Strategic Leadership Portfolio

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EDL 500 – Strategic Leadership

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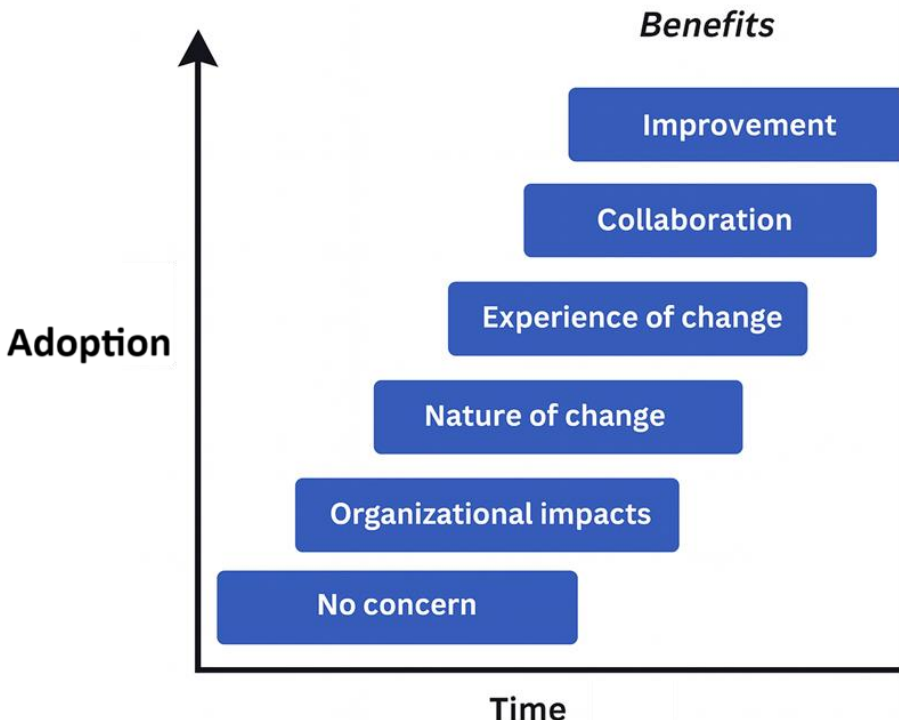July 27, 2025

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Module 2: Gather and Organize Data – Prioritize Performance Challenges from the school's current improvement plan.	
Priority Performance Challenges	**Describe Priority Performance challenges:** Vanguard Classical School – West Campus has identified three key performance challenges in its Unified Improvement Plan (UIP): English Language Arts (ELA) growth, math growth, and school culture. Among these, the most pressing challenge and the focus of this plan is ELA growth. While the school demonstrated strong performance in this area—showing 108% of expected growth and surpassing district averages—only 24% of students met their stretch growth goals in 2023–24. This approach reveals a gap in maximizing student potential, particularly for diverse learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs), Special Education (SPED) students, and students with 504 plans. **My Performance Challenge Focus:** This strategic plan will focus on increasing ELA stretch growth across all student groups. As Bambrick-Santoyo (2018) emphasizes, exceptional schools focus not only on meeting goals but on exceeding them by creating cultures of high expectations and accountability. **Current and Target Performance:** • 2023–24 (Baseline): 108% typical growth; 24% stretch growth • 2024–25 (1-Year Target): 125% typical growth; 50% stretch growth • 2025–26 (2-Year Target): 150% typical growth; 70% stretch growth • Interim Goal (Dec 2024): 90% average typical growth on mid-year iReady
School or District Vision and Mission Statements	**Mission**: "To facilitate individual academic achievement and character development through a safe, equitable, global, content-rich learning environment." **Vision**: To cultivate intellectually curious and virtuous citizens through classical education principles that empower lifelong learning and equity.

