2023 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ROADMAP

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NIET | NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF **EDUCATION**

CONTENTS

LETTER FROM SUPERINTENDENT BRUMLEY

Dear Colleagues,

Teachers enter the classroom to make a positive impact on children. Improving student outcomes is more than simply the goal of educators, it's at the heart of why they do this work. Being an effective teacher is a difficult job. Louisiana's Professional Learning Roadmap was developed to identify a clear path for educators as they grow in their craft.

Whether you are a teacher, principal, or district administrator, this guide walks you through what high-quality professional learning looks like and the process to build this environment. This anchor document also sets a common language and consistent practices for collaborative professional learning across all Louisiana school systems.

I've been fortunate to serve the families of our state as a teacher, coach, principal, district administrator, and system leader. My experiences in all of those roles taught me that the most effective professional learning is peer-to-peer. Iron sharpens iron. Educators learn best from each other. Whether it's through instructional leadership team meetings or teacher collaboration, I've seen this strategy accelerate the growth of students and educators.

Louisiana's recent success on improving from 46 to 41 on the U.S. News & World Report, of ranking number one on the Nation's Report Card for reading growth in fourth grade, and making the largest gains on the LEAP 2025 since 2016 wouldn't have happened without educators committing to these structures. We attribute our state's success to the continuous improvement mindset and efforts of our educators, including the effective implementation of these structures.

Collaboration was also key in the development of this roadmap. We partnered with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) to ensure every resource, sample plan, and guiding question meets our high-quality standards. We are grateful for NIET's partnership with us on this guide and their continued partnership with school systems across Louisiana.

Outside of the family, nothing impacts student learning like an effective teacher. I encourage you to utilize this roadmap to help yourself or your educators engage with one another, grow in their craft, and move Louisiana's children forward.

Dr. Cade Brumley

Louisiana State Superintendent

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Louisiana Professional Learning (PL) Roadmap provides a clear pathway for school systems and schools to align their priorities to improve instructional practice through three essential professional learning structures: instructional leadership teams (ILTs), teacher collaboration, and career pipeline that follow the High Quality Professional Learning Cycle and based on cycles of continuous improvement. The roadmap describes the processes for these key structures.

SCHOOL SYSTEM LEVEL ILT

The PL Roadmap recommends forming an instructional leadership team at the school system level that meets frequently, ideally biweekly, to continuously address instructional goal(s) through ongoing learning, planning, and decision-making. This team is essential for setting clear system-wide goals, communicating with all stakeholders, creating a strategic long-range plan, and allocating resources accordingly. This diverse team should include leaders with various capabilities that reflect all instructional priorities. First, this team conducts a comprehensive review of all of the system's key data, including recent student, teacher, and leader data, to determine its priorities. The team uses this analysis to create clear instructional goals that should be measurable, reflect specific student and/or adult needs, relevant to recent quantitative data, and include a timeline. The team also discusses best practices for high impact leader and teacher actions and how to provide school and school system leaders with regular, high-quality feedback and support.

SCHOOL LEVEL ILT

Similar to the system-level ILT, every school has its own Instructional Leadership Team with clear instructional goals, a long-range plan, and consistent time to collaborate. This team includes school leaders as well as teacher leaders. The purpose of this team is to align the school's professional learning around a clear focus area, so that teachers are supported to make instructional improvements in their classrooms.

In creating its instructional goals and priorities, this team usually reviews these types of documents first: school improvement plan, annual school academic goals, Individualized Education Programs, Local literacy plan, observation plans, and New Teacher Experience guidance. The team also analyzes recent significant data points, including summative student achievement data. Then it creates its ILT cycle goals and long-range plan to address it. These goals should be aligned to the school's goals and teacher collaboration goals, based on improving student achievement and measured by a curriculum-embedded assessment. This school ILT meets weekly to monitor the progress of its goal, learn together by sharing best practices, make adjustments to support teachers, and reflect on the effectiveness of its supports and practices.

TEACHER COLLABORATION

The PL Roadmap emphasizes the importance of meaningful teacher collaboration to improve instructional practice and student outcomes. The planning for teacher collaboration meetings should be directly aligned to the school and school system goals. Effective teacher collaboration meetings include the analysis of student work; unpacking, planning, discussing, and annotating units and lessons from high-quality curriculum; planning for and addressing the needs of diverse learners; and addressing unfinished learning through acceleration. It should provide teachers the opportunity to come together to review data, learn best instructional practices, and walk away with clear next steps for implementing high quality instructional materials in their classrooms.

In summary, the PL Roadmap provides specific guidance for establishing effective ILTs and Teacher Collaboration that mobilize diverse stakeholders to focus change efforts on shared priorities. Through these aligned and repeated actions, school systems and schools can meaningfully collaborate to keep focus on instructional improvement.
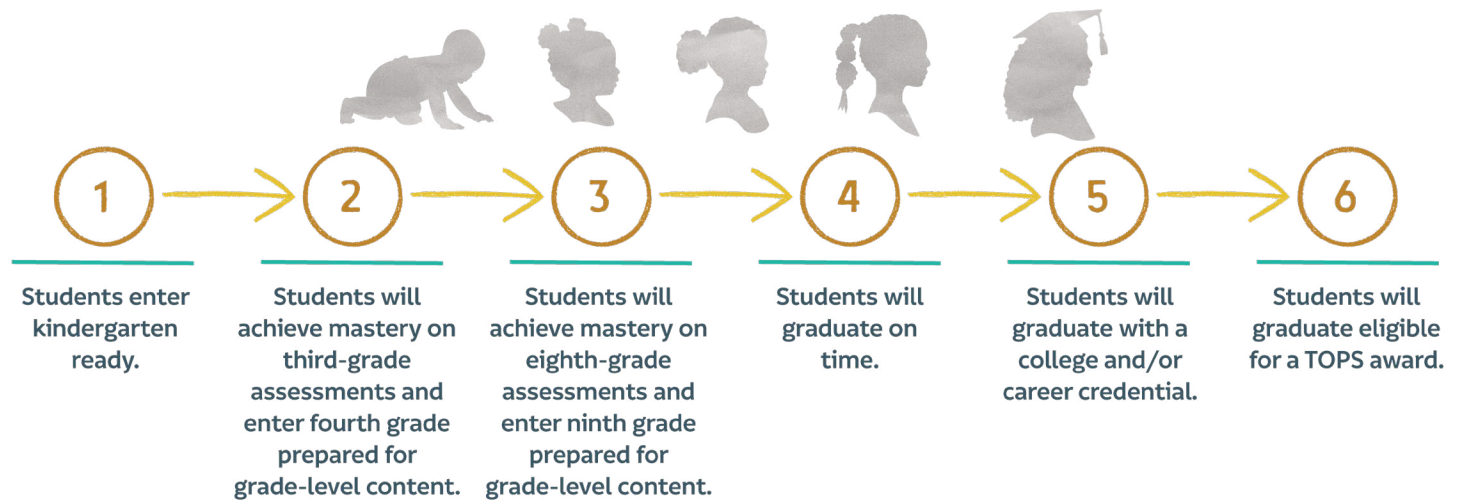
OVERVIEW

VISION AND PURPOSE

School Improvement is a systematic approach by which schools employ evidenced-based best practices to increase educator effectiveness and student achievement. This work is grounded in the Department's *Believe to Achieve* educational priority of cultivating high-impact systems, structures, and partnerships. We know that our children are as capable as any to attain the highest levels of academic success. Each child's educational journey is focused on six critical goals.

BIRTH through GRADUATION

1	2	3	4	5	6
Students enter kindergarten ready.	Students will achieve mastery on third-grade assessments and enter fourth grade prepared for grade-level content.	Students will achieve mastery on eighth-grade assessments and enter ninth grade prepared for grade-level content.	Students will graduate on time.	Students will graduate with a college and/or career credential.	Students will graduate eligible for a TOPS award.

To position students for success along the educational journey, teachers need to lead high-quality teaching and learning every day grounded in high quality curriculum. It is the responsibility of school systems and school leaders to support teachers. School systems can support teachers with intentional planning for improvement and continuous improvement cycles.

A key component of overall school system strategic planning is the implementation of a comprehensive professional learning plan. This Professional Learning Roadmap intends to guide and support school system and school leaders in their implementation of essential professional learning structures: school system instructional leadership team, school instructional leadership team, and teacher collaboration. It includes guidance on how a career pipeline can best contribute to the structures with vital roles. The Professional Learning Roadmap also serves as an anchor document for implementation of these structures state-wide and establishes a common language for all partners and practitioners.

Examine
Reflect, ask focused questions, & acquire the best available data.

Interpret
Analyze data, integrate the data with expertise & best practices.

Act
Make decisions & plans, specify support needed, & take action

Share
Share the data with key stakeholders for perspective & planning.

USING THE ROADMAP

The LDOE's Professional Learning Roadmap describes the journey that school systems and school leaders travel to ensure success for all students. This Roadmap is designed to define and support the implementation of systems and structures for school systems and school level leaders to plan for and implement high-quality professional learning opportunities that best support the improvement of instructional practices (see Figure 1).
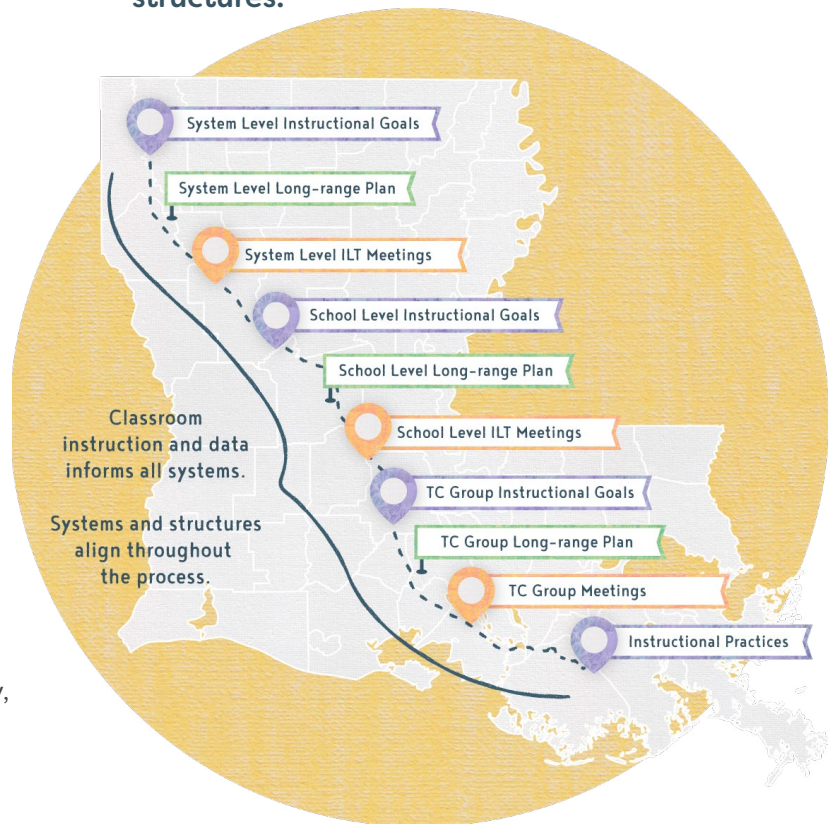
When leaders work to improve instructional practices, students have an increased opportunity to attain academic success (Robinson, 2012). Louisiana's definition of high-quality professional learning is: an intentional capacity-building and decision-making process that is led by experts (internal or external to the system or school), is relevant to the learner and educator, and supports effective teaching and learning that is aligned to research and best practices. It leverages high-quality instructional materials and includes systems of ongoing coaching, support, and feedback. Additionally, high-quality professional learning occurs in a safe environment and provides shared learning experiences between teachers and leaders that are relevant and transferable to various contexts.

