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Leading Change in School Culture

A Professional Development
Toolkit to Assist Principals with
Identifying, Influencing and
Avoiding Pitfalls Associated
with Changing School Culture

Prepared by the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement for the Principal Professional Learning Community, as part of the Wallace Foundation's Principal Pipeline Initiative

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Icon Legend



Distribute Handout



Individual Reading
Activity



Individual Writing
Activity



Pair Activity



Small Group
Activity



Large Group
Activity

Introduction and Facilitator Guide



Leading Change in School Culture

Workshop Objectives:

- Understand the importance of school culture to school performance
- Assess positive and negative impacts of school culture
- Understand how school stakeholders influence school culture
- Learn through feedback and interaction with peers
- Learn new skills and tools to assess and address culture that can be applied in a practical school setting

Participant Agenda:

- I. Introduction
- II. Reflecting on School Culture
- III. Applied Learning Using Vignettes
- IV. Vignette Analysis: Circle of Influence
- V. Short-term Action Planning: Addressing Your School Culture
- VI. Evaluation and Adjourn

Leading Change in School Culture:

A Professional Development Toolkit for identifying, influencing and avoiding the common pitfalls associated with changing school culture.

Intended Audience:

Transitioning Principals, to include first time or experienced principals moving to a new school

Purpose:

Creating a climate hospitable to education is one of five key practices identified by the Wallace Foundation in the January 2013 publication *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning*.

As cited in the recent article “*The Effective Principal*” written by Pamela Mendels in the February, 2012 issue of JSD,

The University of Washington researchers went on to list the key elements of a climate hospitable to learning: “a sense of student and staff safety; respect for all members of the school community, without regard to the professional status or position; an upbeat, welcoming, solution-oriented, no-blame, professional environment; an effort to invite and involve staff in various school-wide functions; and a parallel outreach to students that engaged and involved them in a variety of activities” (Portin et al., 2009, p. 59).

The purpose of this Professional Learning Toolkit is to provide transitioning principals with skills and resources to navigate the unique challenges of shifting a school’s culture. The intangible nature and inherent complexity of culture can make this change one of the most difficult tasks a principal faces.

This professional learning toolkit provides the following resources:

- Fictitious vignettes to explore the positive and negative influences of school culture and apply this learning to current leadership opportunities.
- Reflective questions to guide discussion of both fictitious and real experiences.
- Assessment tools to support principals with identifying their school’s circle of influence as well as the positive and negative aspects of a school culture.
- A framework to support short term planning to enhance school culture.
- A facilitator guide including timed agendas and activities.

Acknowledgements

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Martha Greenway	Group Facilitator

Full Day Facilitator Guide

Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
A	Overview and Warm-up	25 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome the group and introduce yourself and your interest/experience with the topic of school culture 2. Review the agenda and logistics 3. If group is unfamiliar with each other, manage introductions or icebreaker activity 4. Distribute Handout A1: Reflection on Change in School Culture 5. Ask participants to reflect individually and write their responses to the items on the handout (10 minutes) 6. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their experiences in pairs (10 minutes) 	Handout A1: Reflection on Change in School Culture
	Position Statement	25 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute Handout A2: Culture Position Statement 2. Ask participants to read the Position Statement individually and write notes in response to the Guiding Question (10 minutes) 3. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their experiences in small groups (10 minutes) 	Handout A2: Position Statement: Leadership and Culture
B	Applied Learning using Vignettes Part I	45 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the next segment as follows: We are going to work through some fictitious vignettes to think about the impact of school culture. While the stories are fabricated, the elements of these vignettes all occurred in real school settings. After lunch we will practice the use of some tools to effectively address the culture of these schools. 	





Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
B cont'd	Applied Learning using Vignettes Part 1		2. Distribute Handout B.1.a: Gladiola Heights Vignette to half of the participants, and Handout B.1.b Park Bridge Vignette to the other half of the participants 3. Direct participants to read through their vignette and consider the discussion questions at the end 4. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their experiences in small groups	Handout B.1.a: Gladiola Heights Vignette Part 1 Handout B.1.b: Park Bridge Vignette Part 1
Break		15 minutes		
B cont'd	Applied Learning using Vignettes Part 2	30 minutes	1. Distribute Handout B.2.a to the Gladiola Heights group and Handout B.2.b to the Park Bridge Group 2. Direct participants to read through their vignette and consider the discussion questions at the end 3. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their experiences in small groups	Handout B.2.a: Gladiola Heights Vignette Part 2 Handout B.2.b: Park Bridge Vignette Part 2
	Applied Learning using Vignette Part 3	30 minutes	1. Distribute Handout B.3.a to the Gladiola Heights group and Handout B.3.b to the Park Bridge Group 2. Direct participants to read through their vignette and consider the discussion questions at the end 3. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their experiences in small groups	Handout B.3.a: Gladiola Heights Vignette Part 3 Handout B.3.b: Park Bridge Vignette Part 3
	Applied Learning using Vignettes Wrap Up	30 minutes	Using a pre-selected protocol appropriate to your group, ask each discussion group to share one key learning from the Vignette activity	



Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
Lunch		30-45 minutes		
C	Vignette Analysis: Circle of Influence	45 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group participants for this activity. If you wish, you may keep participants in the same groups as the previous activity or you may rearrange them. They must stay with others who read the same vignette in the previous activity. 2. Distribute Handout C.1 Circle of Influence 3. Review the concept of a Circle of Influence using the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •School culture is created by people •Those people can be within the school or outside of the school •The diagram in Handout C.1 represents some of the common stakeholders that influence culture •The arrows flowing in indicate that these individuals shape the culture •The arrows going out indicate that if the culture is changed (in this case by the principal) the stakeholder groups will react 4. Explain the activity as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Working in your groups, complete the chart on page 2 of Handout C.1 Determine how each of these stakeholder groups influenced the pre-existing culture described in the vignette, and how they responded to the change in culture after the new principal took action. If the vignette does not explicitly state how a stakeholder group reacted, discuss how you think they might have reacted •Make notes of your ideas on Handout C.1 	Handout C.1: Circle of Influence for Vignette Activity





Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
C cont'd			<p>Optional Step 4 Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Working in your groups, each person assumes a role of one of the stakeholder groups that influenced and/or reacted to the culture •(Process note:These roles could be selected by the participants, index cards could be created in advance with the roles assigned for people to pull from a stack.) •Describe to the rest of the group how you felt about the school before the new principal arrived, how you felt about the actions of the new principal, and why you reacted as you did •Use the chart on page 2 to record your discussion of Handout C.1 	
D	Short-term Action Plan: Assess Culture and Set Priorities	45 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute Handout D.1: Short Term Action Plan Worksheet 2. Read the directions for Step 1 3. Provide time for participants to record their initial observations, evidence, consequences and benefits (15 minutes) 4. Read the directions for Step 2 Ask participants to identify ONE priority issue to work through in today's session 5. Allow time for participants to select their priority issue (5 minutes) 6. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol for pairs or groups of three that is appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their priority (from Step 2) and the Observations, Evidence and Consequences and Benefits that underlie this priority (from Step 1) (20 minutes.) 	Handout D.1: Short Term Action Plan Worksheet

Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
Break		15 minutes		
D cont'd	Short-term Action Plan: Assess Circle of Influence, Develop Stakeholder Engagement Approach and Develop Action Plan	105 minutes	<p>1. Read the instructions for Step 3.</p> <p>2. Allow participants time to make appropriate notes on their worksheet regarding the Circle of Influence for their Priority Issue (15 minutes)</p> <p>3. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their Circle of Influence with the same groups as the previous exercise (15 minutes)</p> <p>4. Read the instructions for Step 4</p> <p>5. Allow participants time to complete Step 4, focusing on their selected priority (10 minutes)</p> <p>6. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their plans to engage the stakeholders with the same groups as the previous exercise (15 minutes)</p> <p>7. Read the instructions for Step 5</p> <p>8. Allow participants time to develop a possible Action Plan (15 minutes)</p> <p>9. Using the same groupings as the previous activity, use a pre-selected consultative protocol for the pair or groups to provide feedback and suggestions on each participant's action plan (25 minutes)</p>	Handout D.2: Short Term Action Plan Worksheet
	Short Term Action Planning Tool to Address School Culture: Wrap Up	45 minutes	Using a pre-selected facilitative process, allow each participant or group to offer one key learning from the Short Term Action Plan activities	





Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
E	Evaluation and Adjourn	10 minutes	Ask each participant to complete a workshop evaluation before departing	Handout E.1: Workshop evaluation

Overview



Section A Facilitator Guide

Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
A	Overview and Warm-up	25 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome the group and introduce yourself and your interest/experience with the topic of school culture 2. Review the agenda and logistics 3. If group is unfamiliar with each other, manage introductions or icebreaker activity 4. Distribute Handout A1: Reflection on Change in School Culture 5. Ask participants to reflect individually and write their responses to the items on the handout (10 minutes) 6. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their experiences in pairs (10 minutes) 	Handout A1: Reflection on Change in School Culture
	Position Statement	25 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute Handout A2: Culture Position Statement 2. Ask participants to read the Position Statement individually and write notes in response to the Guiding Question (10 minutes) 3. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their experiences in small groups (10 minutes) 	Handout A2: Position Statement: Leadership and Culture



Reflection on Change in School Culture

Read the following statements and make notes about your response, to assist you in sharing this reflection with others. These notes are only for you – this reflection tool will not be provided to anyone else.

I
Describe a situation where you led or experienced a change in school culture.

2

How did the school community (including staff, students, teachers, others) react to this change initially?

3

What were the end results and what did you learn from the process?

Position Statement: Leadership and Culture

Read the statement below. Make notes of your response to the Guiding Question below in order to share your thoughts with others in your session.

In order for a school to achieve and sustain high levels of success for students, the leader must be intentional, transparent, and strategic in developing, modeling and maintaining a strong culture. A strong culture is demonstrated through high expectations, purposeful engagement, and mutual trust of all stakeholders including students, staff and the community.

- Culture is a mixture of leadership, relationships, expectations, beliefs and values.
- Effective cultures consist of a community of learners with staff, students, parents and community members collaborating towards common goals.
- Strong, intentional leadership is required to guide the complicated process of assessing the school culture and leading necessary changes.
- Educators pursue a clear, shared purpose where everyone is involved in collaborative activities, which are focused on specific learning targets.
- High expectations are set for everyone in a supportive, positive and collaborative learning environment.
- Building an effective culture requires a collective commitment to continuous improvement.

Guiding Question:
What resonates with you about this statement and why?

Guiding Question: cont'd

What resonates with you about this statement and why?

