

A HANDBOOK FOR

High Reliability Schools

••• The Next Step in School Reform

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Chapter 1

Safe and Collaborative Culture



Level 1 addresses the factors considered fundamental to the well-being of a school. Namely, do staff, students, parents and the school community feel that the school is safe and maximises collaboration for the enhancement of student learning? Level 1 has eight leading indicators:

- 1.1 The staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.
- 1.2 Students, parents and the school community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.
- 1.3 Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives.
- 1.4 Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction and the achievement of all students.
- 1.5 Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.
- 1.6 Students, parents and the school community have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.
- 1.7 The success of the whole school, as well as individuals within the school, is appropriately acknowledged.
- 1.8 The fiscal, operational and technological resources of the school are managed in a way that directly supports teachers.

As explained in the introduction, the leading indicators are designed to help school leaders determine what is already working well in their school and identify areas in need of focused attention. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to administer a leading indicator survey to teachers and staff, school leaders, students and parents.

Level 1 Short-Form Leading Indicator Survey

Figure 1.1 (p. 16) presents a short-form leading indicator survey for level 1. This survey can be administered to staff and school leaders within a school. Sign in to go.hbe.com.au for reproducible versions of the short-form survey items for all five levels.

1: Strongly disagree	2: Disagree	3: Neither disagree nor agree
4: Agree	5: Strongly agree	N: N/A or don't know

1.1 The staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.2 Students, parents and the school community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.3 Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.4 Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction and the achievement of all students.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.5 Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.6 Students, parents and the school community have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.7 The success of the whole school, as well as individuals within the school, is appropriately acknowledged.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.8 The fiscal, operational and technological resources of the school are managed in a way that directly supports teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	N

Figure 1.1: Level 1 short-form leading indicator survey

This survey provides very general information about a school's level 1 status. For more specific information, long-form surveys should be used.

Level 1 Long-Form Leading Indicator Surveys

Here, we present long-form surveys for four different audiences: (1) teachers and staff, (2) school leaders, (3) students and (4) parents. These surveys provide detailed information for each leading indicator. School leaders ask teachers, staff members, students and parents to complete the appropriate survey from reproducibles 1.1–1.4 (pp. 17–26). Leaders then examine the results to identify areas of perceived strength or weakness within the school.

Reproducible 1.1: Level 1 Long-Form Leading Indicator Survey for Teachers and Staff

1: Strongly disagree

2: Disagree

3: Neither disagree nor agree

4: Agree

5: Strongly agree

N: N/A or don't know

1.1 The staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	Our school is a safe place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school is an orderly place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school has clear and specific rules and procedures in place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I know the emergency management procedures for our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I know how to implement the emergency management procedures for our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	My students and I practise implementing emergency management procedures for specific incidents.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school's emergency management procedures are updated on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.2 Students, parents and the school community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	Students and their parents describe our school as a safe place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Students and their parents describe our school as an orderly place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Students and their parents are aware of the rules and procedures in place at our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school uses social media to allow anonymous reporting of potential incidents.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school has a system that allows school leaders to communicate with parents about issues regarding school safety (for example, a school call-out system).	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders coordinate with emergency services agencies regarding school safety issues.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders engage parents and the school community regarding school safety issues.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.3 Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives.	It is clear which types of decisions will be made with direct teacher input.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Techniques and systems are in place to collect data and information from teachers on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Notes and reports exist documenting how teacher input was used to make specific decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Electronic tools (for example, online survey tools) are used to collect teachers' opinions regarding specific decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Groups of teachers are targeted to provide input regarding specific decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	N

1.4 Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction and the achievement of all students.	A professional learning community (PLC) process is in place in our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school's PLC collaborative teams have written goals.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders regularly examine PLC collaborative teams' progress towards their goals.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school's PLC collaborative teams create common assessments.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school's PLC collaborative teams analyse student achievement and growth.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Data teams are in place in our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school's data teams have written goals.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders regularly examine data teams' progress towards their goals.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders collect and review minutes and notes from PLC collaborative team and data team meetings to ensure that teams are focusing on student achievement.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.5 Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	Data collection systems are in place to collect opinion data from teachers and staff regarding the optimal functioning of our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Opinion data collected from teachers and staff are archived.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Reports of opinion data from teachers and staff are regularly generated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The manner in which opinion data from teachers and staff are used is transparent.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school improvement team regularly provides input and feedback about our school's improvement plan.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.6 Students, parents and the school community have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	Data collection systems are in place to collect opinion data from students, parents and the school community regarding the optimal functioning of our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Opinion data collected from students, parents and the school community are archived.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Reports of opinion data from students, parents and the school community are regularly generated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The manner in which opinion data from students, parents and the school community are used is transparent.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school hosts an interactive website for students, parents and the school community.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I use social networking technologies (such as Twitter and Facebook) to involve students, parents and the school community.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders host virtual school community meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders conduct focus group meetings with students, parents and the school community.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders host or speak at school community/business luncheons.	1	2	3	4	5	N