This Roadmap supports instructional leaders at classroom, school, and school system levels to identify current needs that inhibit the academic growth of our children. Subsequently, this Roadmap honors and leverages existing plans (e.g., Academic Recovery and Acceleration Plan, system-level strategic plan), provides guidance on setting instructional student-centered goals, and supports student-centered instructional leadership. Generally, the instructional goals referenced within this Roadmap should come from a school system level strategic plan, annual school goals, or some other long-term, instructionally-focused goals. Depending on those goals, leaders should plan to differentiate engagement opportunities for instructional stakeholders. Though differentiated, engagement is supported through the specific structures of Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs), school-based Teacher Collaboration (TC) meetings, and Career Pipeline.

(Figure 1) The Roadmap is organized to support systems leaders in:

1. Defining and setting instructional goals.
2. Understanding and defining the purpose of Instructional Leadership Teams and Teacher Collaboration.
3. Strategically planning how to leverage Teacher Leaders to achieve instructional goals.
4. Planning for System and School Level Instructional Leadership Team meetings.
5. Planning for Teacher Collaboration meetings.
6. Reflecting and refining professional learning structures.

System Level Instructional Goals
System Level Long-range Plan
System Level ILT Meetings
School Level Instructional Goals
School Level Long-range Plan
School Level ILT Meetings
TC Group Instructional Goals
TC Group Long-range Plan
TC Group Meetings
Instructional Practices

Classroom instruction and data informs all systems.

Systems and structures align throughout the process.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

TEACHER COLLABORATION SUPPORT

CAREER PIPELINE SUPPORT

SYSTEM AND SCHOOL LEVEL INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING

Prior to implementing strategies related to either Instructional Leadership teams or Teacher Collaboration it is important to first:

1. Review school system and school level data to determine **strengths and needs** (e.g., statewide assessment results, student cohort growth patterns over time, teacher effectiveness data, curriculum walkthrough data).

2. Set internal **instructional goals connected to the implementation of high-quality curriculum.**

3. Identify which **instructional stakeholders** (e.g., system leaders, school leaders, teacher leaders, teachers) could best be leveraged to reach those outcomes.

Instructional planning is the iterative, cyclical process by which data, high-quality instructional materials, and high-quality professional learning coalesce to result in creating goals that meet the diverse needs of children and adults. Instructional planning is a key lever of instructional leadership and begins with system and school leaders reflecting on current data and existing initiatives. Reflection on data allows leaders to identify the purpose of their work and influences the setting of instructional goals that meet needs of children and adults. Instructional goals serve as the foundation of instructional plans. Subsequently, high-quality ILTs develop an instructional plan inclusive of relevant goals that ensures the work is focused on building capacity and making decisions.

SETTING INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

Similar to the **Five Steps for Effective Learning**, the High-quality Professional Learning Cycle is a process in which a purpose is defined, and then teams receive new learning, internalize and practice the new learning, implement the new learning, and assess the impact. Setting measurable instructional goals is a reflective, cyclical process that allows ILTs to maintain a narrow focus while determining the amount of growth and impact on stakeholders. Moreover, setting instructional goals prioritizes the work of the ILT as members reflect and collaborate to identify current instructional needs. Once goals are set, ILTs are positioned to determine what learning is needed to ensure goal attainment. Goals also afford ILT members to contextualize the learning and implement in specific settings. After implementing the learning, the ILT reflects on what impact the learning had on meeting identified needs and determines the purpose of the next learning cycle (see Figure 2).

The road to goal attainment is a long-term process that requires collaboration, commitment, monitoring, adjusting, and further recommitment. By ensuring key leaders are part of the goal-setting process, that they understand how they can impact success, that efforts are supported at various levels, and that there access to transparency and success measurement tools, ILTs and TCs are best positioned to create a successful and repeatable annual goal-setting process for the betterment of leaders, teachers, and students ("Five Steps to Create a Goal-Aligned District," 2018). Additionally, goal setting directs attention to the task at hand (and away from distractions), mobilizes efforts, increases persistence, and promotes the development of new strategies when current ones aren't working. (Locke, E., & Latham, G. (2002) cited in Katz, S. Dack. L., & Mallory, J. (2018).

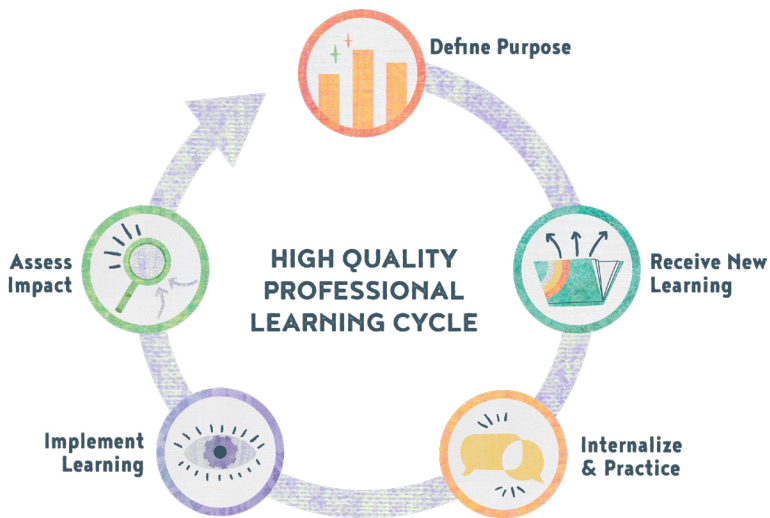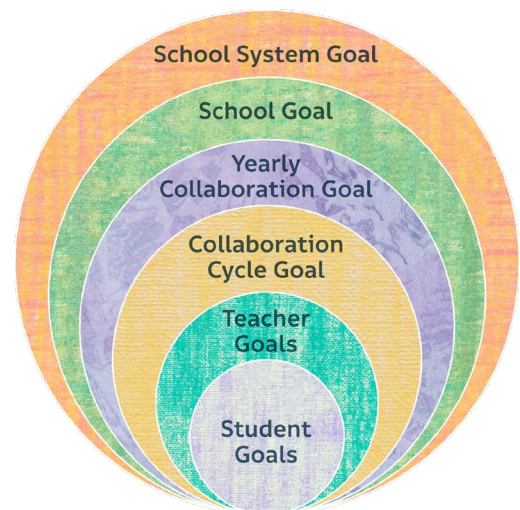## (Figure 2) LDOE High-quality Professional Learning Cycle

Figure 3 represents the alignment of goals at all levels. Systems should develop a plan that supports the improvement of identified needs. A holistic, comprehensive system-level strategic plan includes 3 to 5 years of goals and actionable steps. These actionable steps should be monitored on a regular basis each time new data sets are available. The school system level ILT utilizes this strategic plan to determine short term goals to be met over the course of each academic year.

(Figure 3) Goal Setting Alignment

School system leaders are an essential component of the goal setting process and influence goal attainment at all levels. School system leaders establish and communicate the direction for what goals are to be attained. Through goal-setting, the school system charts a clear and coherent course that supports capacity-building by providing necessary support. The goal-setting process begins with a system goal that reflects what is needed to result in improvements to learning and teaching. This differentiated and targeted focus on setting goals that reflect needs is inherent in the high-quality professional learning structures of ILTs and TC sessions. Thus, system goals are written in terms of improving the school system performance, school performance, and student performance, and ultimately make the organization work. These efforts align to ensure that the entire range of conditions and incentives in the system fully support teaching, learning, and improved educational outcomes for our children.

- A school system ILT looks across system-wide data and determines a cross-system goal to set the focus for priority work for the year.

- The School Goal is usually based on summative student achievement data and sets a clear focus to guide the school's ILT through their own long-range planning in how to support teachers as they achieve their own goals.

- Goals for Teacher Collaboration are set by the school-level ILT with the support of school system leadership and are based on cycles or chunks of new learning.

- All Teacher Collaboration cycle goals align to a yearly collaboration goal, a bigger picture goal of what a school wants to achieve in terms of teacher learning and growth over the course of a year. A cycle can last for an iterative amount of time, usually spanning several weeks, and is based on a need or a set of needs. During each cycle, a goal is set for transfer of the new learning into classroom practices and ultimately student achievement.

- Teachers are supported through the Teacher Collaboration structure, and a teacher sets goals for his or her students based on their own individual data and needs along with professional goals for their own learning and growth.

These needs allow the ILT to then set aligned instructional goals with limited priorities and engage in specific actions to meet goals. Student needs indicate teacher needs. Teacher goals indicate leader needs and provide a focus for collaboration meetings. Setting goals helps the ILT to minimize confusion, establish coherence, and foster a shared commitment to improving instructional practices (Dewitt, 2022).

Critical Elements of Instructional Goals

- Reflect on specific student and/or adult needs
- Measurable and indicate specific growth
- Based on most current quantitative data and the implementation of high-quality curriculum
- Contain specific window for goal attainment

Critical Elements of Instructional Leadership Team Cycle Goals

- Aligned to and supports the school goal and yearly teacher collaboration goal
- Measurable in terms of student achievement
- Based on improving student achievement in knowledge and skill areas of student need that will support students in improving in overarching knowledge and skill areas referenced in the school goal and yearly cluster goal
- Based on summative assessments and is measured throughout a cycle by curriculum-embedded assessments throughout the cycle to measure and monitor student progress towards the cycle goal. A curriculum-embedded assessment may be given at the end of the cycle.

