

Coherent System of Continuous Improvement

Overview

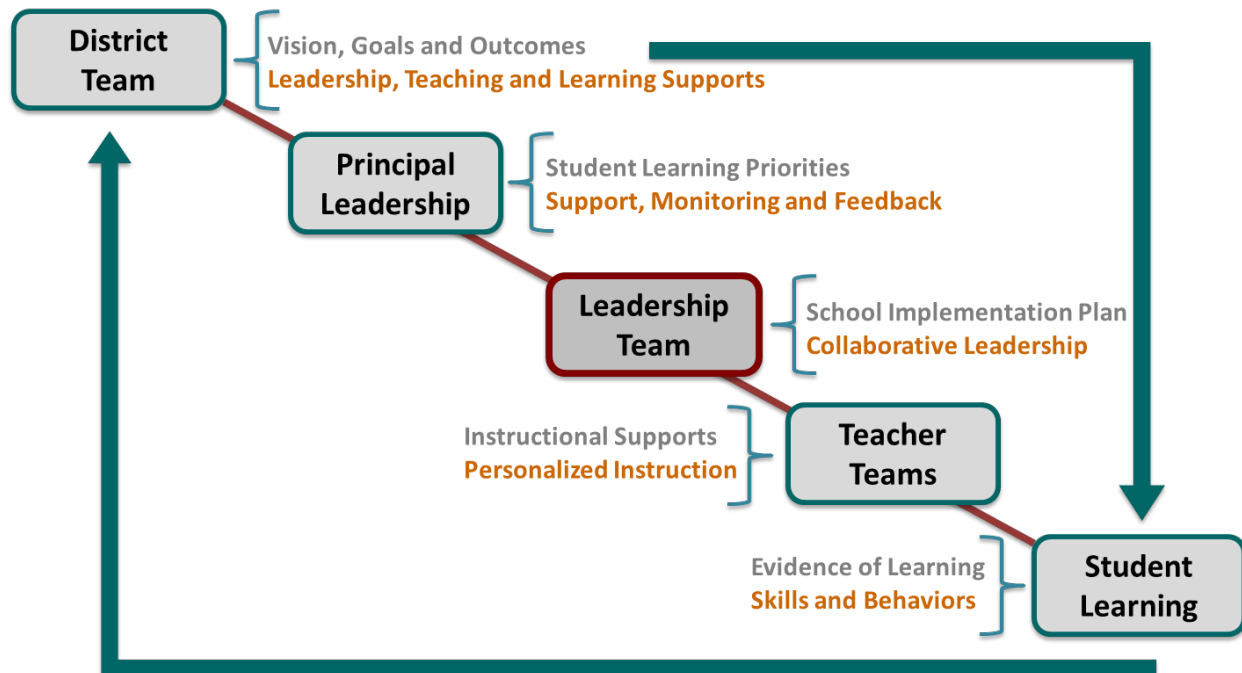
We have been working on a leadership model in Santa Barbara Unified for the last three years called – “Leading from the Middle: Shared Leadership & Systemic Collaboration”. We believe that leadership must be distributed throughout the organization with a shift towards teams operating at the school level. Today, we have seventeen School Leadership Teams (SLT’s) operating in all of our schools - a collaborative team of the school principal with a broad representation of teachers from that school.

This cultural shift has been supported by our partnership with InnovateEd, a consulting firm that has been on the ground with us since spring of 2016. InnovateEd is a consulting firm that specializes in helping districts improve their practices with guidance from Michael Fullan and Joanne Quinn. Michael Fullan is one of the premier global thinkers about education and the author of countless books.

The word “system” is really important to understand why we have pursued this leadership model. Too often organizations depend on a charismatic or strong leader who becomes the system that holds everything together. The leader is the system. The problem with this model is when there is a change in leadership, there goes the system and the organization waits for the next leader to set direction and provide energy for action.

Coherent System of Continuous Improvement – The School Leadership Team (SLT)

The diagram below provides a visual of the system that we have been implementing over the last three school years. The layer that we have invested most of our energy, time, and resources is the School Leadership Team layer which is the middle box in the diagram. This is where the term, “leading from the middle”, comes from. As an appendix, we have listed the 165 teachers, organized by sites, who are members of their SLT. Each SLT is the primary thinking and decision-making body for a school’s instructional goals which are captured in a high-level implementation plan.



The consulting services of InnovateEd have been an important element in helping us improve outcomes for students. Staff is seeking Board approval for a contract for services with InnovateEd for School Year 2019-2020. The scope of services put forward represents an emphasis on the following:

- Streamlining of leadership learning and development
- Gradual release of consultant with SLTs
- Deepening of work with secondary Teacher Teams
- Expanding support for Certificated support roles, including Instructional Support Specialists and Coaches