1.7 The success of the whole school, as well as individuals within the school, is appropriately acknowledged.	Our school's accomplishments have been adequately acknowledged and celebrated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	My team's or department's accomplishments have been adequately acknowledged and celebrated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	My individual accomplishments have been adequately acknowledged and celebrated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders acknowledge and celebrate individual accomplishments, teacher-team or department accomplishments and whole-school accomplishments in a variety of ways (for example, through staff celebrations, newsletters to parents, announcements, the school website or social media).	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders regularly celebrate the successes of individuals in a variety of positions in the school (such as teachers or support staff).	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.8 The fiscal, operational and technological resources of the school are managed in a way that directly supports teachers.	I have adequate resources to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I have adequate time to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders develop, submit and implement detailed budgets.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders successfully access and leverage a variety of fiscal resources (such as grants).	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders manage time to maximise a focus on instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders direct the use of technology to improve teaching and learning.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	School leaders provide adequate training for the instructional technology teachers are expected to use.	1	2	3	4	5	N

Reproducible 1.2: Level 1 Long-Form Leading Indicator Survey for School Leaders

1: Strongly disagree

2: Disagree

3: Neither disagree nor agree

4: Agree

5: Strongly agree

N: N/A or don't know

1.1 The staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	Our school is a safe place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school is an orderly place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school has clear and specific rules and procedures in place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Teachers and staff know the emergency management procedures for our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Teachers and staff know how to implement the emergency management procedures for our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Teachers, staff and students regularly practise implementing emergency management procedures for specific incidents.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school's emergency management procedures are updated on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.2 Students, parents and the school community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	Students and their parents describe our school as a safe place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Students and their parents describe our school as an orderly place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Students and their parents are aware of the rules and procedures in place at our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school uses social media to allow anonymous reporting of potential incidents.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school has a system that allows me to communicate with parents about issues regarding school safety (for example, a school call-out system).	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I coordinate with local emergency services agencies regarding school safety issues.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I engage parents and the school community regarding school safety issues.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.3 Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives.	It is clear which types of decisions will be made with direct teacher input.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Techniques and systems are in place to collect data and information from teachers on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Notes and reports exist documenting how teacher input was used to make specific decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Electronic tools (for example, online survey tools) are used to collect teachers' opinions regarding specific decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Groups of teachers are targeted to provide input regarding specific decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	N

1.4 Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction and the achievement of all students.	A professional learning community (PLC) process is in place in our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school's PLC collaborative teams have written goals.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I regularly examine PLC collaborative teams' progress towards their goals.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school's PLC collaborative teams create common assessments.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school's PLC collaborative teams analyse student achievement and growth.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Data teams are in place in our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school's data teams have written goals.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I regularly examine data teams' progress towards their goals.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I collect and review minutes and notes from PLC collaborative team and data team meetings to ensure that teams are focusing on student achievement.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.5 Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	Data collection systems are in place to collect opinion data from teachers and staff regarding the optimal functioning of our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Opinion data collected from teachers and staff are archived.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Reports of opinion data from teachers and staff are regularly generated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The manner in which opinion data from teachers and staff are used is transparent.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school improvement team regularly provides input and feedback about our school's improvement plan.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.6 Students, parents and the school community have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	Data collection systems are in place to collect opinion data from students, parents and the school community regarding the optimal functioning of our school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Opinion data collected from students, parents and the school community are archived.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Reports of opinion data from students, parents and the school community are regularly generated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The manner in which opinion data from students, parents and the school community are used is transparent.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Our school hosts an interactive website for students, parents and the school community.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I use social networking technologies (such as Twitter and Facebook) to involve students, parents and the school community.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I host virtual school community meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I conduct focus group meetings with students, parents and the school community.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I host or speak at school community/business luncheons.	1	2	3	4	5	N