Critical Elements of Teacher Collaboration Cycle Goals

- Aligned to and supports the school goal and yearly teacher collaboration goal
- Measurable in terms of student achievement
- Grounded in effective implementation of high quality curriculum
- Based on improving student achievement in knowledge and skill areas of student need that will support students in improving in overarching knowledge and skill areas referenced in the school goal and yearly cluster goal
- Based on summative assessments and is measured throughout a cycle by curriculum-embedded assessments throughout the cycle to measure and monitor student progress towards the cycle goal. A curriculum-embedded assessment may be given at the end of the cycle.

Consequently, it is vital that all instructional stakeholders set instructional goals that reflect student needs at the school system, school, and collaborative group levels. All goals originate from student needs and ensure goal alignment. Once that alignment is established, classroom instructional practices – through observations, classroom data, data from the implementation of high quality curriculum, and other data points – can be discussed and supported across Instructional Leadership Teams and Teacher Collaboration.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

DEFINING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) are research-based, school improvement best practices that focus on building capacity and making decisions. ILTs consist of leaders who serve in various capacities across the school or school system. ILT members consistently engage in collaborative actions to identify and meet student, teacher, and leader needs. Such actions will result in improved teaching and learning experiences. Instructional Leadership Teams meet regularly (ideally weekly at the school level and at minimum bi-weekly at the system level). School level instructional leadership teams need to deeply understand the high quality curricular materials teachers are using to ensure school level plans attend to the specific content teachers are teaching. Meeting time should be prioritized and held sacred as essential time to learn, plan, and make decisions. Throughout this Roadmap for both versions of ILTs, you will answer a series of guided questions designed to provide support from the conceptual building of the ILT to planning and facilitating high-quality meetings.

An established ILT meets regularly to discuss

- improving educational outcomes through **analysis of student, teacher, and leader data**;
- incorporating best practices for **high-impact strategies to support implementation of high quality curriculum;** and
- providing school and school system level leaders with **regular, high-quality feedback** and support through an observation/feedback cycle.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEED FOR HIGH-QUALITY ILTS

Student-centered leadership requires that Instructional Leadership Teams focus on goal setting, strategic use of high-quality resources, creating a safe learning environment, observing how high-quality curricula is applied to classroom instructional practices, and taught high-quality learning experiences (Dewitt, 2022). Because distributed school leadership is necessary to ensure improved student outcomes, high-quality instructional leadership teams prioritize student learning and the development of instructional staff. An emphasis on learning and development is supported by setting clear, student-centered goals, identifying and using high-quality resources to attain goals, and determining how to check for progress on goal attainment (Robinson, 2012). These student-centered leadership actions have a large effect on students' learning (Robinson, 2012) and provide members ample opportunities to engage in actions that will result in increases in student achievement (Dewitt, 2022). Collaborative learning structures enhance instructional practices by influencing and prioritizing a focus on human capital to result in continuous improvement of instructional practices and improved implementation of high quality curriculum. Intentional collaboration through Instructional Leadership Teams and teacher collaboration drive student, teacher, and leader growth (Dewitt, 2022) and are the core of student-centered leadership (see Figure 2).

IMPLEMENTING HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

There are multiple Instructional Leadership Teams within a school system, at least one for the school system and one for each school. This section of the Roadmap will focus on the process of implementing School System and School Level Instructional Leadership Teams. While these will have very similar structures and goals, each must exist to allow both to be as successful as possible.

High-quality ILT meetings begin with the development of a plan that is focused on meeting current needs. The ILT **long-range plan** (see **Appendix H**) is a systematic and consistent plan of action for monitoring and supporting the goal instructional processes in a school system or on a school campus. It is used to sketch out or identify major areas of focus for weekly leadership team meetings. It is modifiable and tailored to the instructional needs of a school system or individual school. The work of a high-quality ILT should be reflected in a plan that details in which actions ILT members will engage to meet student and teacher needs. It illustrates the learning and decisions made by the ILT to address needs aligned to the school system strategic plan or school plan. Both the school system and school ILT directly support the structure of Teacher Collaboration. The needs of teachers are highlighted in the ILT structure and this informs the planning for and implementation of Teacher Collaboration.

Both school system and school level Instructional Leadership teams follow the high-quality professional learning cycle. Meetings are always focused on school, leader, teacher, and/or student needs to define the purpose and frame the meeting. ILT members receive new learning from the leader(s) of the ILT and together collaborate on plans for how to implement the new learning in a way that is thoughtful of the group of individuals they represent and support. Following the meeting, ILT members are empowered to implement their new learning as they support schools, teachers, and students in a way that is very intentional and planned during the ILT meeting. They assess the impact of their implementation and are prepared to bring back into a subsequent ILT meeting their impact data and evidence.

SCHOOL SYSTEM LEVEL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

System-level ILT members engage in continuous improvement and model this for school leaders. As system-level ILT members are learning and applying their learning, they must ensure that their learning reaches school-based Instructional Leadership Teams. While the participants in Instructional Leadership Teams will likely mirror those of other regular meetings (e.g., cabinet meetings, budget planning), ILT meetings must have a singular focus on instruction. This intentional and purposeful focus on curriculum-based instructional improvement will take effective planning and meeting facilitation, but for the School System ILT to be effective, the focus on instruction must remain unchanged.

School system level planning is a key element of the school system ILT. For many school systems, this will be in the form of **instructional goals within the school system's strategic plan** while for others it may be tied to school specific instructional improvement plans. Regardless of the name, the instructional goals with the school system plan are vital to determining the focus of the School System ILT. A few plans that would be useful to reference and align to are the

- Pupil Progression Plan,
- **Local Literacy Plan**,
- Ready Start Network Blueprints,
- EL/Lau Plan,
- School System Strategic Plan,
- Achieve! and Believe! Plans,
- Academic Recovery and Acceleration Plan, and
- **Continuous Learning Plan**.

STEPS FOR SUCCESS

There are three critical steps to ensure a successful launch of both the school system level and school level Instructional Leadership Team professional learning structure.

1. **Planning before Implementation**
2. **Developing an ILT Long-range Plan**
3. **Planning for each ILT Meeting**

Each step links to guiding questions for system leaders to complete as they plan for implementation of a system-level ILT. These serve as a tool to support system leaders in thinking through the tactical elements that will help a system begin implementation that will evolve to transformation change.

SCHOOL LEVEL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Schools should use their own local context to determine leaders who should be a part of the school's Instructional Leadership team. A school-level ILT will generally include members of the leadership staff, but the inclusion of Teacher Leaders in an ILT is equally as essential. Teacher Leaders are a unique subset of instructional stakeholders that, when leveraged well, can help ensure that the collaborative learning system being implemented is most effective. To that end, leaders should take time to consider how to utilize their Teacher Leaders prior to planning their ILT or TC structures. Teacher leaders are a group of teachers whose practice promotes teacher development that includes but is not limited to Mentor Teachers, Content Leaders, literacy coaches, Master Teachers, instructional coaches, and Pre-Educator Pathway teachers. Teacher Leaders who participate in the Instructional Leadership Team should play an active role in representing and supporting a group of teachers on their campus. School level instructional leadership teams need to deeply understand the curricular materials teachers are using to ensure school level plans attend to the specific content teachers are teaching.

Instructional Leadership Teams engage in continuous learning themselves as the lead learners in the school. ILT members facilitate teacher collaboration meetings to ensure ongoing learning and feedback cycles are in place from staff to ILT. **School level** planning is a key element of the school ILT. These plans can come from a variety of documents, but it is vital that all ILT planning is aligned to the overall instructional vision, implementation of the high-quality curricula and embedded assessments, and goals of the schools. A few plans that would be useful to reference and align to are the

- School Improvement Plan,
- Annual school academic goals,
- Implementation plans for high quality curriculum,
- **Individualized Education Programs** (IEPs),
- **Individual Accommodation Plan** (IAP, Section 504 plan),
- Coordinated observation plan,
- **New Teacher Experience Guidance Document**, and
- **Local Literacy Plan**.

RESOURCES

Long Range Plans

- **School System ILT Long Range Plan Template**

ILT Agenda Samples

- **ELA Implementation**
- **Math Implementation**
- **Literacy Data Analysis**
- **Science Implementation**
- **Best Practices for Diverse Learners**

ILT Agenda Samples from School Systems

- **East Feliciana Parish**
- **GEO Academies**
- **Jefferson Parish**
- **Natchitoches Parish**
- **Tangipahoa Parish**
- **Webster Parish**

TEACHER COLLABORATION

UNDERSTANDING THE NEED FOR HIGH-QUALITY TEACHER COLLABORATION

Professional development, which "happens to" teachers, is often associated with one-time workshops, seminars, or lectures, and is typically a one-size-fits all approach. Professional learning, by contrast, is typically interactive, sustained, and customized to teachers' needs. It encourages teachers to take responsibility for their own learning and to practice what they are learning in their own teaching contexts (Scherff, 2018). Effective professional learning via a Teacher Collaboration structure not only has the potential to improve both teaching and student outcomes, but can also be effective in recruiting and retaining teachers as it leads to both improved classroom practices and strong relationships of mutual respect and trust by the adult learner participants. To involve teachers in high-quality Teacher Collaboration, leaders must also consider teacher agency, which is the power for teachers to act decisively and positively to better ensure their own professional growth (Calvert, 2016). High-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials are at the heart of meaningful collaboration as teachers work together to analyze student work and make decisions for how to best meet the needs of each individual student and research has shown that professional learning connected to high quality curriculum result in greater improvement in practice and learning than professional development on strategies or content alone. (H. Hill).

IMPLEMENTING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHER COLLABORATION (TC)

The needs of students and teachers drive the new learning that is provided during TC meetings. These meetings are facilitated in cycles of structured professional learning. Effective meetings include the analysis of student work from high quality curriculum; unpacking, planning, discussing, and annotating units and lessons from High-quality Instructional Materials (HQIM); planning for and addressing the needs of diverse learners; and addressing unfinished learning through acceleration. Ideally, collaborations occur amongst small groups of teachers in grade levels or content areas around the high-quality materials they are using. Each school system/school leadership team has the autonomy to determine what the best configuration is for their school. School system leadership teams should support school leadership teams in best situating schedules that allow for this sacred, job-embedded time for teachers to hone their craft and effectively collaborate.

Similarly to both school system and school level ILT meetings, Teacher Collaboration should always follow the High Quality Professional Learning Cycle. This cycle allows for a clear purpose to be set for the meeting that is driven by teacher and student need, for teachers to receive new learning from a skilled facilitator (a member of the school-level ILT), and to internalize the new learning as they collaborate with peers based on their own student needs and upcoming lessons. Following the Teacher Collaboration, teachers are asked to implement their new learning from the session and collect student work to determine the impact of that implementation. This impact informs the next set of instructional decisions that a teacher makes to best serve the needs of all students.

