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
14. The team adapts and refines approaches for achieving goals when necessary, and each team member knows their role in impacting change.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
15. Standard practices are established to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assess the work of the team ➤ Reflect on individual strengths and challenges ➤ Create mutually supportive feedback loops to ensure 				

personal and team commitment to the work				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
Building Blocks of Excellence	0 <i>Not Yet</i>	1 <i>Planned Not Implemented</i>	2 <i>Implemented</i>	3 <i>Implemented and Evaluated</i>
ROBUST INFORMATION SYSTEMS				
16. Robust two-way systems intentionally seek diverse perspectives to inform decision-making.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
17. Robust two-way systems for information sharing are established and provide timely updates on progress toward goals, and refinements to plans to all partners.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
18. School goals and plans for continuous improvement are meaningful, relevant, practical and reflect the experiences and perspectives of those most closely connected to students and families.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				

19. All staff “own” the goals and strategies and know how their work contributes to the intended outcomes.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
Building Blocks of Excellence	0 <i>Not Yet</i>	1 <i>Planned Not Implemented</i>	2 <i>Implemented</i>	3 <i>Implemented and Evaluated</i>
IMPACT MONITORING				
20. There are established processes for reflection to maximize collaboration, team effectiveness, and shared accountability.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
21. Teams engage in regular cycles of inquiry and data analysis to evaluate the impact of their work on teaching and learning.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				
22. Specific and regular cycles of inquiry inform refinements to strategies and help to determine priorities for support and ongoing professional growth and development.				
Notes/Evidence to reflect our assessment.				

Meet the ACB Consulting Team



Ann Cummins Bogan has worked in education for over 30 years. Ann began as a teacher and taught in both a large urban school district and a small suburban school district. As a teacher leader, Ann was active in many school and district initiatives and worked as a mentor to support new teachers. As the teacher co-chair on a district committee to design and implement a teacher evaluation system, Ann developed professional development focused on Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching.

As a consultant, Ann worked for several years with The Danielson Group to support the large-scale implementation of the Framework for Teaching. This included focusing on a culture of collaboration and using professional standards as a driver for reflection and professional growth. Ann also provided leadership coaching and facilitated professional learning in schools and districts across the country. As a senior consultant for The Consortium for Educational Change, Ann implemented strategies to foster positive labor-management relations in districts and schools, and systems change focused on improving outcomes for students.

Ann's partnerships are currently focused on establishing innovative strategies to achieve school and district goals in a climate of uncertainty and unprecedented strains on the profession. This includes support at all levels of the system, from the classroom to the central office.

Ann has a Master's Degree in The Art of Teaching and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Educational Leadership from National Louis University.

Tina Nall serves as the executive assistant to Ann Cummins Bogan Consulting. Tina earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Middle-Level Education from Lourdes University in Sylvania, Ohio, and taught 4th and 5th grade at a Toledo public charter school for two years. While at the school, Tina served on the building leadership team, coached middle school girls’ basketball and volleyball, and co-coached the local chapter of Girls on the Run.

Tina left the classroom to explore her interest and expand her knowledge in systems thinking and education reform by pursuing her Master’s Degree in Education Policy from the University of Washington. While in graduate school, Tina worked with the University’s pipeline project, *Riverways Education Partnerships*, facilitating an undergraduate course called “Challenges and Opportunities in K-12 education.” Tina also spent two years in the corporate world, expanding her systems perspective by serving as an Office Services assistant and then an Attorney Recruiting assistant at Fenwick & West Law Firm.



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Email us for a consultation, or for any questions on the toolkit:
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