1.7 The success of the whole school, as well as individuals within the school, is appropriately acknowledged.	Our school's accomplishments have been adequately acknowledged and celebrated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Teacher teams' or departments' accomplishments have been adequately acknowledged and celebrated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Individual teachers' accomplishments have been adequately acknowledged and celebrated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I acknowledge and celebrate individual accomplishments, teacher-team or department accomplishments and whole-school accomplishments in a variety of ways (for example, through staff celebrations, newsletters to parents, announcements, the school website or social media).	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I regularly celebrate the successes of individuals in a variety of positions in the school (such as teachers or support staff).	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.8 The fiscal, operational and technological resources of the school are managed in a way that directly supports teachers.	Teachers have adequate resources to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Teachers have adequate time to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I develop, submit and implement detailed budgets.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I successfully access and leverage a variety of fiscal resources (such as grants).	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I manage time to maximise a focus on instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I direct the use of technology to improve teaching and learning.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I provide adequate training for the instructional technology teachers are expected to use.	1	2	3	4	5	N

Reproducible 1.3: Level 1 Long-Form Leading Indicator Survey for Students

1: Strongly disagree

2: Disagree

3: Neither disagree nor agree

4: Agree

5: Strongly agree

N: N/A or don't know

1.1 The staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	I know what to do if an emergency happens at school (such as a flood, fire, lockdown or medical emergency).	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.2 Students, parents and the school community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	My school is a safe place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	My school is an orderly place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I know the rules and procedures at my school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I can use social media to report bullying or other incidents anonymously.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.3 Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives.	Teachers help make important decisions at my school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.4 Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction and the achievement of all students.	My teachers meet together on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.5 Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	My school's leaders collect information from teachers about their opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.6 Students, parents and the school community have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	My school's leaders ask for my opinion about how the school should function.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.7 The success of the whole school, as well as individuals within the school, is appropriately acknowledged.	When I achieve a goal or accomplish something important, my school's leaders, my teachers and other students celebrate it.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.8 The fiscal, operational and technological resources of the school are managed in a way that directly supports teachers.	I have plenty of time to learn.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Teachers in my school use technology to help me learn.	1	2	3	4	5	N

Access this reproducible resource at go.hbe.com.au

Reproducible 1.4: Level 1 Long-Form Leading Indicator Survey for Parents

1: Strongly disagree

2: Disagree

3: Neither disagree nor agree

4: Agree

5: Strongly agree

N: N/A or don't know

1.1 The staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	Teachers and staff at my child's school consider it a safe place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Teachers and staff at my child's school consider it an orderly place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	My child's school has clear and specific rules and procedures in place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Teachers, staff and my child know the emergency management procedures for the school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Teachers, staff and my child know how to implement the emergency management procedures for the school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Teachers, staff and my child have practised implementing emergency management procedures for specific incidents (for example, fire drills or lockdown drills).	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The emergency management procedures at my child's school are updated on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.2 Students, parents and the school community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	My child's school is a safe place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	My child's school is an orderly place.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I am aware of the rules and procedures in place at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	My child's school uses social media to allow anonymous reporting of potential incidents.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	My child's school has a system that allows school leaders to communicate with me about issues regarding school safety (for example, a school call-out system).	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The leaders of my child's school coordinate with emergency services agencies regarding school safety issues.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The leaders of my child's school engage the school community and me regarding school safety issues.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.3 Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives.	Teachers help make important decisions at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Specific groups of teachers provide input regarding specific decisions at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5	N

1.4 Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction and the achievement of all students.	Teachers at my child's school meet together on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	At my child's school, teachers who teach the same subject use the same exams, assessments and tests.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Teams of teachers at my child's school look at student achievement data to figure out how to improve students' learning.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.5 Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	The leaders of my child's school ask teachers for their opinions about how the school should function.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The leaders of my child's school collect information from teachers about their opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.6 Students, parents and the school community have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	The leaders of my child's school ask for my opinion about how the school should function.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The leaders of my child's school have a system to save and keep track of the information they collect about my opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Reports of opinion data collected from students, parents and the school community are generated regularly.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I understand how my opinions affect school decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	My child's school hosts an interactive website.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	I visit my child's school's website often.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The leaders and teachers at my child's school use social networking technologies (such as Twitter and Facebook) to involve students, parents and the school community.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The leaders of my child's school host virtual school community meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The leaders of my child's school conduct focus group meetings with students, parents and the school community.	1	2	3	4	5	N
The leaders of my child's school host or speak at school community/business luncheons.	1	2	3	4	5	N	