Teacher Collaboration is designed to enable teachers to embrace collective teacher efficacy, thus creating the "collective self-perception that teachers in a given school make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact of their homes and communities (Hattie, 2016)." Teacher ownership of the Teacher Collaboration structure will ensure teachers enter meetings prepared to plan, discuss, and truly engage in purposeful conversations about how to best address the needs of all students.

The planning for TC meetings for the year should be directly aligned to the school and school system instructional goals. This allows for constant growth and feedback across all levels of the school and school system. Meetings should be organized around units from the high-quality curriculum, so that teachers are studying and planning for upcoming units and lessons based on the needs of all students. Planning for new learning by cycles of study that are focused and intentional will help to avoid a weekly "topic-hopping" approach and rather reinforces that the five steps of the High Quality Professional Learning Cycle build an arc of learning that enhances practices over time.

STEPS FOR SUCCESS

There are three critical steps to ensure a successful launch of the Teacher Collaboration professional learning structure.

1. **Planning before Implementation**
2. **Developing a TC Long-range Plan**
3. **Planning for each TC Meeting**

Each step links to guiding questions for system leaders to complete as they plan for implementation of a system Teacher Collaboration. These serve as a tool to support system leaders in thinking through the tactical elements that will help a system begin implementation that will evolve to transformation change.

CALL TO ACTION

The Roadmap provides clear guidance on the implementation of high-quality professional learning which is necessary to ensure the children of Louisiana receive an education that prepares them to graduate on time to enter college or the workforce. The LDOE professional learning structures provide systems with the elements that are integral to establishing and maintaining a culture rooted in making instructional decisions that build educator capacity, valuing teachers and leaders for their expertise in a way that nurtures ongoing collaboration.

As systems prepare to use this guidance to enhance or create climates focused on high-quality professional learning, use **Appendix G** to determine at what stage your system is utilizing these structures.

Then, reflect on the following:

1. **What is the academic vision of my system?**

2. **What beliefs about children and adults exist at the system level?**

3. **How will the system utilize the structures of ILT, TC, and career pipeline to maintain a focus on learning and teaching?**

4. **What can school system leaders model for school leaders in the planning and implementation of ILT?**

5. **What are the expectations for implementation of Instructional Leadership Teams at the system and school level?**

6. **How will system level Instructional Leadership Teams influence the direction of TC sessions?**

7. **What data will be collected to determine the needs of children and adults?**

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM: PLANNING BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDING QUESTIONS

These questions should be answered by the **leader of the ILT** to best prepare for the planning needed to determine the general outlines, parameters, and structures of the ILT **prior to inviting the full ILT**.

ILT: PLANNING BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION	
GUIDING QUESTION	**RESPONSE**
Who might participate in the ILT meetings? **School System Recommendation:** Members should be those within school system cabinet leadership who directly or indirectly impact instructional practice. (e.g., Superintendent/Executive, academic leader(s), financial leader, Human Resources leader, Special Education leader, English learner leader, Early Childhood leader). **School Recommendation:** Members should be those within school leadership who directly or indirectly impact instructional practice (e.g., principal, assistant principal(s), Content Leader(s), Mentor Teacher(s), special education leaders, grade or content teacher leaders).	
When will the team meet (date/time)? **School System Recommendation:** Weekly meetings are ideal, but they should not meet less than bi-monthly. **School Recommendation:** These should be held weekly.	
How long will the team meet? **Recommendation:** Approximately 60 minutes each week. Extend time if meetings are less frequent.	
Where will the team meet? **Recommendation:** A designated space for regular meetings is encouraged.	

ILT: PLANNING BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION	
GUIDING QUESTION	**RESPONSE**
Who will be responsible for creating the agenda? **School System Recommendation:** One member of the core leadership team who works in tandem with the superintendent that is responsible for planning. **School Recommendation:** This should be the principal or one member of the core leadership team that is responsible for planning.	
What will drive the agenda or be the focus of the meeting? **School System Recommendation:** The needs of leaders, teachers, and students will drive the areas of focus and align to the goals of the school system. The system will consider the needs of schools in curriculum implementation. **School Recommendation:** Determine what new learning the members need to meet the school instructional goals. Refer to the long range plan.	
What procedures, processes, or protocols will be used? **Recommendation:** Determine procedures, processes, or protocols to be used prior to planning individual meetings (e.g., High-Quality Professional Learning Cycle, 5 Steps for Effective Learning, ILT protocols).	
What will be the group norms? **Recommendation:** Dedicate time to setting norms specifically around engaging in and framing instructional conversations.	

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM: DEVELOPING THE ILT LONG-RANGE PLAN GUIDING QUESTIONS

These questions should be answered in **consultation with the full ILT prior to the first ILT meeting** in order to ensure that all perspectives and stakeholders are considered.

DEVELOPING THE ILT LONG-RANGE PLAN	
GUIDING QUESTION	**RESPONSE**
What data will be used to determine school system, school, leader, teacher, and student needs? **Recommendation:** Current student data, classroom evidence, and evaluation data can be used to determine needs.	
What school system, school, leader, teacher, and student needs exist? **Recommendation:** Current stakeholder data will be analyzed to determine how the ILT will meet the needs.	
Based on stakeholder needs, what will the ILT accomplish? **Recommendation:** Use identified needs to narrow the focus to a single stakeholder group. This will support the work of setting a short-term goal that will drive the work of the ILT.	
What school system-, school-, leader-, teacher-, and student-level data will be analyzed? **School System Recommendation:** Data should be inclusive of multiple measures (e.g., observations, curriculum-embedded assessments, student work samples, literacy screener progress monitoring, behavior, attendance) most appropriate for the content area and not limited to state-level data. The school system's strategic plan outlines key data aligned to the plan's goals and can be used here. **School Recommendation:** Use multiple measures (e.g., observations, curriculum-embedded assessments, student work samples, literacy screener progress monitoring, behavior, attendance) and consider looking at student group data, particularly if the school has a label for a specific student group.	
How will the highest level instructional needs based on that data be determined? **Recommendation:** Instructional decisions should be directly informed by the school system and school level instructional goals.	

DEVELOPING THE ILT LONG-RANGE PLAN	
GUIDING QUESTION	**RESPONSE**
How will plans address the needs throughout the year using data, growth plans, collaboration, and/or teacher evaluation? **Recommendation:** Determine a cadence of meetings aligned to the demonstrated instructional needs incorporating the listed items.	
What goals have, or can, be set for the areas of need throughout the school year? **Recommendation:** Determine milestones and goals aligned to the school system instructional goals through the year to monitor.	
How will the ILT create regular, high-quality observation and feedback cycles that reflect the identified needs of the leaders, teachers, and students? **Recommendation:** Identify who will conduct the cycles, how often they will occur, what tool and process will be used, and when the data will be used in an ILT meeting.	
How will the team monitor instructional goals throughout the school year to ensure progress? **Recommendation:** Determine milestones and goals through the year to monitor aligned to the school instructional goals.	
How can the ILT align the focus of meetings' overall instructional goals? **Recommendation:** Align meeting foci across the long-range plan to ensure timeliness throughout the year and opportunities for sustained learning over time.	
How will members collaborate in establishing the meeting's agenda? **Recommendation:** Determine collaborators based on meeting topic and scope.	
How will the desired outcomes be determined? **Recommendation:** Set meaningful expected outcomes aligned to the overall goal that can be progress monitored through the year.	

APPENDIX C

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM: PLANNING FOR EACH MEETING GUIDING QUESTIONS

These questions should be **completed by the full ILT** in the facilitation of the planning for the first ILT meeting.

PLANNING FOR EACH ILT MEETING	
GUIDING QUESTION	**RESPONSE**
What will the focus of this meeting be and who will determine it? **Recommendation:** Directly align the meeting's focus to priorities from the long-range plan.	
What data source will be used to establish the need during this meeting? **Recommendation:** Rely on the most appropriate data source (e.g., curriculum-embedded assessments, student work samples, attendance) for the goal at the time of the meeting.	
What will the members of the leadership team know or be able to do as a result of this meeting? **Recommendation:** Align the meeting focus to the overall goal of the ILT.	
Who will lead the meeting or sections of the meeting and will this require any additional members to be present? **Recommendation:** Ensure that the person with the most knowledge around the outcome facilitates the new learning.	
What materials or artifacts are needed for the meeting? **Recommendation:** Provide any materials needed to meet the outcomes of the meeting (e.g., data, schedules, curriculum, rubrics, school system plans)	
What will leadership team members develop as a result of the new learning? **Recommendation:** Align development to meeting outcomes.	

PLANNING FOR EACH ILT MEETING	
GUIDING QUESTION	**RESPONSE**
What new learning will be presented and how will it be presented? **Recommendation:** Consider how to align the learning with the relevant data and ideal outcomes from the meeting.	
Who will lead appropriate sections of the meeting and determine if additional members need to be present? **Recommendation:** Determine who has the best contextual knowledge based on the desired outcome of the meeting.	
Who is the best person to present this new learning? **Recommendation:** This may not be a regular member of the ILT, but the best person to present the learning.	
How will the ILT be asked to apply the new learning prior to the next team meeting(s)? **Recommendation:** Delineate clear next steps for each member aligned to new learning and the meeting focus.	
How will the ILT use data from regular, high-quality observation and feedback cycles? **Recommendation:** Identify trends across observations to drive the need for Teacher Collaboration or identify specific supports for one or a group of teachers based on data.	
How and when will team members evaluate the application of the outcome? **Recommendation:** Request documentation or evidence that the application was implemented. This can serve as a foundation for the next meeting and help determine if any additional follow-up is needed.	

TEACHER COLLABORATION: PLANNING BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDING QUESTIONS

These questions should be answered by the **school leader or coordinator of collaborative learning** to best prepare for the planning needed to determine the general outlines, parameters, and structures of the TC **prior to communicating the system to teachers**.

PLANNING BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION	
GUIDING QUESTION	**RESPONSE**
What makeup or structure for TC teams makes the most sense in the school context? **Recommendation:** TC teams should be made up of small groups of like teachers (e.g., pre-K-K, 1-2, 3-5, or by grade level or content area).	
When will the team meet (date/time)? **Recommendation:** These should be held weekly during the school day at a time specifically designated for TC.	
How long will the team meet? **Recommendation:** Approximately 60 minutes each week.	
Where will the team meet? **Recommendation:** A designated space for each TC is encouraged.	