Alignment of Vision/ Mission (with a focus on the priority performance challenge)	**Performance Challenge Focus:** The school's mission to provide an equitable, content-rich learning environment is directly aligned with addressing the ELA stretch growth challenge. By refining instructional practices and cultivating a love of reading across all demographics, the school not only boosts academic outcomes but fulfills its promise of equitable access to rigorous content. As Gasman (2022) emphasizes, equity in school leadership and planning is not merely a moral imperative—it is essential for meaningful academic progress, particularly for marginalized populations. Improving reading engagement, phonics instruction, and monitoring practices supports this mission by ensuring that every student, regardless of background, is provided the tools and encouragement to thrive academically. The school's classical model of education also inherently supports close reading, critical thinking, and wrestling with challenging texts. This further cements that reading growth—especially stretch growth—is not a short-term objective but is at the center of the school's academic identity in the long term. A robust reading culture transforms students from passive recipients of information to active learners, a transition that is instrumental in building civic responsibility and academic inquiry. Gasman (2022) further contends that access and equity in leadership must lead to tangible results for marginalized groups. Therefore, aligning instructional practice with the expressed mission of the school enhances the school's cultural and academic environment.
	(Module 3- Improvement Planning)
Current Performance (including previous performance targets)	 iReady diagnostics indicate that students at Vanguard West have already surpassed typical growth expectations in ELA. However, the low percentage of students reaching stretch goals suggests untapped potential. As Pont (2020) notes, sustained student growth hinges on adaptive instructional strategies that empower both teachers and students with the tools needed to excel. To this end, Vanguard has adopted a new phonics curriculum ("95% Group") and school-wide strategies to foster a culture of reading.

Notable Trends (within Data Narrative)	• ELL students exceeded district growth targets in ELA. • Students showed consistent typical growth year-over-year. • However, only a quarter met advanced growth benchmarks. This trend is especially concerning for closing achievement gaps. Stretch growth is often what propels underperforming students toward proficiency and high achievers toward mastery. A focus on reading culture and systematic phonics instruction is anticipated to reverse this pattern.
Root Causes	**Rational for Root Cause as identified in the improvement plan.** The UIP identifies two major root causes: 1. Lack of school-wide reading culture. 2. Use of outdated phonics curriculum. **Rationale for Root Cause** The leadership team's rationale stems from an analysis of survey data, classroom observations, and student achievement trends. The existing phonics system lacked coherence and was no longer supported with updated materials. Moreover, students demonstrated a lack of intrinsic motivation to read, indicating that the school culture had not prioritized joyful reading or ownership of learning. This process aligns with Hollins (2021), who argues that cultivating teacher-led initiatives that promote engagement and collaboration is critical in addressing the root causes of academic stagnation. In addition to an outdated phonics curriculum, informal teacher interviews and observation data indicated the absence of regular implementation of guided reading strategies and peer discourse around the pedagogy of reading. Teachers often labored in silos with varying expectations for reading fluency standards, student conferencing, and independent reading frameworks. These variations created a fractured instructional practice, particularly for students requiring scaffolding. Hollins (2021) emphasizes that when leadership cultivates teacher collaboration and shared responsibility, it builds the organizational capacity to solve instructional issues. Identifying these underlying obstacles explains the necessity for a coherent and consistent literacy framework across grades.
	(Module 4 – Assessing Change Readiness for Change)
Implementer Concerns (Stages of concern, supports for concerns to address in moving forward with	Using the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), anticipated staff concerns fall into several stages: • **Stage 0 (Awareness):** Some teachers may not recognize the urgency of shifting reading culture. • **Stage 1–2 (Informational/Personal):** Teachers may question how this change impacts their workload or autonomy. • **Stage 3 (Management):** Logistical concerns around time management, material preparation, and assessment scheduling are likely. To address these concerns, school leadership will provide targeted professional development (PD), coaching, and opportunities for staff input throughout the process. As Bambrick-Santoyo (2018) advises, sustainable

	change depends on regular feedback, walkthroughs, and leadership modeling. A few seasoned teachers expressed concern about changing well-ingrained classroom habits, particularly regarding time management. Others feared that new expectations would encroach on their instructional independence. In response to these concerns, the leadership team will hold focus groups and involve teacher leaders in the rollout process. Providing opportunities for teacher's voice helps to shift minds from compliance to ownership. Pont (2020) encourages honoring teachers as change agents rather than passive recipients of top-down orders. By involving teachers in the decision-making and leadership, the school will be more likely to experience deep and lasting reform.

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Graph Representation and Data Analysis of Concerns

Two visuals were included:
- A bar chart showing the percentage distribution across concern categories.
- A staircase model illustrating progressive adoption over time.

