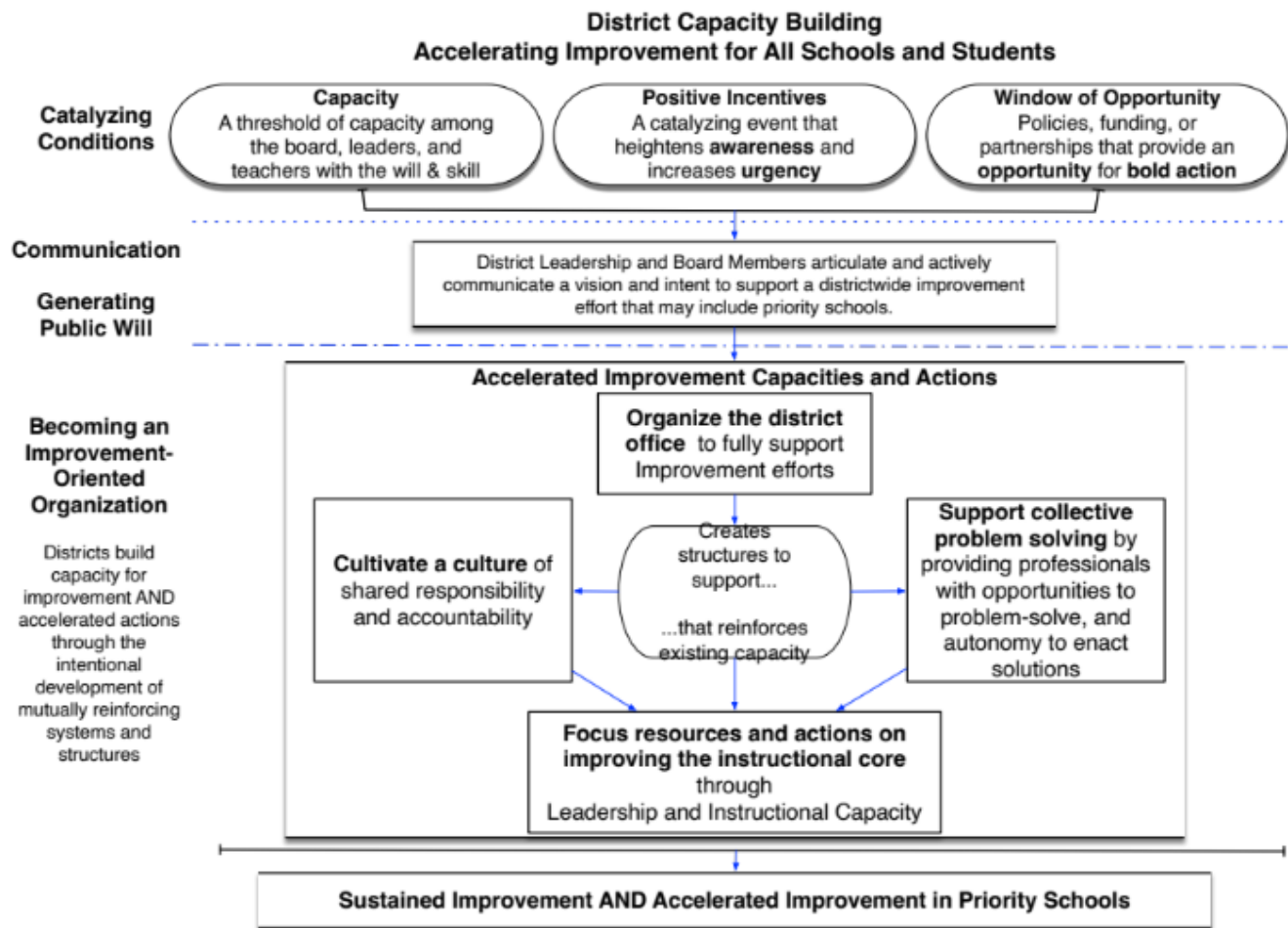


Framework for District Capacity Building and Support



Accelerating Improvement for All Schools and Students

The INSTLL Framework for District Capacity Building integrates core district functions and improvement capacities with the catalyzing conditions and strategies needed to initiate a process of rapid improvement. The framework includes 10 interdependent variables and depicts the relationships among them.



Adapted from: Lane, B. (2009). *Exploring the Pathway to Rapid Improvement*. Lincoln, IL: Center on Innovation and Improvement.

The Pathway to Accelerating Improvement

Initiating an effective and sustainable improvement effort involves key steps and actions to be taken by the district. These steps — first accepting that the current state of affairs is unacceptable, and second, using the district's Bully Pulpit to communicate urgency and generate public will — are crucial in setting the stage for significant improvement efforts to be owned and successfully enacted.