PLANNING BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION	
GUIDING QUESTION	**RESPONSE**
Who will be responsible for creating the agenda? **Recommendation:** A teacher leader, grade level leader, Content Leader, Mentor Teacher, instructional coach, or other designated facilitator should create the agenda.	
What procedures, processes, or protocols will be used? **Recommendation:** Determine procedures, processes, or protocols to be used prior to planning individual meetings (e.g., High Quality Professional Learning Cycle, 5 Steps for Effective Learning, ILT protocols).	
What will drive the agenda or be the focus of the meeting? **School System Recommendation:** Leader, teacher, and student needs based on school system instructional goals and stage of implementation of high-quality instructional materials outlined in the school system's strategic plan and aligned learning needs of members of the ILT. **School Recommendation:** Determine what new learning the members need to meet the school instructional goals. Refer to the long range plan.	
What will be the group norms? **Recommendation:** Dedicate time to setting norms specifically around mindsets and ongoing learning.	

APPENDIX E

TEACHER COLLABORATION: DEVELOPING A TC LONG-RANGE PLAN

These questions should be answered in **consultation with the full TC group prior to the first TC meeting** in order to ensure that all perspectives and stakeholders are considered.

DEVELOPING A TC LONG-RANGE PLAN	
GUIDING QUESTION	**RESPONSE**
What school, teacher, and student level data will you analyze? **Recommendation:** Data should be inclusive of multiple measures, including curriculum-embedded assessments, and not limited to state-level data.	
How will the highest level needs based on that data be determined? **Recommendation:** Should be directly informed by curriculum-specific, school instructional goals.	
How will the needs be addressed throughout the year using data, growth plans, collaboration, and/or teacher evaluation? **Recommendation:** Determine a cadence of meetings aligned to the demonstrated instructional need incorporating the listed items.	

DEVELOPING A TC LONG-RANGE PLAN	
GUIDING QUESTION	**RESPONSE**
What goals can be set for the areas of need throughout the school year to check for progress? **Recommendation:** Determine milestones and goals through the year to monitor aligned to the school instructional goals.	
What cadence of meetings meets the instructional needs of the TC? **Recommendation:** TC should have a cadence in which cycles focus on a topic, learning, or module for a set number of meetings.	
How can the TC align their meeting outcomes to those named in the goals? **Recommendation:** Align outcomes within the cadence to align to timeliness of milestones and goals, ensuring a continuum for learning and development.	

APPENDIX F

TEACHER COLLABORATION: PLANNING FOR EACH TC MEETING

These questions should be **completed by the full TC group** in the facilitation of the planning for the first TC meeting.

PLANNING FOR EACH TC MEETING	
GUIDING QUESTION	**RESPONSE**
What data or evidence has been gathered related to the instructional goals? **Recommendation:** This evidence should align with the long-range plan and can be student data, classroom evidence, evaluation data, or anything that may inform TC learning.	
Based on the data, what identified instructional needs will be addressed during the meeting? **Recommendation:** This should be based on the long-range plan as well as the real-time data collected between TC meetings.	
What materials or artifacts are needed for the meeting? **Recommendation:** Provide any materials needed to meet the outcomes of the meeting (e.g., student work, student data, schedules, curriculum, rubrics).	
What new learning will be obtained by TC members to address the identified need? **Recommendation:** This new learning should be formatted for classroom application, be based on credible sources, and have a proven application showing student growth.	

PLANNING FOR EACH TC MEETING	
GUIDING QUESTION	**RESPONSE**
What will be developed by TC members to demonstrate their understanding of the new learning and readiness to apply in the classroom? **Recommendation:** This should support classroom instruction through demonstration, modeling, practice, and peer coaching with analysis of student work.	
How will TC members apply the new learning in the classroom? **Recommendation:** Evidence of application should be seen through observation, peer coaching, and self reflection applied to student work within specific learning of TC and be shared at the next meeting.	
How and when will the group evaluate the impact of learning on student performance? **Recommendation:** This could include analyzing student assessment data aligned to the new learning.	
How will the TC group be asked to apply the new learning prior to the next team meeting? **Recommendation:** Delineate clear next steps for each member aligned to new learning and the meeting focus.	

STAGES AND ALIGNED SUPPORT ACTIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS AND TEACHER COLLABORATION

STAGE 1: IMPLEMENTATION	STAGE 2: APPLICATION	STAGE 3: EVALUATION

• Determining meeting logistics (day, time, frequency)
 	
• Including key team members who serve as instructional leaders in various capacities
 	
• Using current plans as well as student and teacher data to identify needs
 	
• Setting goals to meet needs
 	
• Determining timeline for goal attainment and progress monitoring
 	
• Creating agendas/plans to identify actions that will be taken to meet needs
 	
• Communicating implementation actions to key stakeholders
 	
• Soliciting feedback from key stakeholders regarding implementation efforts
 	
• Determine what feedback to apply and finalize regarding implementation efforts
	• Determining actions needed to attain goals
	
	• Distributing leadership by assigning specific tasks to ILT/TC members
	
	• Identifying resources needed to support goal attainment
	
	• Using agendas/plans to conduct classroom, ILT, and/or TC observations to
	
	  » determine what high-quality feedback will be provided;
	
	  » ensure identified needs
	    › are still relevant,
	    › contextualized to a specific campus, grade level, or leader, and
	    › are addressed through the ILT/TC.
	
	• Providing numerous opportunities for members to collaborate around a common need
	
	• Collecting relevant data
	
	• Reflecting upon relevant data
		• Using relevant data to monitor progress towards goal attainment
		
		• Using relevant data and work samples from students and teachers to provide high-quality feedback to key stakeholders regarding instructional practices and use of HQIM
		
		• Using relevant data to identify any gaps in plans and/or support actions
		
		• Using qualitative and quantitative data to adjust plans and inform goals and agenda items
		
		• Using relevant data to determine whether ILT/TC sessions increased members' capacity to make instructional decisions

SCHOOL SYSTEM ILT LONG RANGE PLAN TEMPLATE

Long-range plans detail the short term goals and actions in which ILTs engage to attain rigorous and realistic goals centered on improving learning and teaching. High-quality plans include a measurable goal, aligned, cycle of learnings, the resources utilized, and what actions occur after the meeting.

SCHOOL SYSTEM ILT LONG RANGE PLAN 20XX–20XX					
System Goal:					

CYCLE 1

Timeframe:					
Priority:					
Short Term Goal (STG):					
Week/Date	**Topic/s**			**...sources**	**Progress/Next Steps**

*The **timeframe** in which the ILT will focus learning and the duration of the cycle.*

Key shifts communicated by the LDOE and/or system specific instructional priorities.

*Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely **goal** that leads to system **goal** attainment.*

CYCLE 2

Timeframe:					
P...					
S...					
Week/Date	**Topic/s**	**Outcomes**	**Objectives**	**Materials/Resources**	**Progress/Next Steps**

Details the actions ILT members will take after the meeting.

Details what ILT members will know and be able to do by the end of the meeting that prepares them to achieve the outcome of the meeting.

Chunks and sequences learning received by ILT members.

Details specific assignments on how each ILT member will apply learning from each meeting.

CYCLE 3

Timeframe:					
Priority:					
Short Term G...					
Week/Date				**Materials/Resources**	**Progress/Next Steps**

Identifies the things needed to support ILT members in meeting the objective. Should include relevant LDOE guidance and HQIM resources.

SYSTEM LEVEL ELA ILT MEETING AGENDA SAMPLE

Define the Purpose

In Pelican Parish, middle school ELA LEAP 2025 data are not growing at the same rate as other grade levels. School system leaders look at the data by school, teacher, and by individual student groups, paying special attention to students with disabilities, who are historically underserved when compared to their peers, and who once again, did not receive the high-quality, differentiated instruction to yield improved academic outcomes. Using the most recent ELA LEAP 2025 data, the Director of Student Learning (DSL) determined that Pelican Middle School has significant student and teacher needs. The DSL displays this data in the ILT conference room to signal the purpose for this next cycle of learning: School system leaders will identify best practices to set system wide expectations in middle school ELA classrooms.

Receive New Learning

The DSL discusses the guiding questions she used when observing a middle school ELA classroom:

- What is the teacher doing and saying?
- What are the students doing and saying?
- What is the curriculum asking of students in this particular lesson?
- What evidence exists of student learning?
- How do teachers know that transfer of new learning took place?

The use of student-centered questions allowed her to focus on how teacher actions, aligned to HQIM, influence student learning. The DSL models how to use these questions, what she observed, and shares takeaways from the observation.

Internalize and Practice

The ILT develops a plan to observe a variety of middle school ELA classrooms across the systems and determines what additional look fors they may add, such as adding a list of guiding questions to include the parts of a lesson:

- Does the lesson include explicit instruction?
- Does the lesson include an opportunity for students to practice?
- Does the lesson include an opportunity for students to demonstrate individual mastery?
- How are diverse learners supported during independent practice?

The ILT also develops a plan to observe middle school ELA teacher collaboration and determines a list of guiding questions. These may include:

- What need is driving the purpose of the collaboration?
- What new learning is taking place?
- How does the Internalize and Practice part of the HQPL Cycle lead to changes in classroom practices?
- What role does HQIM play in the teacher collaboration?

Implement Learning

The ILT conducts observations of middle school ELA classrooms and teacher collaborations using the planned guiding questions to collect evidence.

Assess Impact

At the next ILT, the ILT members will share the evidence they collected from their observations, identify trends, and develop a set of system-wide best practices in ELA classrooms.

SYSTEM LEVEL MATH ILT MEETING AGENDA SAMPLE

Assess Impact

Last meeting, we left with assignments to observe K-5 math classrooms since we are focusing on improving student responses to Type II reasoning and Type III modeling questions on assessments. We observed classrooms during independent practice, during math instruction, and teacher collaboration looking for evidence of planning for student engagement with modeling and reasoning questions.

Resources: Math K-12 Planning Resources

Define the Purpose

We noticed through observations, teacher collaboration conversations, and a survey of the student curriculum workbooks that reasoning and modeling problems are consistently skipped during lessons. In addition, on the first end-of-module assessment, students received partial or no credit on Type II and Type III questions (modeling and reasoning questions).

Based on the data from multiple observations and end-of-module assessment data, today we will

• consider what actions teachers need to take for students to experience the full depth of lessons and

• determine action support steps.

Receive New Learning

To ensure students are engaging with the full depth of the mathematics standards, the school system Math Lead will

• identify the parts of the math lesson that most often embed mathematical reasoning and modeling with three concrete examples and

• model one example of successful reasoning or modeling within the classroom.