Applied Learning Vignettes



Section B Facilitator Guide

Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
B	Applied Learning using Vignettes Part I	45 minutes	<p>1. Describe the next segment as follows: We are going to work through some fictitious vignettes to think about the impact of school culture. While the stories are fabricated, the elements of these vignettes all occurred in real school settings. After lunch we will practice the use of some tools to effectively address the culture of these schools.</p>	
			<p>2. Distribute Handout B.1.a: Gladiola Heights Vignette to half of the participants, and Handout B.1.b Park Bridge Vignette to the other half of the participants</p> <p>3. Direct participants to read through their vignette and consider the discussion questions at the end</p> <p>4. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their experiences in small groups</p>	<p>Handout B.1.a: Gladiola Heights Vignette Part I</p> <p>Handout B.1.b: Park Bridge Vignette Part I</p>
Break		15 minutes		



Section B Facilitator Guide



Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
B cont'd	Applied Learning using Vignettes Part 2	30 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute Handout B.2.a to the Gladiola Heights group and Handout B.2.b to the Park Bridge Group 2. Direct participants to read through their vignette and consider the discussion questions at the end 3. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their experiences in small groups 	<p>Handout B.2.a: Gladiola Heights Vignette Part 2</p> <p>Handout B.2.b: Park Bridge Vignette Part 2</p>
	Applied Learning using Vignette Part 3	30 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute Handout B.3.a to the Gladiola Heights group and Handout B.3.b to the Park Bridge Group 2. Direct participants to read through their vignette and consider the discussion questions at the end 3. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their experiences in small groups 	<p>Handout B.3.a: Gladiola Heights Vignette Part 3</p> <p>Handout B.3.b: Park Bridge Vignette Part 3</p>
	Applied Learning using Vignettes Wrap Up	30 minutes	Using a pre-selected protocol appropriate to your group, ask each discussion group to share one key learning from the Vignette activity	
Lunch		30-45 minutes		

VIGNETTE

Gladiola Heights Middle School

PART 1

When you walk through its colorful streets on the weekend, you can see why Gladiola Heights is pictured on many postcards. The dense, urban neighborhood is renowned for its historic Victorian architecture and bustling multi-cultural neighborhood activities, including a Saturday Farmer’s Market and summer music festival.

Gladiola Heights Middle School has anchored the neighborhood for nearly 40 years, but for a while, it seemed that the good years for GHMS had passed. Test results were poor, the student body had little racial or economic diversity, the facilities were antiquated, and many families were leaving the area to get in “better” school districts. It’s a story familiar to many—faded glory in the midst of urban poverty.

Then, principal Henry Edwards arrived with a vision. About ten years ago, he spearheaded an effort to form a “school within a school”—a performing arts magnet school that would attract a diverse group of students to the school and revitalize school spirit and performance.

Mr. Edwards was instrumental in securing corporate funds to build a beautiful fully equipped, new arts wing, which brought regional attention to GHMS. The Cookland Review and Channel 9 News praised the concept of the Performing Arts Magnet (PAM) and did features on some of the respected teachers who had joined the faculty. Community pride rose.

Ten years later, the PAM program continues to be featured in local press and celebrated by the school district. Due to its features and reputation, the PAM program is popular and competitive. It has a diverse group of applicants from throughout the district. Applicants who audition and meet certain criteria are selected through a lottery. Once admitted, PAM students who gain the prestigious admission receive free transportation; attend all their classes in the new wing; and enjoy an integrated, project-based curriculum, resources donated by community partners, and great teachers.

GHMS QUICK FACTS

- ✓ 800 students
- ✓ 200 of those in Performing Arts Magnet (school within a school)
- ✓ Established, low-income neighborhood
- ✓ 50% of student population is economically disadvantaged

Some of that prestige has rubbed off on the rest of the school, as GHMS has some of the top aggregate standardized test scores in the metro area.

Mr. Edwards is well loved by the vast majority of students and parents. Amber, a recent graduate of the magnet program and class president, shared the following, “I had a great experience at Gladiola. For the last three years, I have been with the same group of really good friends who care about learning, and have had teachers who really challenged us. And some of the other kids are really funny. They made the electives entertaining.” The PTA board is almost exclusively run by PAM parents, many of whom consider the “neighborhood” GHMS as an uncomfortable and lesser partner. These vocal parent leaders are not too eager to reveal either the inequality in the two student populations or the fact that their own children might do just as well or better at other schools. Similarly, the faculty in both wings is fairly complacent. 7th grade team lead Julio Williams speaks for the majority when he says, “GHMS is simply one of the best schools in the state. I wish we could bottle up what makes us great and sell it!”

TIME FOR A CHANGE

There have been changes in Cookland County Schools and changes in Gladiola Height MS. The new superintendent, Dr. Han, has decided that while Mr. Edwards did a great job in bringing the PAM to life, he is not the right person to take ALL of GHMS to a higher level of achievement. Mr. Edwards “retired” to the great regret of the majority of teachers and parents.

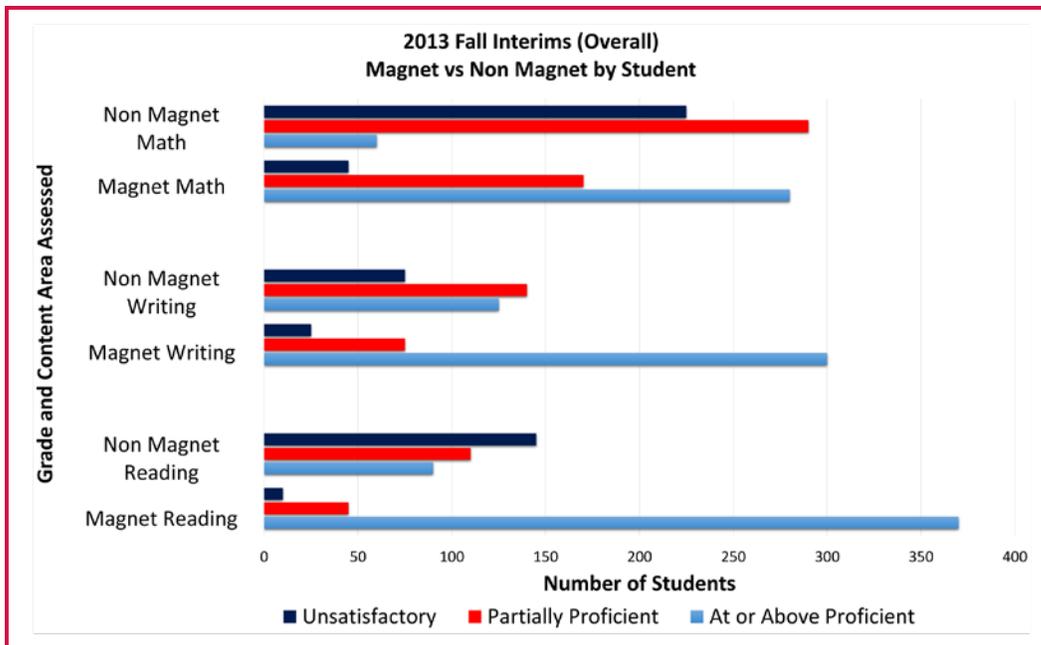
The community was assured that they would have input into the characteristics of the new principal. A Town Hall meeting was held where the community voiced their preferences for an experienced school leader with an established reputation within the school district and a strong background in performing arts.

Dr. Han has recruited Sophia Brown, a dynamic recent transplant from Phoenix with a solid track record of improving student achievement but no experience in performing arts. Unbeknownst to the community and faculty, Dr. Han has met with Ms. Brown several times to explain that Mr. Edwards was actually encouraged to resign so that a new leader could be recruited to change the culture and improve results for all students. Dr. Han decided to forgo the usual principal application and interview process and make a direct appointment of Sophia Brown as the principal of Gladiola Heights.

Before school ended, Ms. Brown was introduced to the school community. She was particularly perplexed by a comment from one of the students in her meeting with the Student Council. Jevon made the following statement, “I am a cross-over. I used to be in the neighborhood program. I like my teachers and my classes now, but I miss my friends from last year. We don’t get to hang out together during school. I don’t like to talk them about my classes because they don’t get to do the same things I get to.”

PEELING BACK THE LAYERS

Sophia was anxious to sit down and examine the student performance data at Gladiola Heights. Dr. Han had indicated his dissatisfaction with student achievement at the school and she was anxious to dig into it. She did not have to dig far. She quickly began to see that GHMS is two schools on one property, significantly unequal—a “neighborhood” school and a “magnet” school. “Neighborhood” students still attend school in the old building, and they do not share any teachers, facilities, or classes with the PAM students. Disaggregation of data reveals some stunning patterns: The neighborhood school has greater levels of poverty, fewer students in gifted or advanced classes, and far lower levels of mastery in ALL subjects on standardized tests.



Of course, neighborhood students are welcome to apply to the magnet, but only 15% of neighborhood students are chosen each year. “Neighborhood” students are primarily in classes designated as on-level, whereas magnet students are primarily in gifted or above-level classes.

When comparing the PAM students to demographically similar students at other middle schools in the district, their performance on standardized tests is higher in reading but lower in math. So, even though PAM remains highly regarded, the hoped-for gains for the neighborhood have eroded over the years, with PAM only providing a veneer of promise over the same-old, same-old for the majority of students.

Gladiola Heights Discussion Questions - Part I

What are your observations about this situation?

- What is working well?
- Where are the challenges?

How would you describe this culture?

Gladiola Heights Discussion Questions - Part I

How is culture impacting the school?

If you were the principal, what would you address first?

VIGNETTE

Park Bridge Elementary School

PART 1

“This lovely area,” explained real estate agent Heather Sales as she cruised through suburban Bannerton, “is where many teachers live, because they want their own children to go to the best school in the area.” She nodded toward the fact sheet in Robert’s hand. “You’ll notice that they have the overall top achievement scores in Northland County almost every year.”

Her client, Robert Graham, gazed out the window at the well-kept older homes on the tree-lined street. It looked so peaceful—and charming! No typical suburban tract houses, but a mixture of bungalows, small ranch homes, and larger colonials. It looked to be all single-family homes. Nice.

Heather continued, “There are great parks, and you’ll meet people from all walks of life here, and I know you will love Park Bridge Elementary School for your Jason. The faculty there are the best, and the whole school is like an extended family. For example—and this is just one example, you’ll see—Ms. Farragut teaches third grade at PBES and serves as a liaison to the Bannertown Chamber of Commerce. And here is the school now...”

She pointed out a bright green and white banner in front of the school proudly proclaiming it a “School of Excellence.” Similar banners lined the drop-off area. Robert noted that the year on the banner was ten years ago, but he supposed that showed that the school had been exemplary for some time. The school’s marquee said, “We’ll miss you, Mrs. Atiba!” Robert asked about it.

“Mrs. Atiba just retired. She was the principal for 20 years! Terrific, terrific lady and a great leader. We’re really lucky, though. The new principal, Barry Diaz, was extremely successful at Blessing Elementary, and we’re fortunate to get him. Of course, Park Bridge is so great all around, it could practically run itself!”

TIME FOR A CHANGE

The new principal, Mr. Diaz, also continued to hear great things. In his first two weeks, he learned that there are a lot of active leaders at PBES. Teachers act as grade-level chairs, PTA committee heads, and community organizers.

PBES QUICK FACTS

- ✓ 600 students
- ✓ Suburban area of mixed income, single-family homes
- ✓ Student achievement, faculty performance, and leadership all viewed as excellent
- ✓ School of Excellence in 2004

He also has noted the ubiquitous “School of Excellence” logos and proclamations recognizing PBES as a top performer in its geographic area, based upon aggregate standardized test scores.

Everyone has been very warm and friendly, including the very large and active Sunshine Committee, a faculty group that planned a picnic to welcome him during his first week. It was unbelievably well organized, with tables representing major student activities, PTA committees, and other school groups. Barry was touched and more than a little impressed with the coordination and the large turnout. Clearly, the Sunshine Committee had it together!

PEELING BACK THE LAYERS

Mr. Diaz, a strong instructional leader, took a few weeks to listen, explore, and learn. As a systematic man, he gathered his information from a variety of sources.

TEACHER EVALUATION
Past performance reviews show that most teachers are rated as Exemplary.
INSTRUCTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Diaz sees little evidence of rigor or differentiation. Instruction is at very basic levels, generally using worksheets and textbooks. Teachers in formal leadership roles do not appear to have better instructional methods than other teachers, and in some cases, they are worse.
PLANNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Diaz has attended grade-level meetings and finds little evidence of data analysis, review of student work, or common assessments. Most of the conversation is about planning of field trips or teacher activities.
GRADING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most students have straight A's on report cards. Despite a district policy to the contrary, teachers raise grades to reward student effort and good behavior.
STUDENT DATA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When compared with other demographically similar schools in the state, assessment scores for PBES are low overall, as well as within sub-groups. Students he interacted with made comments such as, “If we finish our work in class we can do our homework before we leave class,” “After the teacher is finished talking we get to work in whatever centers we want”, “If we are good we get extra time at recess.”

Park Bridge Discussion Questions - Part I

What are your observations about this situation?

- What is working well?
- Where are the challenges?

How would you describe this culture?

Park Bridge Discussion Questions - Part I

How is culture impacting the school?

If you were the principal, what would you address first?

VIGNETTE

Gladiola Heights Middle School

PART 2

THE PRINCIPAL TAKES ACTION

With Dr. Han's charge at the top of her mind, along with a desire to radically improve results at GHMS, Ms. Brown hit the ground running. The timeline below shows what she accomplished in her first months on the job.

Month	Activity	Action
June	Scheduling	She changed the master schedule so PAM and neighborhood students are together in teams for core subjects. She assigned PAM and non-PAM teachers to team together.
July	Teacher Planning	In pre-planning week, she reviewed student data for demographic subgroups and presented the case that the school was not achieving as well as other schools with similar groups.
August	Back to School Night	Two weeks after the pre-planning faculty meeting, she shared the same data with parents during Back to School Night.
September	Team Planning	In week 4, she required weekly team planning sessions focused on data and instructional planning.
October	Observations	In week 8, she began weekly observations in the classrooms of the teachers with the lowest achieving students.

Gladiola Heights Discussion Questions - Part 2

Reflect on the steps taken by the principal. What are your observations?

How do you think the school community will react to these actions?

VIGNETTE

Park Bridge Elementary School

PART 2

THE PRINCIPAL TAKES ACTION

While he enjoyed the warm welcome from the community, Mr. Diaz didn't waste time. He started knocking off items on his to-do list. First, he had several vacancies to fill. He searched his contact list and recruited some extremely strong instructional leaders. Sami Herring was his first success. She had been the fifth grade team lead at Crossville ES, where she had also been instrumental in establishing professional learning communities, and he challenged her to fill both roles at PBES. He excitedly introduced her to the rest of the faculty and also introduced Teresa White, another new teacher who would lead the third grade team. Mr. Diaz's final key hire was Zach McIlroy, the new AP. Zach replaced assistant principal Angela Clark, who surprised the faculty by taking a voluntary transfer to another school. Mr. Diaz introduced Mr. McIlroy as a strong leader who is in Northland School District's RLP (Rising Leader Program). Mr. Diaz emphasized how lucky PBES was to have Mr. McIlroy, a former literacy coach who had extensive experience in supporting and developing teachers.

Mr. Diaz kept the other grade level chairs in place for the time being, and told all the grade level chairs that he expected them to work with him to establish professional learning communities (PLCs) within the school. In fact, Mr. Diaz took a personal interest in participating in, and in some cases leading, a variety of PLCs at the school. He engaged the entire faculty in a lesson study program, and rolled up his sleeves to model lessons himself in some classrooms.

In another decisive move, Mr. Diaz disbanded the Sunshine Committee and replaced it with a Data Team and a Leadership Team, which includes the school administrators and grade level chairs. Under the guidance of Mr. Diaz, the Leadership Team came up with a new grading policy that relied on academic performance and not on participation or effort.

Park Bridge Discussion Questions - Part 2

Reflect on the steps taken by the principal. What are your observations?

How do you think the school community will react to these actions?

VIGNETTE

Gladiola Heights Middle School

PART 3

THE SCHOOL REACTS

Her plan ran into a few bumps in the road, as various members of the school community reacted to her plans.

“I’m not sure this is an improvement, thought Sophia, as she toyed with ignoring her inbox. Too many phone calls and emails had contained bad news lately. In fact, she reflected, there had been more resistance to change than she had anticipated.

Her “short list” of challenges now included:

- Magnet parents had complained to the superintendent and board that the PAM program was being “watered down.”
- Despite several Parent Nights, feedback surveys and small group coffees, parents of the non-magnet students were not engaged in the school.
- Several PAM teachers indicated they would be leaving at the end of the year.
- Discipline referrals increased among all students.
- Teachers of lower performing students complained to the Human Resources department and Teachers Association that they were being observed more frequently than the performance evaluation processes dictated, and that this was an inequitable burden amounting to harassment.

Sophia had led change efforts before, and she realized that resistance to change was part of the process, but this time, it seemed worse than usual. Maybe it was the entrenched inequity at GHMS, she mused. Gladiola Height was proving to be quite a challenge.

Gladiola Heights Discussion Questions - Part 3

How did school culture influence the reaction of the school community?

How did this reaction compare to your prediction?

VIGNETTE

Park Bridge Elementary School

PART 3

THE SCHOOL REACTS

Robert Graham, the new parent at PBES, has had an earful since his son Jason enrolled at PBES. He and his wife are active parents, and they really like Teresa White, the new teacher who is Jason's teacher. While sharing perceptions as fellow newcomers, Ms. White has revealed that she has not felt at all welcomed by the existing faculty and staff. In fact, none of the new hires feel included in the social or professional fabric of the school. Ms. White feels that the grade-level meetings and PLCs are studies in passive-aggressiveness, where none of the faculty active participate.

Mrs. Graham, too, has heard some negative things from other moms. Several parents have told her that their children's grades took a drop for no reason after Mr. Diaz came on board. They have written to the superintendent and board members to complain. The other moms report that the school's best teachers have confided that the equality of the school is declining and that the focus now is only on teaching to standardized tests.

Mr. and Mrs. Graham do not know what to think. Ms. White and the other new hires are nervous. The "old" faculty and staff want to figure out a way to pull Mrs. Atiba out of retirement so the school can go back to the happy place it was. Mr. Diaz has his hands full.

Park Bridge Discussion Questions - Part 3

How did school culture influence the reaction of the school community?

How did this reaction compare to your prediction?

Vignette Analysis: Circle of Influence



Section C Facilitator Guide

Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
C	Vignette Analysis: Circle of Influence	45 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group participants for this activity. If you wish, you may keep participants in the same groups as the previous activity or you may rearrange them. They must stay with others who read the same vignette in the previous activity. 2. Distribute Handout C.1 Circle of Influence 3. Review the concept of a Circle of Influence using the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School culture is created by people • Those people can be within the school or outside of the school • The diagram in Handout C.1 represents some of the common stakeholders that influence culture • The arrows flowing in indicate that these individuals shape the culture • The arrows going out indicate that if the culture is changed (in this case by the principal) the stakeholder groups will react 4. Explain the activity as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in your groups, complete the chart on page 2 of Handout C.1 Determine how each of these stakeholder groups influenced the pre-existing culture described in the vignette, and how they responded to the change in culture after the new principal took action. If the vignette does not explicitly state how a stakeholder group reacted, discuss how you think they might have reacted • Make notes of your ideas on Handout C.1 	Handout C.1: Circle of Influence for Vignette Activity

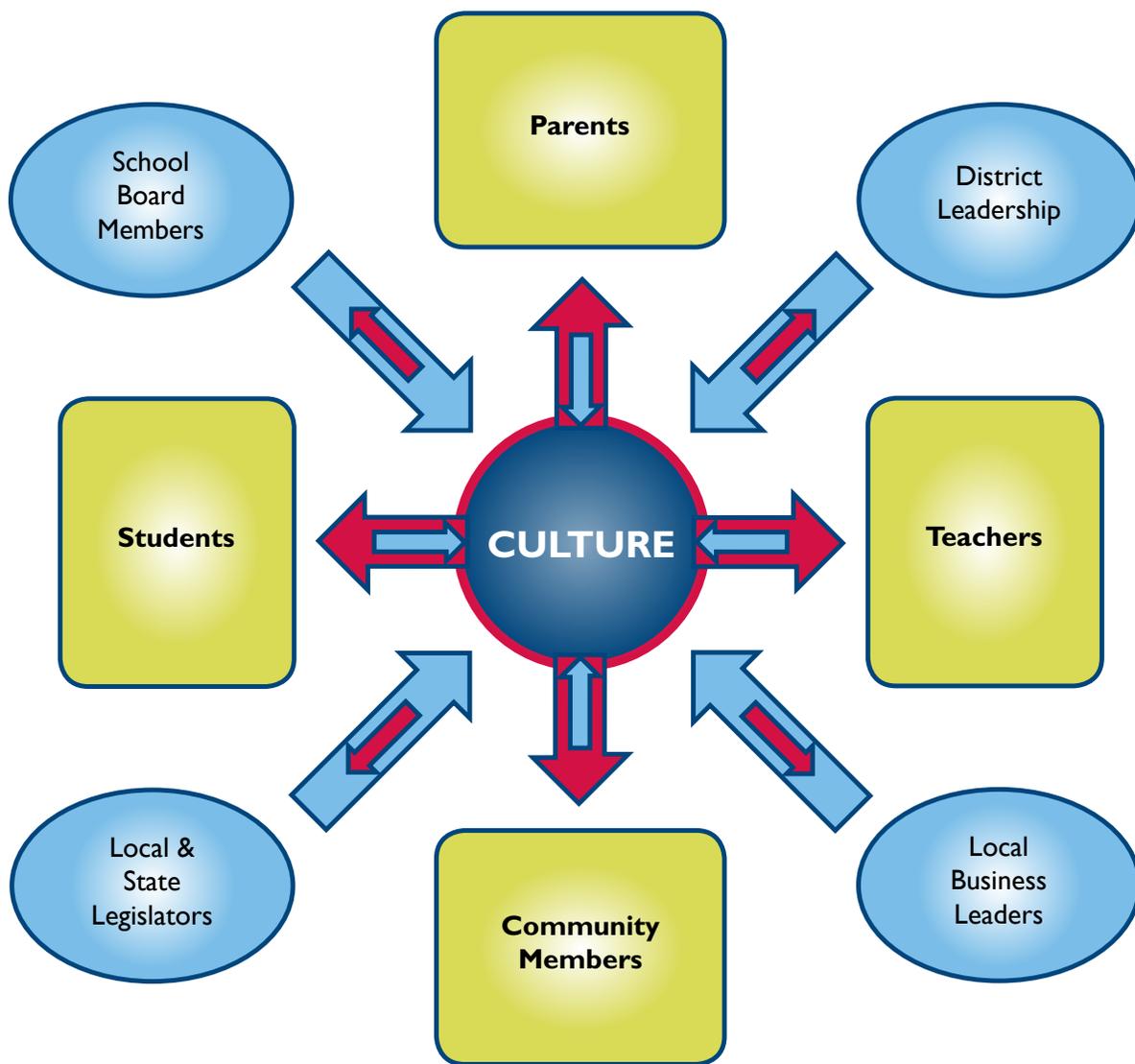


Section C Facilitator Guide



Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
C cont'd			<p>Optional Step 4 Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in your groups, each person assumes a role of one of the stakeholder groups that influenced and/or reacted to the culture • (Process note: These roles could be selected by the participants, index cards could be created in advance with the roles assigned for people to pull from a stack.) • Describe to the rest of the group how you felt about the school before the new principal arrived, how you felt about the actions of the new principal, and why you reacted as you did • Use the chart on page 2 to record your discussion of Handout C.1 	

Circle of Influence for Vignette Activity Assessment Tool For Identifying & Prioritizing



Assessment Tool For Identifying & Prioritizing the “Circles of Influence” As It Relates To Establishing A Successful School Culture

For each Stakeholder Group identified in the diagram that has an influence on the culture, describe how they influenced the culture in Column 1. Next, describe how they responded to the shift in culture (or how they might respond if not explicit in the Vignette) in Column 2.

Stakeholder Group	#1- How Influenced the Culture	#2- How responded to shift in culture
Students		
Teachers		

Stakeholder Group	#1- How Influenced the Culture	#2- How responded to shift in culture
Parents		
Superintendent		
District Leaders		
Local & State Legislators		

Stakeholder	#1- How Influenced the Culture	#2- How responded to shift in culture
Local Business Leaders		
Community Members		

Short Term Action Plan



Section D Facilitator Guide

Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
D	Short-term Action Plan: Assess Culture and Set Priorities	45 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute Handout D.1: Short Term Action Plan Worksheet 2. Read the directions for Step 1 3. Provide time for participants to record their initial observations, evidence, consequences and benefits (15 minutes) 4. Read the directions for Step 2 Ask participants to identify ONE priority issue to work through in today's session 5. Allow time for participants to select their priority issue (5 minutes) 6. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol for pairs or groups of three that is appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their priority (from Step 2) and the Observations, Evidence and Consequences and Benefits that underlie this priority (from Step 1) (20 minutes.) 	Handout D.1: Short Term Action Plan Worksheet
Break		15 minutes		



Section D Facilitator Guide



Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
D cont'd	Short-term Action Plan: Assess Circle of Influence, Develop Stakeholder Engagement Approach and Develop Action Plan	105 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the instructions for Step 3. 2. Allow participants time to make appropriate notes on their worksheet regarding the Circle of Influence for their Priority Issue (15 minutes) 3. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their Circle of Influence with the same groups as the previous exercise (15 minutes) 4. Read the instructions for Step 4 5. Allow participants time to complete Step 4, focusing on their selected priority (10 minutes) 6. Using a pre-selected discussion protocol appropriate to your group, ask participants to share their plans to engage the stakeholders with the same groups as the previous exercise (15 minutes) 7. Read the instructions for Step 5 8. Allow participants time to develop a possible Action Plan (15 minutes) 9. Using the same groupings as the previous activity, use a pre-selected consultative protocol for the pair or groups to provide feedback and suggestions on each participant's action plan (25 minutes) 	Handout D.2: Short Term Action Plan Worksheet
	Short Term Action Planning Tool to Address School Culture: Wrap Up	45 minutes	Using a pre-selected facilitative process, allow each participant or group to offer one key learning from the Short Term Action Plan activities	

Short Term Action Plan Worksheet

Use this tool to begin development of an Action Plan to address needed changes in your school culture. During the Workshop session, work through one priority area to develop an action plan. Use this Short Term Action Plan format on your own to consider additional school culture priorities at a later date.

Step I: ASSESSMENT BASED UPON INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Think about the following categories of Mission, Student Achievement and Safe and Orderly Environment. For each, list one observation you have made about your current school culture. For each observation list your evidence. Then consider the consequences of what you have observed and the benefits if it is addressed.