Step 1

Catalyzing Conditions

The current state of affairs is unacceptable and must change.

A catalyzing event or external change agent

- **Heightens awareness** among school board and district leaders of critical academic gaps
- **Increases urgency** among school board and district leaders to make significant change

A Window of Opportunity

- Changes to policies, availability of funding, or access to expertise that creates conditions for real change
- Provides opportunity for bold action and dramatic improvement

A Threshold of Capacity

- A strong and proactive school board or home-grown district leader/superintendent
- Strong principals and teacher leaders
- A school board with the courage and ability to attract and hire high-quality, change-oriented leadership

Step 2

Communicating and Generating Public Will

Here is what we are going to do — and it will require dramatic change.

District leaders and the board decide on a coherent approach (e.g., a framework, an articulated theory of action) **to accelerating improvement in all schools** that:

- Is **system-wide**, encompassing the entire district and all schools
- Is **linked to prioritized district and school issues and challenges**
- Defines **specific and public goals** meaningful to parents, community members, educators, and students
- **Depicts a vision of the district** dramatically different than the status quo — requiring rapid, intense, and dramatic change

The district-wide approach is **communicated and shared** with principals, teachers, and community leaders.

Step 3

Becoming an Improvement-Oriented Organization

Districts build leadership capacity for sustainable improvement through the intentional development of mutually reinforcing systems, structures, and processes focused on improving the instructional core.

<p>Cultivating a culture of shared responsibility and accountability</p> <p><i>Articulating a clear vision, specifying expectations and goals</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing and communicating a district-wide improvement strategy, including a vision and specific goals for improvement • Developing and strategically using policies, state and federal mandates • Establishing and maintaining a focus on equity • Coordinating and ensuring alignment among programs and external providers • Developing tools and processes to directly monitor local school improvement efforts and provide immediate and useful feedback to principals and schools
<p>Supporting collective problem solving</p> <p><i>Providing professionals with opportunities to problem-solve and autonomy to enact solutions</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing educators with ongoing opportunities (at least once a week) to engage in joint problem-solving around teaching and learning • Providing principals and teachers with the autonomy to incorporate educator-developed strategies and solutions within district expectations • Developing teaming processes that value and engender trust, willingness to share information, reflection, and willingness to change
<p>Improving and strengthening the instructional core</p> <p><i>Through leadership and instructional capacity building</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining what high-quality core instruction and interventions look like across grades and content areas • Implementing strategies that enable learning and sharing of effective instructional strategies within and among schools • Actively developing and monitoring formal and informal mechanisms focused on improving teachers' instruction • Identifying improvement strategies aligned with the district's theory of action and regularly evaluating their impact
<p>Reorganizing the district office</p> <p><i>To fully support and monitor improvement</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategically allocating and targeting human and fiscal resources to improve instruction and cultivate shared responsibility • Aligning district systems, structures, and policies to provide ongoing support for district and school improvement efforts • Advocating for and actively using policies and authorities that provide schools with the flexibility to enact accelerated improvement

Core District Functions

Core District Functions

Districts have control over and responsibility for a set of core functions. Establishment of these core functions provides the foundation for districts to become high-performing and improvement-oriented organizations capable of supporting all students to succeed.

<p>Management and Operations</p> <p>Core District Function</p> <p><i>The district demonstrates the following functions:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Board and Superintendent/District — effective and mutually supportive working relationship • Policies and procedures — ability to develop, communicate, and enforce district-wide policies • Strategic management of human resources — efficient systems for induction, evaluation, compensation, and training focused on Teaching and Learning • Administration and Finance — efficient management of district finances with an explicit connection to Teaching and Learning • Operations — efficient upkeep of buildings and district services (physical plant, food services, custodial, student services) • Federal and state compliance — ability to meet all regulations and compliance requirements
<p>Teaching and Learning</p> <p>Core District Function</p> <p><i>The district establishes, supports, provides, or has access to:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned curriculum — K–12 curriculum frameworks, maps, or guides and sample instructional strategies aligned with state standards • Formative and summative assessments — district-wide and school-level assessments in literacy, mathematics, and science, aligned within and across grades • Data systems — for collecting, storing, accessing, and disseminating school and student-level data • Materials — textbooks and curricular materials needed for instruction • Human capital — capacity to recruit, induct, evaluate, retain, and/or release district and school staff, principals, teachers, coaches, and support staff • Knowledge and expertise — to support and train district and school staff on instructional programs, including designated time for professional development

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