

# Plan on a Page

Maybe you refer to it as your “district strategic plan” or the “comprehensive school improvement plan.” It’s intended to bring about change and improve the organization, but does anyone really know what’s even in it? It’s time to simplify. Get your entire plan on one page by following these steps.

**Embrace shared leadership.**

The foundation of any effective plan is selecting the right process and people to work on it. By establishing a community of leaders, administrators can collectively harness the talent of a diverse group of stakeholders and benefit from their multiple perspectives. When a cohesive team is empowered with leadership responsibilities, it is more likely that their decisions will be supported and acted on by colleagues.

**Establish measurable goals and monitor progress.**

Leadership teams need to measure and monitor progress frequently to determine the impact and effectiveness of strategies. A concept known as “dashboard” helps educators observe results and make in-process adjustments. Like the dashboard in a car, educators can monitor key indicators of achievement and keep an eye out for “warning lights.” Dashboard measures provide a process for “early detection” of progress through a public display of data in graphical formats for easy interpretation by stakeholders.

**Establish a clear and common focus.**

Leadership teams need to ensure that plans incorporate explicit and agreed-upon focus. To ensure group consensus, get input. It’s essential to make certain that the values of stakeholders are represented. Only the most important or “critical few” focus areas should be included to keep the effort centered and manageable.

**Make the plan theirs!**

One way to increase ownership, responsibility, and accountability for the plan is to have everyone create their own version.

**Clearly set and communicate direction.**

The leadership team must ensure that each person clearly understands the plan and his contribution to it. Post your Plan on a Page where it can be referenced and used in decision-making. Large posters of the plan should be displayed in high traffic areas and can even be reproduced on smaller note cards for easy distribution to stakeholders.

Through a collaborative process of shared leadership; the establishment of common and shared focus with input from stakeholders; the setting of clear direction at all levels; the creation of measurable goals; the monitoring of goal progress in a dashboard; and the involvement of everyone creating their own Plan on a Page, school leaders can involve everyone in the process of continually improving the educational system.

—By J. Jay Marino

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