1.7 The success of the whole school, as well as individuals within the school, is appropriately acknowledged.	The accomplishments of my child's school have been adequately acknowledged and celebrated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The accomplishments of my child's teachers have been adequately acknowledged and celebrated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	My child's individual accomplishments have been adequately acknowledged and celebrated.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The leaders of my child's school acknowledge and celebrate individual accomplishments, teacher-team or department accomplishments and whole-school accomplishments in a variety of ways (for example, through staff celebrations, newsletters to parents, announcements, the school website or social media).	1	2	3	4	5	N
1.8 The fiscal, operational and technological resources of the school are managed in a way that directly supports teachers.	Teachers at my child's school have adequate materials to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	Teachers at my child's school have adequate time to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The leaders of my child's school develop, submit and implement detailed budgets.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The leaders of my child's school successfully access and leverage a variety of fiscal resources (such as grants).	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The leaders of my child's school manage time to maximise a focus on instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	N
	The leaders of my child's school direct the use of technology to improve teaching and learning.	1	2	3	4	5	N

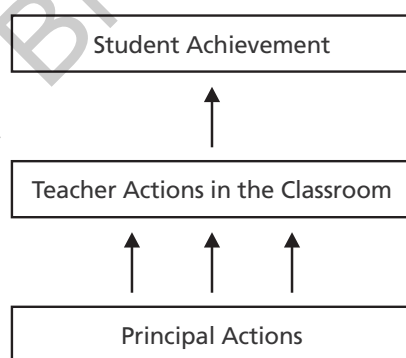
After administering the survey and compiling the results, school leaders might notice that staff responses to leading indicator 1.4, which is “Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction and the achievement of all students,” are lower than responses to other leading indicators. This could prompt school leaders to implement activities and initiatives specifically designed to enhance the effectiveness of collaborative groups addressing common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction and the achievement of students. As described in the introduction, we consider implementing professional learning communities as critical to high reliability status at level 1. Hence we refer to the implementation of the PLC process as a critical commitment.

Level 1 Critical Commitment

While the PLC process is sometimes thought of as a singular intervention to engage teachers in meaningful collaboration, when used to its full potential it can be the structure that makes possible the successful implementation of a variety of the leading indicators for level 1. Indeed, Richard DuFour and Robert Marzano (2011) maintained that the PLC process can change the basic dynamic of leadership within a school, allowing school leaders to have a more efficient and direct impact on what occurs in classrooms. DuFour and Marzano noted that

the principal of a K–5 building can now work closely with six teams rather than thirty individuals. The principal of a large high school can influence twenty team leaders directly rather than 150 teachers indirectly. In short, the PLC process provides a vehicle for focused interactions between principals and teachers. (p. 51)

DuFour and Marzano explained that in the absence of the PLC process, the principal must influence each individual teacher, who in turn influences student achievement in their classroom (see figure 1.2). This has long been recognised in the research literature: the principal has an indirect influence on student achievement (see Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2006).



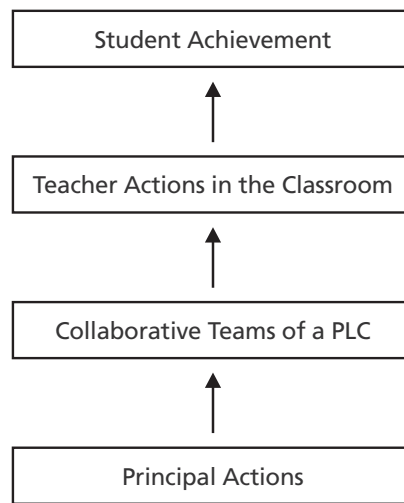
Source: DuFour & Marzano (2011, p. 49)

Figure 1.2: Typical relationship between principal behaviour and student achievement

DuFour and Marzano (2011) further noted that one of the more enlightening and disturbing aspects of the figure is that

multiple lines of influence are depicted between the principal and teachers’ actions. This is because traditionally there has been no way for principals to interact directly and concretely with teachers in a manner that influences their actions in the classroom. (p. 49)

The PLC process alters this basic dynamic. Within the context of the collaborative team structure of a PLC, the relationship between principal behaviour and student achievement can be depicted as shown in figure 1.3.



