Finding Your Leadership Focus

Avoiding Initiative Fatigue

Jennifer Briggs, Laura Luna, & Cristy Pendergrass, Upper Cumberland CORE
To Plant a Garden is to Believe in the Future!

Finding Your Leadership Focus

Agenda

- **Why Leadership Focus Matters**
  - Impact, Leverage, and Implementation
- **Identifying the Weeds**
  - Diversionary, Toxic, and Unsustainable
- **Planting the Garden**
  - Focus, Monitoring, and Efficacy
- **Weeding the Garden and Fertilizing the Flowers**
  - Identifying your focus

Norms for today...

NORMS

- Keep students at the center of focus and decision-making.
- Be present and engaged.
- Monitor air time and share your voice.
- Challenge with respect.
- Be solutions oriented.
- Risk productive struggle.
- Balance urgency and patience.
Please complete the Leadership Focus Assessment.

Respond to the questions and determine your Leadership Focus score.

Agenda

❖ Why Leadership Focus Matters
  ❖ Impact, Leverage, and Implementation

❖ Identifying the Weeds
  ❖ Diversionary, Toxic, and Unsustainable

❖ Planting the Garden
  ❖ Focus, Monitoring, and Efficacy

❖ Weeding the Garden and Fertilizing the Flowers
  ❖ Identifying your focus

Leadership Focus Criteria

- **Impact**
  - Proposed initiative is significantly greater than present practice

- **Leverage**
  - Impact on multiple variables

- **Implementation**
  - Continuum of performance (introduction, initiation, application, capacity building)
FIGURE 1.1  The Law of Initiative Fatigue

Administrator Rubric

An exemplary visioning process occurs when school leaders jointly develop a vision for continuous improvement, contextualized through a) a vision for a culture conducive to teaching and learning and b) a vision for professional learning and growth. The resulting overarching school vision thus exhibits and requires:

- Collaboration with key partners to identify and enact clear, measurable, annual goals
- Linkage to goals that support student achievement, gap closure, and college and career readiness with evidence of growth
- Communication to nearly all stakeholders
- Modeling of personal commitment to continuous improvement and a culture conducive to teaching and learning
- Modeling of school-wide beliefs in professional learning and growth
Agenda

- Why Leadership Focus Matters
  - Impact, Leverage, and Implementation
- Identifying the Weeds
  - Diversionary, Toxic, and Unsustainable
- Planting the Garden
  - Focus, Monitoring, and Efficacy
- Weeding the Garden and Fertilizing the Flowers
  - Identifying your focus

List all your school and district actions/initiatives from this past school year. *(new and/or ongoing)*

**Definition of Initiative:** Anything being undertaken that must maintain a focus, needs human and/or fiscal resources and should be monitored for implementation.

Two Essential Questions

- What is the extent of my ability to influence this action?
- What impact will this action have on the student learning results I am seeking to achieve?

Rate your influence and impact on student achievement.  
1 = low/ 10 = high 
*(Self-reflection)*

**Definition of Initiative:** Anything being undertaken that must maintain a focus, needs human and/or fiscal resources and should be monitored for implementation.
Identifying the Weeds
One person’s... Is another person’s...
Even a rose in a cornfield is a weed!

-Laura Luna

Diversionary Weeds

- Earnest intent and good appearance
- Becomes a weed when it takes time and focus away from priority
- What we do with our time has to have an outcome related directly back to student achievement

Melaleuca Tree/Brush: Takes over in Florida. Not native to USA

Toxic Weeds

- Demand a response
- We are reluctant to challenge and remove them
- May look good, sound good, make people feel good in the short term
- Once introduced into the environment, they strangle the life out of the other plants that we had hoped to cultivate

Thistle: Deep roots, use caution when touching

Unsustainable Weeds

- Can be a meritorious idea
- Becomes a weed when it is unsustainable!
- Can quickly move from good intentioned to chaos

Bamboo can grow quickly and become a weed when not carefully planning for its growth/use.

Identify the weeds in your initiatives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversionary</th>
<th>Toxic</th>
<th>Unsustainable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Look at your list of actions/initiatives. Can you identify any weeds? Place a star and a D,T, or U beside any weeds.
Agenda

- Why Leadership Focus Matters
  - Impact, Leverage, and Implementation

- Identifying the Weeds
  - Diversionary, Toxic, and Unsustainable

- Planting the Garden
  - Focus, Monitoring, and Efficacy

- Weeding the Garden and Fertilizing the Flowers
  - Identifying your focus

Your task:
Reread pgs. 26-27 through the lens of:
What one sentence speaks to you most?
Write on a piece of paper. Be prepared to explain why this sentence resonated with you.

3 Keys to Successful Implementation

Focus

Efficacy

Monitoring

3 Keys to Successful Gardening

Focus

What do we want to produce in our garden?

Efficacy

Do we have the belief that we can make the garden grow?

Monitoring

Are we monitoring our garden regularly for growth?
Refer back to your actions/initiatives.

Rate the focus, monitoring, and efficacy for each.

Leaders identify and monitor no more than 6 instructional initiatives clearly linked to student needs.

Personal conviction of teachers and administrators that their actions are the primary influence on the academic success of students.

Regular systematic observation of adult actions – what teachers and leaders do to improve students’ learning.

“Focus is easy to talk about and difficult to implement. “
Rate your focus, efficacy, and monitoring of each of the initiatives.

1 = low / 10 = high

(Self-reflection)
At office task: Cross reference your initiatives

Questions:

1. Do you see alignment between your actions/initiatives and your stated goals/actions in ePlan?
2. Why or why not?
Agenda

❖ Why Leadership Focus Matters
  ❖ Impact, Leverage, and Implementation

❖ Identifying the Weeds
  ❖ Diversionary, Toxic, and Unsustainable

❖ Planting the Garden
  ❖ Focus, Monitoring, and Efficacy

❖ Weeding the Garden and Fertilizing the Flowers
  ❖ Identifying your focus

Laser-Like Focus: Why Weed the Garden?

- Of 21 variables studied, the combination of FOCUS, MONITORING, and EFFICACY were most powerfully related to student results.

- Schools with effective monitoring and focus had TWICE THE GAINS in reading over three years compared to low focus schools.

- Schools that most needed focus were least likely to have it.

What happens when we don’t weed our garden?

What Matters Most

- How can the system best support the work?
- What do our staff on the front line need to support the work?
- What is getting in the way of our most important work?
- How will we eliminate or change initiatives and tasks that divert us from our values?
- What matters most for the greater good?
What is your focus for this year?

Note to self:
STAY FOCUSED

Sample ePlan Goal

In the 2014-15 school year, the TVAAS composite for ELA in District B was a 3. While this TVAAS score is meeting expectations, it is still an area of identified need based on other indicators. Therefore, District B might set a goal in this area as follows:

*In the 2015-16 school year, District B will score at least a level 3 TVAAS in 3-5 ELA, 6-8 ELA, and English I,II,& III.*

*Strategies?*

*Action Steps?*
Sample ePlan Goal (School Level)

In the 2014-15 school year, the TVAAS composite for ELA in School B was a 3. While this TVAAS score is meeting expectations, it is still an area of identified need based on other indicators. Therefore, School B might set a goal in this area as follows:

*In the 2015-16 school year, School B will score at least a level 3 TVAAS in (3-5 ELA, 6-8 ELA, or English I,II,& III).*

Strategies?
Action Steps?
You’ve got to think about big things while you’re doing small things, so all the small things go in the right direction.

-Alvin Toffler

Let’s plan…

1. Determine your focus for next year.
   - No more than 6
   - Affect student achievement/growth
   - Influence?
   - What surfaces as a non-negotiable?

2. How will you develop efficacy?

   1. How will you monitor?

   2. How does it fit into ePlan?

3. What are possible “weeds” that will creep in?

“It is not a daily increase, but a daily decrease. Hack away at the inessentials.”

-Bruce Lee

Credits

• http://www.sstr1.org/files/Landing/OIP/April_29_2013/Weeding/Weeding_the_Garden.ppt