The highest concentrations of concern appear in the "Informational" and "Management" stages. This finding indicates that while teachers are aware of the need for change, they require structured support and clear implementation frameworks to gain confidence and proficiency. |
| **Implementation** | Phonics PD complete August 15, 2024
Monthly walkthroughs initiated   August 20, 2024 |

Benchmarks	Mid-year iReady growth benchmark December 13, 2024 Culture of Reading incentives launched September 1, 2024
Interim Measures	• Mid-year iReady diagnostic in December • Monthly reading engagement tracker (e.g., DEAR logs, book club participation) • Teacher feedback surveys after PD

Module 5: Supporting Change	
Performance Targets (Mod 2 and 3)	**Performance Targets** | Baseline	Interim	1-Year	2-Year
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47%	**60%**	**70%**	**80%**	 • Baseline (2023–24): 108% typical growth; 24% stretch • Interim (Dec 2024): 90% typical growth • 1-Year (May 2025): 125% typical growth; 50% stretch • 2-Year (May 2026): 150% typical growth; 70% stretch This structured growth plan includes both typical and stretch goals to support all learners, particularly those from special populations.

Visual Summary of Teacher Concerns (Mod 4)	**Visual Summary of Teacher Concerns (Mod 4)**
		Concern	Response Category	
	|---|---|
		Curriculum clarity	Unaware	
		Adequate training	Informational	
		Time to implement	Personal	
		Student impact	Personal	
		Admin support	Management	
Policies, Guidelines, and Expectations	School leadership will enforce a clear policy structure aligned with the new instructional expectations. Key guidelines include: • Mandatory DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time during the literacy block • Student planners are required across grades 3–8 • Weekly connection circles and morning meetings • Integration of reading targets in student-led conferences These expectations ensure consistency, create routines, and foster student engagement.
Objectives (Actionable, Assessable, Feasible)	1. All K–5 classrooms will implement the new phonics curriculum with fidelity by September 15, 2024. 2. Students in grades K–8 will participate in DEAR at least 3x per week, logged by teachers. 3. 100% of teachers will participate in two PD cycles focused on reading instruction and engagement by January 2025. These objectives are measurable and achievable within the school year timeline.

Classroom Based Performance Implementation	Implementation will be monitored by literacy coaches and assistant principals via: • Monthly walkthroughs • DEAR logs • Student reading journals • Classroom libraries aligned to Lexile bands Teachers will also track individual reading conferences to guide instruction and foster goal setting.
Professional Learning Events -	**EventDateLtL Code** Phonics Curriculum Launch PD August 1, 2024 F, A Culture of Reading: Book Clubs & Incentives September 10, 2024 R, S, A DEAR Time Best Practices & Management October 2, 2024 F, AA, A Data-Driven Reading Instruction (iReady PD) November 6, 2024 F, R, A These events are structured to support stages of concern, build expertise, and encourage collaboration.
Survey of Professional learning	A post-event feedback survey will be used to gather teacher input and adjust future training. Key indicators: • Usefulness of strategies (Likert scale) • Confidence in implementation (open-ended) • Barriers to success (multiple choice and comment) Leadership will use these insights to provide additional coaching or re-teach sessions, supporting continuous improvement. Professional learning sessions will also incorporate collaborative protocols such as Instructional Rounds and PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) to promote peer review and sharing of best practices. Sessions will all be mapped to the Colorado Teacher Quality Standards so that they reinforce statewide accountability and licensure requirements. Evaluation of PD effectiveness will move beyond simple satisfaction surveys and will consist of pre- and post-assessments, reflective journaling, and classroom implementation snapshots. Furthermore, mid-year staff interviews will be conducted by leadership to supplement survey data and provide qualitative feedback on how training is being translated into classroom practice. These practices reflect a dedication to equity, responsiveness, and continuous professional development—values espoused by Gasman (2022) and consistent with improvement science frameworks.

Living the Learning (LtL) Key:
AA = Airtight Activity that leads participants to the right conclusion mostly on their own.
R = Reflection (participants quietly analyze, generate conclusions or takeaways)
S = Small-Group or Large-Group Sharing; workshop presenter is primarily a questioner
F = Frame the learning; provide the formal vocabulary associated with the workshop objective

A = Apply; put the principles into practice and give/receive feedback

References

Bambrick-Santoyo, P. (2018). *Leverage leadership 2.0: A practical guide to building exceptional schools*. Jossey-Bass, a Wiley Brand.

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Hollins, E. R. (2021). Teacher leadership and collaboration: The missing piece in supporting equity and reform. *Journal of Educational Change*, *22*(2), 137-159.

Pont, B. (2020). Teacher leadership: The role of knowledge and skills. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *48*(2), 278-295.