

## Appendix A.4 • Leading for Deep and Sustainable Change

*Achieving real and sustainable outcomes with a continuous focus on learners and their needs and commitment to collective leadership and change*

Dimension	Substantially off Track	Getting Started	Looking Promising	Well on Track	Geared for Success
Focusing every action and decision through the lens of the least-served learners	“Failure” is often attributed to learners’ attitudes or behaviors, with no or little emphasis on how adults’ actions impact—and can change to improve—the outcomes of the learners who are struggling the most. Goals evidence an implicit belief that there’s an acceptable level of failure, and there’s a widespread assumption that “the way we do things around here” isn’t up for discussion.	There are clear messages from leadership that the only morally defensible target is 100 percent success, and progress is tracked with a strong focus on the learners who have been traditionally least well served. What <i>adults</i> can change is emphasized, and learning partners are starting to think carefully about whether their actions enable or hinder learners’ progress.	Learning partners have embedded the belief that changes that benefit the most-struggling learners create shifts that benefit everyone. They’re challenging programs and practices through the lens of these learners and starting to find ways to accelerate their learning outcomes, engaging in critical discussions about what works for particular learners.	There’s a firm, shared understanding across the school or school system about how to improve outcomes for everyone, as well as an unshakable belief that all learners can and will succeed. There has been a fundamental shift from making convenient changes to putting the needs of learners first and taking courageous action to address them.	Every action and decision is questioned through the inquiry process in light of its impact on learners’ outcomes, and everything within the control of the school or school system is arranged to deepen those outcomes. Leaders have created a culture in which it’s safe and encouraged to raise questions about “the way we do things around here,” and they model this by example.
Prioritizing what needs to change and collaboratively designing solutions	Leaders struggle to identify, design, and prioritize deep, sustainable change solutions and to find the balance between administrative work and focuses on teaching and learning. They’re unable to see the “big picture” of what will most benefit learners, and they don’t engage learning partners in the process of designing change.	Leaders are starting to see which duties, change opportunities, and solutions are important and needed now, as well as those that can wait or aren’t needed at all. They’re sharpening their understanding of where to focus their efforts, and they constantly consider the needs of teachers and learners when identifying or designing solutions.	Leaders see themselves less as administrators and more as leaders of change. They’re able to identify where and how they can be most influential, making important decisions and changes that will improve teaching and learning. They may still struggle with what to prioritize, or how to effect real, lasting, and systemic change in partnership with others.	Leaders understand and embody their role as true leaders of change. They spend their time on the items that matter most, without getting lost in the details. They welcome ideas and potential solutions from all learning partners and work collaboratively to design innovative, tailored solutions that improve outcomes for those learners most in need.	Leaders have created a strong shared understanding throughout the school or school system about what needs to change, what matters most, and why. Top priorities are collectively identified and solved, resulting in a dynamic school or school-system environment and a strong sense of shared ownership of the vision for 100 percent success.

*(Continued)*

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Dimension	Substantially off Track	Getting Started	Looking Promising	Well on Track	Geared for Success
Leading change all the way through to measured, sustainable outcomes	The approach to improving learners' outcomes is generally to buy "quick-fix" or "off-the-shelf" solutions that don't reflect the individual school or school system, its learners, and their needs. The tendency is to "set and forget"—implement would-be solutions, hope they produce the desired outcomes, and check back in on the final results.	There's an understanding among leaders that improving outcomes isn't simply a matter of purchasing ready-made professional learning or other solutions. The change process takes time, requires a deep understanding of the system and its learners, and needs to be actively monitored to ensure the best possible outcomes for learners.	Leaders understand that programs and initiatives are change <i>levers</i> to be used within a connected and systematic change <i>process</i> . They carefully identify and design solutions and measure their progress, but they still experience difficulties adapting to monitored successes and challenges as they arise mid-implementation.	Implemented solutions have shifted from quick, isolated fixes to an emphasis on school- or system-wide change led in partnership with others at all levels of the system. Leaders are creating momentum for change, measuring early wins, and working on ways to deeply embed, sustain, and further improve upon collective solutions.	Leaders use powerful and proven strategies to ensure deep and lasting change. They work collectively to formulate and decide on solutions, implement them, monitor progress, and measure and act on the results. They have their finger on the pulse of learners' outcomes and how they're changing, and they ensure sustained success in the culture of the school or school system.
Fostering and supporting student, teacher, system, parent, and community leaders	"Leader" is a strict and exclusive designation for principals, system administrators, and other "top leadership" within the system, reflecting <i>position</i> as opposed to <i>practice</i> . Students, teachers, parents, and community members aren't supported with opportunities to take on leadership roles and effect lasting change.	Leaders are embracing the understanding that effective leaders aren't alone but are surrounded by others capable of supporting the change process. There's a growing effort to engage learning partners around leading for sustainable change.	Leaders are setting up structures and processes for fostering leadership opportunities and capacity for an increasing number of learning partners, including the introduction of <i>change teams</i> that engage leaders at all levels of the school or school system around identifying what needs to change and driving sustainable outcomes.	Any learning partner interested in taking on a leadership role is supported with the opportunity and tools needed to make it happen. Students, teachers, principals, administrators, parents, and community members feel not only included in the change process but also encouraged and able to lead that change in partnership with one another.	The change team process has effectively embedded a culture in which improvement is a partnership and leadership is a practice that all are supported to develop. Changes are connected at all times to learners and their outcomes, and they and their learning partners take on an active leadership role in embedding and sustaining them.

*Source:* The Learner First, 2018

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