I. Mission: The school mission is clearly articulated and referred to by all stakeholders. Staff are highly committed and deeply rooted in the academic and social learning goals of the school.

Observation
I. Evidence a. b. c.
II. If left unaddressed, what are the consequences of what you observed?
III. If improved, what is the benefit?

II. Student Achievement: Staff and students display ownership of school-wide learning goals, demonstrate high expectations, and exhibit attributes of a mutually respectful learning community.

Observation
I. Evidence a. b. c.
II. If left unaddressed, what are the consequences of what you observed?
III. If improved, what is the benefit?

III. Safe and Orderly Learning Environment: School-wide expectations are clearly articulated and internalized by staff and students. There exists an atmosphere in which staff and students feel supported and responded to in a fair and consistent manner.

Observation
I. Evidence a. b. c.
II. If left unaddressed, what are the consequences of what you observed?
III. If improved, what is the benefit?

Step 2: SELECT PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Based upon the ratings above, identify one priority you must begin to address quickly to enhance your school culture. For today's Workshop you will use this priority to work through steps 3, 4, and 5.

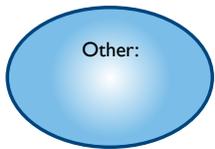
Priority #1 - _____

Step 3: UNDERSTAND THE CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

Complete a Circle of Influence diagram on the next page for this priority. Use the open areas to identify additional stakeholders who have an influence on each priority, or who may react to efforts to address the priority.

Consider the actions and reactions for each stakeholder group. Above each arrow, indicate the influence the stakeholder group has on the culture. Below each arrow, indicate how each group might react if the culture shifts around your priority area listed above. Make additional notes as needed to indicate sub-sets of the stakeholder group that may have particular or unique influence.

Influence _____



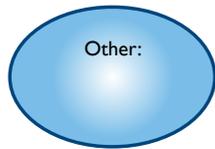
React _____

Influence _____



React _____

Influence _____

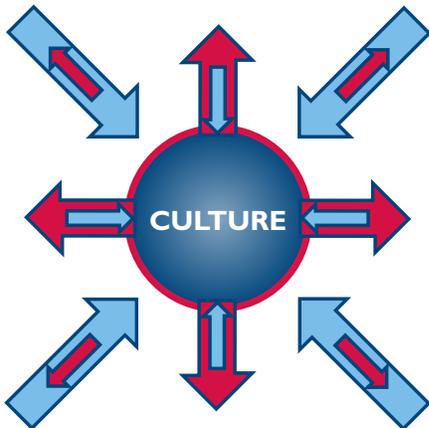


React _____

Influence _____



React _____

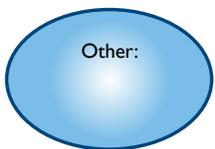


Influence _____



React _____

Influence _____



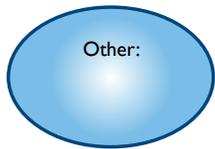
React _____

Influence _____



React _____

Influence _____



React _____

Step 4: ENGAGE THE INFLUENCERS

For your priority issue check the Influence box for each stakeholder who has a strong influence on the issue, or is likely to react if it is addressed. Use the space in each stakeholder box to indicate any sub-sets that have particular or unique influence on the priority issue. For each stakeholder selected, indicate your approach to involving them in addressing the issue.

Priority #1 - _____

Stakeholder Group	Influencer?	How Involved?
Students ----- Subsets:		
Faculty/Staff ----- Subsets:		
Parents ----- Subsets:		
Community Members ----- Subsets:		
Other:		

Step 5: DEVELOP SHORT-TERM ACTION PLANS

For your priority issue, draft an action plan for the next 90 days. Focus on quick wins that will demonstrate the benefit of the change in culture.

For today's Workshop, think about an action plan for the one priority issue you selected.

Priority #1 - _____

Current Status:			
Action Step	Person Responsible	Deliverables	Target Date for Completion

Evaluation



Section E Facilitator Guide

Section	Topic	Time	Activity	Handouts
E	Evaluation and Adjourn	10 minutes	Ask each participant to complete a workshop evaluation before departing	Handout E.1: Workshop evaluation



Leading Change in School Culture Session Evaluation

On a scale of 1 through 5, with 5 being Highly Effective and 1 being Highly Ineffective, please rate the degree to which this workshop addressed the following objectives.

1. Understand the importance of school culture to school performance

1	2	3	4	5
Highly Ineffective	Ineffective	Moderate	Effective	Highly Effective

2. Assess positive and negative impacts of school culture

1	2	3	4	5
Highly Ineffective	Ineffective	Moderate	Effective	Highly Effective

3. Understand how school stakeholders influence school culture

1	2	3	4	5
Highly Ineffective	Ineffective	Moderate	Effective	Highly Effective

4. Learn through feedback and interaction with peers

1	2	3	4	5
Highly Ineffective	Ineffective	Moderate	Effective	Highly Effective

5. Learn new skills and tools to assess and address culture that can be applied in a practical school setting

1	2	3	4	5
Highly Ineffective	Ineffective	Moderate	Effective	Highly Effective

6. Please rate the activities used in this workshop

1	2	3	4	5
Highly Ineffective	Ineffective	Moderate	Effective	Highly Effective

7. Please rate the facilitator for this workshop

1	2	3	4	5
Highly Ineffective	Ineffective	Moderate	Effective	Highly Effective

8. What was the best thing about this workshop?

9. What could be improved?

10. Are there any other comments you would like to share?



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