> › Ask participants: What did you notice? What do you wonder? What skills and knowledge are needed to ensure students are able to perform at this level of rigor? What are some important teacher actions? What are some important student actions?

Internalize and Practice

ILT members will study an annotated lesson and plan for next week's support for principals. School leaders will watch a model of how to review an annotated lesson and consider the following questions:

• Are students experiencing the full depth of the lesson?

• How do the planning decisions impact students' experience with the math of the sample lesson?

• What teacher actions must be present in order for students to experience the full depth of this lesson? What student actions must be present in order for students to experience the full depth of this lesson?

Resources: Math Planning Guide

Implement Learning

ILT members will plan for the following support at the schools they support:

• Support school leaders who lead teacher collaboration with side-by-side support in which teachers will identify the modeling and reasoning problems they commit to completing with students.

• Support school leaders who lead teacher collaboration will either modeling or supporting teachers with the lesson chosen in teacher collaboration.

• Walkthrough of the focus lesson discussed during teacher collaboration and complete the observation walkthrough tool to bring back to our next meeting to assess the impact.

Resources: Math Planning Guide; Sample Annotated Lesson Plans

SYSTEM LEVEL LITERACY ILT MEETING AGENDA SAMPLE

Assess Impact

Last meeting, we left with assignments to observe K-3 classrooms since we are focusing on our shifts in early literacy and our implementation of our improvements outlined in our local literacy plan. Since we have teachers indicate in their schedules when they implement intervention, we observed K-3 ELA intervention blocks where teachers are pulling small groups of students while other students work in learning centers.

We also administered our middle-of-the-year literacy screener in K-3 grade classrooms and disseminated the results to our system level ILT to begin to analyze prior to the meeting.

Define the Purpose

Look at the following data points:

- *MOY data summary from literacy screeners*
- *Notes from our school system ILT learning walks during literacy intervention*

Discuss as a group:

- What system-wide trends do we notice in our MOY data? For example, do we have a student group that is disproportionately below level?
- How does our MOY data correlate with our learning walk notes?
- What schools may need targeted support based on their MOY results?

Receive New Learning

Today, we will utilize the various mid-year screener data scenarios and the **Focusing the Lens: Analyzing Mid-Year Screener Data for Maximum Impact** to prepare for our conversations with principals and their subsequent conversations with their teachers around the data.

The ILT will reflect on the scenarios and how to use the data to create actions for schools.

Internalize and Practice

Discuss:

- What change do we want to drive through these mid-year conversations that will impact our end-of-year data? How does this align to our local literacy plan?
- Based on the new learning just received, what are OUR expectations for MOY data conversations? How will we set and communicate expectations for what data analysis conversations should take place between principals and teachers? What role should our literacy coaches play in these conversations?
- From what we absorbed during New Learning, what are our expectations for when and how the conversations will take place?
- How will we prepare and support principals in their own data analysis and in their conversations with teachers?
- What are we seeing in classrooms that resulted in this MOY data?

Implement Learning

Use the reflection guide to implement MOY screener data conversations with our assigned principals. Observe each of your assigned principals having at least one conversation and provide feedback to that principal based on the best practices we discussed in ILT. Bring back your observation and coaching notes to share during the next ILT and refine our template.

SYSTEM LEVEL SCIENCE ILT MEETING AGENDA SAMPLE

Assess Impact

Note: This is the second meeting of this cycle. In the previous meeting, the team reviewed the Classroom Observation Tool and the **Shifts in Science** called for by the Louisiana Student Standards for Science.

We noticed through observations of science classrooms that lessons seem to be more teacher-centered than intended by our high quality science curriculum. When analyzing observation notes from the Classroom Observation Tool, we noted a pattern across classrooms in Indicator 2 that we did not see all students actively thinking about and discussing the work within lessons.

Resource: 2020-2021 Classroom Observation Tool; Shifts in Science

Define the Purpose

Based on the data collected, the purpose of today's meeting is to consider why student-centered opportunities within the curriculum are underutilized to inform appropriate support.

Receive New Learning

Analyze lesson materials of the HQIM with a focus on the teacher support and student activities in order to determine what opportunities for student engagement were present compared to what was seen during instruction.

The Science Lead will highlight an annotated example from a lesson where students actively make sense of the science phenomenon including specific supports for instructional routines. Annotations include

- how the three dimensions support student engagement;
- coherence and connections among lesson components; and
- instructional routines that support student sensemaking.

Members reflect on how teachers might use this process to identify and leverage opportunities within the lesson for student thinking and discussion with the overall goal of more student-centered science classrooms in mind.

Resources: Planning Guide for Science Instruction (step 3: Lesson Set Annotation); Sample Annotated Lesson; Science Talk Moves; Supporting Student Sensemaking

Internalize and Practice

ILT members annotate an upcoming lesson using the same protocol. Members reflect on:

- how the three dimensions support student engagement;
- coherence and connections among lesson components; and
- instructional routines that support student sensemaking.

ILT members share how this process would help them identify opportunities within the curriculum for students to actively think about and discuss their learning within the lesson. They will also discuss what additional resources might be needed to fully leverage these opportunities when implementing the lesson.

Resources: Planning Guide for Science Instruction (step 3: Lesson Set Annotation); Sample Annotated Lesson; Science Talk Moves; Supporting Student Sensemaking

Implement Learning

ILT members will lead teacher collaboration on their respective school sites with science teachers where they will:

- provide the sample annotated lesson, highlighting opportunities for student engagement and sensemaking;
- guide teachers in annotating an upcoming lesson using the same protocol; and
- charge teachers with implementing the lesson and reflecting on successes and challenges to bring back to the next collaborative planning meeting.

ILT member(s) will model collaboratively planned lesson for science teacher and/or science teacher team with a focus on demonstrating opportunities for student sensemaking within the model lesson. ILT members will debrief with teacher(s) upon completion of the model lesson for key look fors and applications to their future practice.

ILT members will continue to observe and guide teacher planning followed by classroom observations of the lessons to assess the impact of this planning cycle.

Resources: Planning Guide for Science Instruction (step 3: Lesson Set Annotation); Sample Annotated Lesson; Science Talk Moves; Supporting Student Sensemaking

SYSTEM LEVEL BEST PRACTICES FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS ILT MEETING AGENDA SAMPLE

Assess Impact

This is the first meeting of this cycle.

Define the Purpose

The performance of students with disabilities is actively monitored in data that is collected. Based on most recent data, students with disabilities continue to remain behind regular education students in LEAP performance. While 2021-2022 data indicates that students with disabilities saw a 1% increase in mastery and 2022-2023 data showed a 2% increase, so did regular education students, and so the gap remains. Closing this gap is a key in Louisiana. The goal is to close the gap by 5% in the next 5 years, or by 2028.

- Achievement gap of students with disabilities compared to typically developing peers at a school system, school, and teacher level on last year's LEAP scores and literacy screeners
- Placement of diverse learners based on student schedules and Individualized Education Programs
- Student schedules
- Inventory of both special education and general education areas of expertise (what subject are they content strong)
- Special education, general education, para educators, speech language pathologist, and support staff schedules
- Individual teacher schedules to determine core instruction times
- How do students with disabilities' scores compare to typically developing peers?
- Is there a specific school and teacher with data that show exceptional growth in closing the achievement gap?
- What percentage of students with disabilities attend core instruction?

Receive New Learning

To attain our goal of increasing achievement of students with disabilities, a focus will be placed on the implementation of three instructional best practices. Guidance and support will be focused on improving outcomes for students with disabilities by addressing the following needs:

- Prioritizing core instruction for all students
- Creating schedules that provide dedicated extra time to learn
- Capitalizing on the strengths of educators and building capacity to ensure instruction is delivered in the subject area that they are content strong

If we are committed to improving outcomes for students with disabilities, we must review the Louisiana Department of Education **Special Education Playbook for System Leaders** and hold collaborative meetings to learn/implement the new guidance.

The ILT will discuss reflections from the best practices.

The ILT will discuss the components below which are imperative to ensure the success of best practice implementation.

- How do student's schedules align with the appropriate placement for the student's needs as indicated on the Individualized Education Program?
- Are special education students being pulled out during core instruction?
- Are students grouped by area of specific need for interventions?
- Do teachers' lesson plans show annotations for specifically designed instruction (SDI)?
- Are teachers scheduled to teach in their area of expertise?

Internalize and Practice/Development

To ensure best practices are being implemented

- Identify
  - › How our school system's support actions align to the three best instruction practices outlined in the Special Education Playbook,
  - › Percentage of students with disabilities that are receiving appropriate access to core instruction,
  - › Percentage of students who are provided extra time to learn in a group with common needs, and
  - › Percentage of content strong teachers who are teaching in their area of expertise.
- Develop a plan for system-level team to conduct a needs assessment.
  - › Review data and information regarding best practices.
  - › Complete learning walks with special education lead teachers, coordinators, principals, and directors and use the self-assessment to gather additional data about current practices.
  - › Complete walk-thrus to gather specific data and observational notes regarding what is occurring during classroom observations.

Implement Learning

The following items will be implemented prior to the next meeting:

- Once observations and walk-throughs have been completed, complete an internal review of findings, conduct a self-assessment of the best practices
- Create an action plan for next steps

APPENDIX I

The following case studies provide insight on implementation of ILTs in four school systems.

A STOP AT EAST FELICIANA PARISH SCHOOLS

District: East Feliciana

Size: 6 schools

Enrollment: 1672 students

Demographics:

- Rural
- 76% Economically Disadvantaged
- 57.1% Black
- 38.5% White

Background

The East Feliciana Public School System is a small rural district located in eastern Louisiana. Keisha Netterville, who has been its Superintendent since 2019, summarizes her leadership: *"I'm all about building capacity and my people."* True to her words, Superintendent Netterville has leveraged the Professional Learning Roadmap to develop every educator's capacity–from district leaders to principals to teachers–to better meet students' needs. These are some of the essential ways that the system has strategically developed educator capacity and strengthened its instructional practices.

Strategic and Supportive District ILT

Superintendent Netterville created a high-functioning system-level Instructional Leadership Team. This team includes these roles: Superintendent, Executive Master Teacher, Curriculum Coordinator, Assessment and Accountability, and Exceptional Student Services. Superintendent Netterville calls it a *"melting pot of people with different levels and areas of expertise."* This team meets weekly to fulfill its key responsibilities: analyze and disaggregate system-wide data, establish clear goals, create and implement its long-range plan, and reflect on how to adjust their services. Their data includes academic sources such as curriculum-embedded assessments as well as attendance and behavior. They use these trends to create goals that are tied to student achievement. This team also conducts frequent site visits to schools to study curriculum implementation and observe classroom practices.