Source: DuFour & Marzano (2011, p. 52)

Figure 1.3: Relationship between principal behaviour and student achievement with PLCs

In a PLC, principals have a direct line of influence to collaborative teams, and collaborative teams have a direct line of influence to teacher actions in the classroom. In effect, use of the PLC process can render leadership more efficient.

Because of the collaborative nature of PLCs, schools can use the process to meet multiple leading indicators. The PLC process creates a foundation for leading indicators 1.1, 1.3 and 1.5 because collaborative teams can be used to identify and execute ways to make the school more safe and orderly, obtain teacher input into decisions regarding school policies and provide input regarding how the school can function more effectively. Leading indicators 1.2 and 1.6 relate to parents and the school community. It is important that initiatives and activities be designed and executed specifically for those constituent groups, and collaborative teams can aid in the design of those initiatives and activities. When done with integrity, the PLC process can also be a powerful vehicle for leading indicator 1.7, because collaborative groups can be used to identify and recognise individuals whose students have made exceptional gains in their learning. Specific collaborative teams can also be singled out and acknowledged, in addition to recognising the entire school community for certain accomplishments. Finally, leading indicator 1.8 can also be addressed through a PLC, as collaborative teams can be used to gather information from teachers about the use of fiscal, operational and technological resources.

Level 1 Lagging Indicators

As explained in the introduction, lagging indicators and their corresponding criterion scores provide evidence that a school has achieved a specific level of high reliability. High scores on leading indicator surveys can provide enough evidence for leaders to conclude that no immediate action is required regarding a specific area. However, low scores on leading indicators point to areas that may need to be addressed in a school. As activities and initiatives are implemented to address those areas, the school's progress should be tracked using lagging indicators. For example, if a school leader noticed very low survey scores on leading indicator 1.4, they might formulate a lagging indicator to measure the school's progress in that area. Lagging indicators

might also be formulated for areas with high scores. Again, lagging indicators are the evidence a school gives to validate its achievement of a high reliability level, particularly in areas where there is general agreement that the school is not doing well.

To illustrate, the following are examples of lagging indicators that a school can use to demonstrate that they are meeting level 1 status:

- One or no incidents occur each year in which students' safety is compromised.
- Fewer than five incidents occur each month in which rules and procedures are not followed.
- Surveys of staff indicate 90 per cent agreement that the school is safe and orderly.
- Surveys of students, parents and the school community indicate 90 per cent agreement that the school is safe and orderly.
- Surveys of staff indicate 90 per cent agreement that they have input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.
- Surveys of students, parents and the school community indicate 90 per cent agreement that they have input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.
- Meeting minutes show that 80 per cent of decisions affecting the entire school were made with input from staff.
- Meeting minutes show that 80 per cent of decisions affecting the entire school were made with input from students, parents and the school community.
- Project notes indicate that 85 per cent of school initiatives were developed through collaborative efforts of teacher teams.
- A written report is available indicating that 80 per cent of the school budget is focused on issues that directly support teaching and learning.
- A written report demonstrates that specific accomplishments of the school and individuals within the school have been formally acknowledged.
- One or no incidents occur each year that indicate teacher dissatisfaction with the school (for example, teacher requests for transfers to other schools).

It is important to note that the lagging indicators listed in each chapter are only examples. There is no set number of lagging indicators a school should use, and there is no set list of lagging indicators from which a school must select. Rather, school leaders should use data from the leading indicator surveys to identify areas of importance to their school for which lagging indicators should be designed. A chart like the one in table 1.1 (p. 30) can facilitate the process of moving from leading indicators to lagging indicators.

Here, we offer several examples of how schools identified areas of concern, designed lagging indicators and criterion scores or concrete products to measure their progress, and implemented plans to meet the lagging indicators.

Example 1

A primary school principal reviewing survey data for level 1 finds that although teachers, parents and students agreed that leading indicators 1.3 to 1.8 were present in the school, they did not feel that it was safe and orderly. The low scores on leading indicators 1.1, "The staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly," and 1.2, "Students, parents and the school community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly," prompt the principal to investigate further. The principal discovers that low ratings for those leading indicators are primarily due to the excessive number of physical injuries occurring on the playground. The

principal determines that many of these injuries are the result of rules not being followed and that teachers on playground duty do not have clear and consistent expectations for what rules they are expected to enforce while on duty.

Table 1.1: Lagging Indicator Determination Chart for Level 1

Leading Indicators for Level 1	Used as Basis for a Lagging Indicator?	Lagging Indicator(s)	Criterion Score or Concrete Product
1.1 The staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.			
1.2 Students, parents and the school community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.			
1.3 Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives.			
1.4 Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction and the achievement of all students.			
1.5 Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.			
1.6 Students, parents and the school community have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.			
1.7 The success of the whole school, as well as individuals within the school, is appropriately acknowledged.			
1.8 The fiscal, operational and technological resources of the school are managed in a way that directly supports teachers.			

The principal determines that many of these injuries are the result of rules not being followed and that teacher assistants responsible for monitoring the playground do not have clear guidance as to what rules they are expected to enforce while on duty.

To address these issues, the principal designs the following lagging indicators (based on leading indicators 1.1 and 1.2) with criterion scores that will indicate the school has remedied the problem:

- Two or fewer incidents occur each month in which students' safety is compromised.
- Four or fewer incidents occur each month in which rules and procedures are not followed.

Then, the principal implements a system to meet the goals articulated in the lagging indicators. The principal forms a Playground Safety Committee, consisting of themselves, the learning support teacher, two classroom teachers (one from junior primary, one from senior primary) and two of the teacher assistants. The committee designs a set of rules that clearly explain the expectations for student behaviour on each piece of playground equipment and for team games played during lunch periods. Additionally, they design a process to address students who consistently ignore playground expectations.

First offence: The teacher on playground duty explains what the student did to break a rule and gives the student a warning.

Second offence: Student sits out for the rest of the lunch period and fills out a reflection form (which is given to their classroom teacher) describing their behaviour, the result of their behaviour and how they plan to make different choices in the future.

Third offence: The student is sent to the office for a conference with the principal and a phone call is made to a parent.

To help all students learn the new rules and expectations, several members of the committee create short video clips of students using playground equipment and playing team games correctly. These clips are shown during morning announcements over the course of the next week.

The principal tracks the incidence of rules being broken and playground injuries over the next three months. The first month, playground injuries drop from an average of two per day to an average of four per week, and, on average, one rule is broken each day. The second month, injuries are less frequent, occurring only once a week on average. Rules are only broken, on average, two times each week. During the third month, there are only two injuries during the entire month and rules are broken only four times. Using these data, and data collected for the school's other lagging indicators, the principal determines that his school has achieved level 1 high reliability status.

Example 2

A primary school principal at a new school finds that staff members assign low ratings to leading indicator 1.3, "Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives," on the leading indicators survey but very high survey responses for all other leading indicators. Based on subsequent conversations with teachers, the principal finds that the teachers feel they have no say in important decisions, and some feel as if they are forced to implement initiatives that go against their fundamental beliefs about how children should be taught. To address this issue, the principal implements a new decision-making process. During the decision-making process, staff members are asked to give their opinions and specify whether the issue at hand is a matter of preference or matter of conscience for them. Matters of preference are defined as those issues for which a person desires a certain outcome but could commit to live with and support the

decision of the group. Matters of conscience are defined as those issues for which a person's values and beliefs are so strong that supporting a contrary decision would be difficult.

The principal uses the new decision-making process during a staff discussion of classroom multi-age grouping. First, the principal explains what they think is the consensus of the group: students in Foundation to Year 2 will be grouped together and students in Years 3 to 5 will be grouped together. Next, the principal asks those who have opposing positions or concerns regarding the grouping structure to share their opinions and specify if they are matters of preference or matters of conscience.

All staff supports the grouping structure except for one Foundation teacher who indicates that they are opposed to the structure and that their opinion is a matter of conscience. "Foundation students are new to school, and they really need the opportunity to interact with same-age peers only as they learn to function in the classroom," they explain. Based on this teacher's opinion, the principal asks staff members to consider what the teacher has said and puts the decision off until the next week. When the teachers convene for the next week's staff meeting, it quickly becomes apparent that a number of teachers have thought more about the issue and looked at research and agree with the Foundation teacher's opinion. Therefore, the group decides to keep Foundation students in a grouping by themselves and only group Years 1 and 2 together in primary multi-age classrooms.

Based on leading indicator 1.3, the principal creates a lagging indicator and criterion score that states, "80 per cent of decisions that affect multiple staff members will be made using the new decision-making process." Over the year, the principal keeps a file of meeting minutes and notes about all decisions made. Each month, the principal reviews the file to ensure that 80 per cent of decisions affecting multiple staff members are made with those staff members' input and designation about whether the issue is a matter of preference or conscience for them.

Example 3

The principal of a large secondary school notices that survey responses for leading indicator 1.4, "Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction and the achievement of all students," are much lower than those for other indicators. The principal begins to work towards this leading indicator by forming a humanities and social sciences professional learning community team to address a number of parent complaints he has recently received. Essentially, parents are concerned that students in different classes are learning different content and being asked to complete different assignments depending on which teacher they have. Each teacher independently determines what they consider the most important content for their students to learn, what activities and assignments are best for learning that content and what type of assessment activities are appropriate to assess students' knowledge of the content.

To address the issue and work towards enhancing the school's status on leading indicator 1.4, the principal asks the history and geography teachers, the economics and business teacher and one of the school's learning support teachers to participate in this collaborative PLC team. Together, they are responsible for identifying the content that is most important for students to learn, organising that content into topics and units, creating scales for each target learning goal and writing common assessments that will be used to measure students' progress towards the learning goals. Additionally, the principal tasks the group with meeting once a week to discuss the content taught that week and the instructional strategies they used to deliver it. When assessments are given, the collaborative team analyses the test data to determine areas of strength and areas that need to be improved. At the end of the year, the team analyses all the available assessment data from that period to revise the topics and units for the next year.

To collect data about the process, the principal creates a lagging indicator and criterion score: “In each content area, PLC collaborative teams will document the completion of at least two collaborative initiatives per year.” The principal is responsible for helping PLC collaborative teams form and facilitating their selection of appropriate initiatives. To document completion of an initiative, each PLC team turns in meeting minutes and artefacts from its work together, along with a summary form that explains the purpose, process and outcome of its initiative.

Quick Data for Level 1

After achieving high reliability status for level 1, school leaders can use quick data to continue to monitor the school’s status. Here, we provide sample questions and incidents based on the leading indicators for level 1. We also provide suggestions for easy-to-collect quantitative data for level 1 and ways to acknowledge and celebrate success.

Quick Conversations

Questions for quick conversations at level 1 could include the following:

- 1.1 and 1.2 How safe has our school been lately?
- 1.1 and 1.2 How orderly has our school been lately?
- 1.3 Recently, to what extent have teachers had roles in making important decisions regarding the school?
- 1.4 Recently, to what extent have teacher teams and collaborative groups interacted to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, or student achievement?
- 1.5 and 1.6 Recently, to what extent have you had opportunities to provide input regarding the operations of the school?
- 1.7 Recently, to what extent have the accomplishments of the school or individuals been acknowledged and celebrated?
- 1.8 Recently, to what extent have teachers been provided with adequate time and resources to support their teaching?

Teachers from collaborative teams might ask one or more of these questions during a given interval of time. These data would be summarised on a regular (for example, monthly) basis.

Quick Observations

Quick observations can also be made for level 1 indicators. Such observations would focus on recent incidents that indicate the following:

- The school is a safe place.
- The school is an unsafe place.
- The school is an orderly place.
- The school is not an orderly place.
- Teachers have input into discussions.
- Teachers do not have input into discussions.

- Teacher teams and collaborative groups are interacting to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction or student achievement.
- Teacher teams and collaborative groups are not interacting to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction or student achievement.
- Teachers have opportunities to provide input into the operations of the school.
- Teachers do not have opportunities to provide input into the operations of the school.
- Students and parents have opportunities to provide input into the operations of the school.
- Students and parents do not have opportunities to provide input into the operations of the school.
- The accomplishments of the school or individuals have been acknowledged and celebrated.
- The accomplishments of the school or individuals have not been acknowledged and celebrated.
- Teachers have been provided with adequate time and resources to support their teaching.
- Teachers have not been provided with adequate time and resources to support their teaching.

These observations could be collected anecdotally (as in table I.4, p. 10) and summarised in a narrative.

Easy-to-Collect Quantitative Data

In addition to quick conversation and quick observation data, a school should take advantage of easy-to-collect level 1 quantitative data that can be used to continuously monitor level 1 performance. Such data might include:

- Frequency counts of rule violations
- Frequency counts of discipline referrals, and for which infractions:
 - Detentions
 - Suspensions (lunch suspensions, in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions)
 - