

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Five Leadership Moves for the First Weeks of School

1 Read the Data Twice

The first read names which students are at risk. The second read asks what the pattern says about the system that produced it. Both reads belong in the same meeting.

2 Look at Tier 1 First

Core instruction is the only tier that reaches every student every day. Strengthening it changes outcomes for the most children, and it usually costs nothing in new materials.

3 Protect the Block

Count what interrupts core instruction for one week in one grade level. Sixty minutes and ninety minutes are two different curricula, not two speeds of the same one.

4 Build the Follow Up

Training builds knowledge. Coaching cycles, planning time, and schedules turn that knowledge into daily practice. Put the follow up on the calendar before October arrives.

5 Name One Priority

A plan with one priority, one owner, and one December measure survives October. Six priorities is the same as none.



Not knowing an answer is not a failing. Most of the answers live in buildings rather than in the central office, which is exactly why they are worth going and finding.

FOCUS ON LEARNING

From Screening Data to a 90-Day Plan

Fall screening tells you which students are at risk. It was built to answer that question quickly and well. What it was never built to do is measure the system that produced the results.

September is when the second question is worth asking out loud. The decisions made in these few weeks are the ones teachers will run all year.

What a 90-Day Plan Includes



One Clear Priority

A single focus between now and the winter benchmark, chosen because it addresses a root cause.



A Named Owner

One person accountable for moving the work forward, with a check in every week or two.



Root Cause, Not Symptom

A change aimed at why results stalled rather than at the score itself.



Protected Time and Coaching

A schedule that places the literacy and intervention blocks first, with coaching built around practice.



Implementation Data

Walkthrough counts, coaching logs, and teacher feedback collected alongside student data.



A December Measure

Evidence that tells the team by winter whether to keep going, adjust, or stop.



Pair Your Data with an A+ Audit

The A+ Audit reviews 62 indicators across ten domains and produces a scorecard, a root cause analysis, and a 90-day plan.

Learn more: apluseducationalconsulting.net/the-a+-audit

RECENT WORK & HIGHLIGHTS

Fall screening windows are opening across the country, and leadership teams are getting ready to sit down with the first data of the year.

This month I am working alongside teams to get ready for that review, setting the questions before the numbers arrive. Which skill is showing up as the pattern. What core instruction is doing about that skill right now. What would have to change by December for the pattern to move.

The teams that get results decide what they are looking for before the report lands. That is what turns September data into the beginning of a plan rather than the end of a meeting.

◎ **Every student should make one year of growth. That is the floor, not the goal.**

RESOURCES

• NCII Academic Progress Monitoring Tools Chart

Independent reviews of progress monitoring measures, useful when setting decision rules. charts.intensiveintervention.org/aprogressmonitoring

• A+ Audit

A comprehensive review of your literacy system to identify strengths, gaps, and next steps. apluseducationalconsulting.net/the-a+-audit

• IES Practice Guide: Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding

Evidence-rated recommendations for strengthening core reading instruction in K through grade 3. ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/21

• Literacy Systems Self-Check

A short set of questions that shows a team where to look next. apluseducationalconsulting.net



LEADER TAKEAWAY

September data becomes a September plan when it is paired with one priority, one owner, and one measure that reports by December.

Every system. Every classroom. Every child.

*Lead with clarity.
Act with purpose.
Build what lasts.*