Beyond its technical systems and structures, this team shares several deeply held beliefs about their crucial roles. First, they are deeply committed to supporting their schools. As Superintendent Netterville says, *"We are not a school system that sits back and allows schools to just function on autopilot. We're there to support them."* In addition to directly helping schools, they also understand that they need to value and motivate all educators. "It has to start at the top. People need to feel supported and they need to feel as though what they're doing is meaningful." Finally, they understand this team needs to model the way, making it clear that they are invested in doing the work.

> **"You have to walk the walk if you want to see results."**

Meaningful Principal Development

The East Feliciana Parish Public School System prioritizes the important role of principals. Their theory of action is strategic and clear. *"We need to make sure that our school leaders are equipped and able to go into classrooms, observe curriculum implementation, and provide high-quality feedback to teachers."* While the system is proud of its principal hires, it also believes in the importance of continuously developing their instructional leadership capacity. To do so effectively, it has created three structures. First, there are monthly principal collaboration meetings. Superintendent Netterville is quite clear that these sessions are always focused on academics, and they are never something that could simply be communicated in an email or newsletter. Instead, these sessions are designed to develop principals' instructional skills, and then give them time to design their roll-out at their site. As Superintendent Netterville says,

> **"You don't leave with a bunch of notes and confusion. You leave with—this is what I'm going to do."**

Secondly, the system hosts quarterly Data Share meetings. During this time, principals share their instructional data trackers, goals, and action plans. The system's role is to ask clarifying and probing questions, and then offer feedback and support. This is an opportunity for the system and school to dig deeply into data to determine how to make instructional improvements and address major challenges.

Principals also receive coaching on how to lead their school-based instructional leadership teams. These teams include the principal, assistant principal, master teacher, and 3-4 mentors. Just like the system's ILT, this team has an overarching long range plan that is supported by distinct cycles of improvement and consistent agendas.

Robust Teacher Leadership

The system has also invested time and resources into teacher leadership, particularly funding two critical positions with salary supplements: Mentor Teachers and Master Teachers. Master teachers are instructional coaches. Mentor Teachers are career teachers with a regular schedule except they have one additional off-period during which time they coach their peers. Not only does this strengthen teacher practice, but it also provides an internal leadership pipeline within the system. Superintendent Netterville praised them, *"I can't stress enough how important Mentors and Master Teachers are because they go in, they teach, they follow up, they give that support."* These roles also

enable the district to adopt a train-the-trainer model as well as test out and modify its new initiatives and strategies before rolling them out with teachers.

Ongoing Teacher Development

All teachers in the school system have job-embedded professional learning through their weekly collaboration. This time is considered sacred, and it is well-accepted as a key responsibility of being a teacher. During this collaboration time, teachers discuss and learn curriculum implementation, data analysis, strategies for instructional delivery, and methods to differentiate for individual students. It is designed so that teachers receive targeted feedback about a specific topic. As Superintendent Netterville says, "we'll work on that little thing until we get you to the point as a teacher that you're not only bettering yourself, but you're also helping your students to learn better because you are pacing your lessons out a little bit faster, not rushing through certain components or elements of the lesson." This approach to professional learning has allowed them to grow their novice teachers into proficient and effective ones; additionally, they have a 92% teacher retention rate, which could be due to this type of purposeful and individualized support.

Clear Instructional Practices

The system is committed to curriculum implementation with fidelity and purposeful assessments. In previous years, they adopted Tier 1 curricula in every content area, providing teachers with training in how to implement it. After understanding the overall curricular materials, the system has helped teachers understand how to annotate their lesson plans and individualize them for specific students. In doing so, they have begun to focus more on data and assessments to determine which students need which supports in order to master those standards. This year teachers are grappling with this question: "This is what I'm going to teach, here's how I'll deliver it, and how will I know that students actually get it?" From there, school leaders are working with teachers to leverage assessments.

Next Steps

Superintendent Netterville praised the LDOE: "They have been wonderful, nothing but supportive of me and my journey." Overall, the system intends to continue to implement these high-impact practices while improving a few areas next year. As the system leader, Superintendent Netterville wants to develop other district leaders so they can facilitate system ILT meetings and take on more responsibilities.

A STOP AT GEO ACADEMIES OF BATON ROUGE

School System Type: Charter

Size: 4 schools

Enrollment: 1,800

Demographics:

- 75% Economically Disadvantaged
- 92% Black
- 3% White
- 3% Hispanic

Background

GEO Academies is a charter school network with four schools in Baton Rouge: two K-8 schools, one K-2, and one high school. It currently serves over 1,800 students, most of whom qualify for free or reduced lunch. Its Chief Academic Officer, Sandra Douglas, oversees the four Louisiana sites.

GEO Academies has TAP schools, which is a system for teacher and student advancement. Lowell Milken, the founder and chairman of NIET, created TAP as a comprehensive approach to develop educator capacity and increase student achievement. It includes four key components: multiple career paths, ongoing applied professional growth, instructionally focused accountability, and performance-based compensation.

GEO Academies exemplifies how a school system can strategically leverage data to continuously improve its schools. They have created clear systems to consistently collect and analyze data at all levels from student performance to teacher observations to survey feedback. In alignment with the Professional Learning Roadmap, this data has informed their goals and action plans to better meet the needs of their students.

> "Instructional planning is the iterative, cyclical process by which data, high-quality instructional materials, and high-quality professional learning coalesce to result in creating goals that meet the diverse needs of children and adults."

These are some of the essential ways that GEO Academies leverages its data.

Data Drive District Improvement

GEO Academies has a strong Instructional Leadership Team that oversees the entire network's improvement. It is comprised of these roles: Chief Academic Officer; Deputy Academic Officer; Content Director in ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies; Special Education Director; and Data Coordinator. This team begins every biweekly meeting by reviewing data together ranging from student assessment scores to teacher survey results to pieces of student work. They use this data to ground their conversation about how they can best focus their efforts to support schools. For example, GEO Academies teachers receive at least 12 hours of professional learning a month as TAP Schools. Sandra Douglas explained that they use the network-wide data to plan these sessions, *"we use data to guide what professional development we feel teachers need based on student needs and teacher needs."*

In addition, the ILT disaggregates and analyzes its student data to determine its instructional priorities. They pay particularly close attention to how to best support their students with disabilities and their English learners. Last year, they reviewed student work samples from student assessments to dig deeply into gaps in student learning. They have already adopted Tier 1 curricula for math, science, and ELA, so they decided to promote academic discourse and writing to increase rigor. These data trends helped them create specific goals to mobilize the entire network.

Data Drive School Improvement

In addition to the network ILT, every school has its own school-based ILT, which is led by the principal. This team includes the principal, assistant principal, Mentor Teachers, and a new role, Executive Master Teachers. They meet consistently every week, using the same TAP agenda which is centered on data. There is pre-work prior to every meeting which involves analyzing the most recent set of data. This enables the team to be ready to engage in robust dialogue when they come together. During the meeting, they share their reflections and then discuss how to adjust their support for teachers and students. While all schools in the GEO Academies network use the same agenda and approach, they have the flexibility to choose their data and design their specific based on their school's needs.

Data Drive Teacher Collaboration

GEO Academies believes in the importance of teacher collaboration to internalize curriculum, analyze standards-based data, and strengthen instruction. All teachers meet weekly in small grade-level or content-like teams using a consistent agenda and rubric. During these Cluster meetings, teachers bring their curriculum manuals and student work.

According to Sandra Douglas, the purpose of these meetings is so that

> **"teachers get an opportunity to collaborate with each other, look at their data, look at student work, and also possibly learn a new strategy based on the data. Everything is centered on what you see kids doing or not doing."**

Teachers should leave Cluster meetings with a new insight or strategy that they can implement in their classrooms within the next week. GEO Academies currently has high teacher retention, which could be due to its emphasis on teacher support through these purposeful Cluster meetings.

In addition to classroom teachers, the Cluster meetings are also attended by teaching assistants and district ILT members. Most GEO Academies classrooms have a teacher and a teaching assistant. When feasible, Teacher Assistants participate in all staff trainings, including Cluster meetings, so that they have the same opportunity to learn the strategies and content in the upcoming lessons. The system ILT members participate in these teacher Cluster meetings, so that they can provide direct support and gain a better understanding of teacher needs.

Data Drive Principal Support

GEO Academies also uses data to develop its principals' capacity as instructional leaders. Principals and assistant principals are expected to conduct at least 10 classroom observations a week. The network created a common walkthrough form for classroom observations. Every Friday, school leaders submit their observations to the centralized systems. This system allows the network leaders to review all observational data to determine how to provide targeted support to teachers and leaders.

Additionally, GEO Academies has bi-annual data stepback meetings with its school leaders. The principals present their school-level data and action plans to the network leaders. For example, after the first semester, each principal collects and analyzes its fall data based on student assessments, teacher surveys, and other measures. They synthesize this data into an action plan that they share with the network leaders to get their feedback. This way, the network and school leaders are able to launch the second semester with a clear collaborative plan grounded in data and goals.

Data is Bite-Sized

Overall, one of their key learnings around data is to keep it manageable and actionable. They recommend collecting a variety of information to get a deep understanding about a system's strengths, needs, gaps, and opportunities. However, they recommend only focusing on 1-2 priorities. They select a target area, and then they continuously work to improve it at all levels. Sandra Douglas advises, *"keep data in small bite-sized pieces."* In doing so, they can ensure that all instructional meetings are focused on this priority, and they can easily monitor progress and implementation.

Next Steps

GEO Academies will continue to implement the best practices articulated in the Professional Learning Roadmap. As Sandra Douglas said, *"I've been in this game a long time, and I like the direction we're heading in. I feel more informed and I feel more supported."* Instructionally, GEO Academies wants to strengthen its ELA instruction, so that will be the focus on its two-week summer training for teachers. In terms of systems, they want to improve their system ILT by being more consistent with their agenda and starting earlier in the year. This way, they can immediately support schools with their action plans.

A STOP IN NATCHITOCHES PARISH SCHOOLS

District: Natchitoches Parish

Size: 14 schools

Enrollment: 5,158 students

Demographics:

- 90.8% Economically Disadvantaged
- 56% Black
- 35.9% White
- 3.5% Hispanic
- 3.3% Multiple races

Background

Natchitoches Parish School District is a medium-sized school district serving 5,655 students in central Louisiana. Grant Eloi became Superintendent in 2020. Under Eloi's leadership, Natchitoches has made significant improvements. Last year, it was the highest-growing district in the state for proficiency growth and it has doubled its literacy scores in kindergarten through third grade.

Its school system Instructional Leadership Team includes the Superintendent; the Director of Teaching and Learning; a Teaching and Learning Specialist in Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies; a Data and Accountability Director; and a school turnaround specialist. This team meets regularly to collect and review system-wide data. They disaggregate their data based on student groups, and use these trends to set their system-wide goals and long-range plan.

Superintendent Eloi attributes their growth to their system-wide focus on the following key practices.

Early Literacy

After analyzing its district-wide data, the Instructional Leadership Team decided that Early Literacy needed to be a top priority. At the time, only 34% of students in Kindergarten through third grade were reading proficiently. This was not only having a significant impact on those students' experiences in school, but it was also affecting the educational outcomes in all subsequent grade levels. They set a long-range goal to be 100% proficient within five years. To achieve this, they needed to make two significant changes across the system. First, they adopted a new, high quality literacy curriculum and trained teachers in its implementation. Simultaneously, they provided all elementary teachers with an intense training in the Science of Reading. While these two decisions required a significant amount of time and resources, they are already seeing the gains with their K-3 literacy doubling in a year.

School Instructional Leadership Teams

Natchitoches credits some of its growth to the strengthening of its school-based Instructional Leadership Teams. Superintendent Eloi shared that these instructional teams have become important to schools: *"They have become sacred, they value it, they put in the time for it, they do their pre-planning."*

> It is creating momentum: the schools with stronger ILTs are making greater gains.

To build the buy-in and capacity to lead these teams, the system led intense ILT trainings to empower and coach principals. They made it clear that it was a non-negotiable practice, and they provided the support to develop principals' knowledge and skills to make these teams effective. Superintendent Eloi remembers that he started this training by saying, *"Some of y'all have been flirting with ILTs. It's now time to propose and get married because it's a non-negotiable."*

Their school-based ILTs are finding it most effective to connect their goals, data, and action plans directly to classroom experiences. Superintendent Eloi explained that one site had started to stagnate during quarter 2. In response, they focused on implementing best practices in quarter three, making sure that their support was relevant, purposeful, and actionable for teachers and students. Suddenly the school saw massive growth as these shifts in practice led to significantly different results.

Quarterly Data Meetings

In addition to weekly school ILT meetings, the system also holds quarterly data reviews with all schools. During this time, schools share their updated and disaggregated data as well as their action plans. The system asks questions such as *"Can you explain this trend to us?"* or *"What are you doing to fix that gap?"* After the system provides feedback, then they have a collaborative conversation about how the system can provide additional targeted support, such as a science specialist or another resource. For example, one school realized that one of its newer teachers needed more content support, but she had a new baby at home so it was difficult for her to stay after school; collaboratively, the system and school decided to carve out a half hour of the teacher's day so that she could receive direct support from a specialist without having to stay longer. These quarterly data meetings repeat throughout the year. When the school comes back the next quarter, the district is able to see if it has implemented its action steps and if those have led to improvement, so it becomes a continuous conversation about how to leverage data to get better.

Master Teachers

The system also invested significant time and money in its Master Teachers program. When Superintendent Eloi was hired, he decided to elevate and promote this position. According to him, *"I would say these are the most valuable people in our entire district."* They created a buzz about this new position and provided a $10,000 stipend. Additionally, they increased the selection criteria, requiring three letters of recommendation, videotaped lessons, and an hour-long interview. They also made it clear that if a Master Teacher doesn't meet expectations, then they lose their stipend and return to the classroom.

As a result of these efforts, they were able to recruit and hire 15 exceptional Master Teachers, who have provided tremendous modeling and coaching to teachers. The Master Teachers have been able to balance this dual role, embedding themselves within the school community while also representing the system voice. The system is able to roll out strategic initiatives to these Master Teachers during their monthly PDs. After the Master Teachers have learned it, then they roll it out to their schools. This ensures that the strategy is shared with the same key messages and modeling throughout the system. Superintendent Eloi emphasized, *"Everything we do is strategic to the initiatives we're doing. And so the voice coming from the Master Teachers is consistent."*

These Master Teachers also play a critical role with teacher collaboration, known as Cluster Time. Master Teachers facilitate Cluster sessions, integrating data analysis, curriculum internalization, lesson planning, and system initiatives, into these weekly collaborative sessions. At first, teachers were hesitant about these changes to Cluster time, but there is more buy-in now that they are experiencing how much it benefits their instruction. In addition to providing teacher support, these Master Teachers also share feedback and insights with the district, creating a clear communication loop that enables everyone to be on the same team.

Next Steps

Superintendent Eloi remains committed to the work in the Louisiana Professional Learning Roadmap: "I love the direction LDOE is going in." He plans to continue to strengthen these practices by emphasizing the importance of consistency. To do so, he wants to adopt a more formal structure for the district ILT. Secondly, he wants to ensure that all schools are consistent with their own ILTs, even if that means applying greater accountability to some of them that need to take more ownership. Ultimately, Natchitoches plans to continue its tremendous growth trajectory.

> **"Last year we moved from a C to a B this year. We will have no F schools in our district, and we're going to be an A within the next five years."**

A STOP IN WEBSTER PARISH SCHOOLS

District: Webster Parish

Size: 14 schools

Enrollment: 5,264 students

Demographics:
- Rural
- 76% Economically Disadvantaged
- 50.2% White
- 42.4% Black
- 3.5% Multiple Races
- 3.1% Hispanic

Background

Webster Parish is a medium-sized rural school system with 14 schools serving approximately 5,700 students in northwest Louisiana. It was named a Top 10 district for growth in Louisiana; it attributes its success to its instructional leadership teams and thoughtful goal-setting approach in alignment with the Louisiana Professional Learning Roadmap.

Dusty Rangel is the Curriculum and Instruction Supervisor, and she leads the system's Instructional Leadership Team. In the past, this team was comprised of system-level supervisors; however, Dusty realized that it would be more effective to include those who are working directly at school sites. As she says, *"It was an epiphany. We had to work with the people who are in schools all of the time. This was going to make the biggest difference."*

During the past year, this team has made significant progress in its goal setting, action planning, data monitoring, and overall system improvement. This team collects and analyzes various types of system level data, such as assessments, DIBELS, and LEAP scores. Then they synthesize all of this information to create their system-wide goals. As the Professional Learning Roadmap emphasizes, *"Through goal-setting, the school system charts a clear and coherent course that supports capacity-building by providing necessary support."* Webster Parish is an excellent example of how a school district can strengthen its instruction by creating clear shared actionable goals that are connected to student data.

Goals Are Shared

Many systems invest time and resources in creating goals that only stay at the system level. In contrast, Webster Parish used its system goal-setting process to mobilize and inspire the entire community around a shared vision. This past year, Webster Parish decided to focus on student learning outcomes, specifically increasing the percentage of students scoring Mastery on the statewide assessment. From there, its Instructional Leadership Team communicated this goal frequently and broadly, even including it at the top of all instructional meeting agendas. ILT members shared this overarching goal with school leaders, asking them to consider how their school would help achieve it. Then school leaders created their own school-based goals and action plans in alignment with this broader system goal. Dusty Rangel reflected that there was a shared commitment: *"we are all teaching different things, but what do we each need to do to help us reach this goal?"* As a result, all staff members within Webster Parish were working toward the same outcomes for students.

Goals are SMART

Dusty Rangel credits their adoption of the SMART goals framework, which stands for Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic and Timely. Prior to SMART goals, their instructional leadership team would conduct learning walks and walk away with a list of potential issues to fix. It felt overwhelming and inactionable. Now they start by identifying the specific goal and data that they want to address, making sure that it is clear and understood by all teachers. Then they create an action plan to improve a few key changes during a cycle of improvement. By monitoring the specific data and action plan closely, they are able to make a small series of changes over time which ultimately has a cumulative impact on teachers and students.

To do this well, Webster Parish invested the time in training its coaches and principals in how to create and monitor SMART goals. When the system originally surveyed principals about using SMART goals at their sites, they realized that many school leaders were not comfortable or confident with the approach. In response, everyone on the system ILT team was assigned a group of principals to support. These system leaders helped school leaders create school-wide SMART goals, and figure out what data to collect and questions to ask. Now its school leaders are connecting the school SMART goals to teacher collaboration, understanding how to integrate new strategies and data analysis with this professional learning time. Dusty Rangel reflected that these changes in practice have taken different amounts of time depending on the goal and strategy:

> **"You know, there's no perfect timeline as to how this looks—that was a huge misconception."**

Instead of imposing unrealistic timelines, the system is focused on strengthening each cycle of continuous improvement so that all staff members–from principals to teachers–can apply this approach to their own practice.

Goals Are Monitored and Supported

All of the system leadership team members are also members of the school instructional teams, so they are able to participate in these weekly site meetings to discuss and monitor progress. The system coaches share the Professional Learning Roadmap as a helpful resource to show sites how to break down each step in order to connect goal-setting, data collection, and planning. They find the sample agendas and scenarios to be particularly useful. Many sites now have a clear long-range plan with consistent agendas. Dusty Rangel praised how many school-based ILTs have taken a deep ownership of this process, calling it a *"needle mover for these schools."* Furthermore, since the system leaders are on-site, they are able to differentiate their support based on the leaders' needs and context, including assisting new learning and enhancing teacher collaboration.

Goals are Connected to Student Data

Most importantly, Webster Parish has found that they are making the greatest gains when they can connect these goals to individual student results. They invest a lot of time in analyzing pieces of student work and exemplars. In the past, during collaboration time, teachers would discuss how to score student work and they would also review their overall class data. This analysis did not always change practice. As Dusty said, "if you don't actually look at the individual student work, then it's just a number." Now Webster Parish has its teachers focus on 3-4 students. Teachers look closely at these particular students' data and pieces of work. Then they consider what changes they can make in their classroom to better support these students' needs. This process has made a huge impact on teacher practice. Dusty Rangel reflected, *"It's amazing how just this little bitty tiny thing makes a big difference."*

Next Steps

Webster Parish plans to continue on this trajectory, strengthening its cycles of improvement to achieve greater student outcomes. As Dusty Rangel said,

> **"We see the benefit of it and we're grateful that we can keep getting better at something."**

Next year, the district wants to provide more differentiated support to its school-based ILTs, helping some of them rethink their membership criteria while working with others to dig deeper into specific instructional practices. Teacher and leader turnover has been one of their greatest challenges, so they also want to figure out how to provide more training opportunities, including visits to model classrooms, throughout the school year to continue to build the entire team's instructional capacity.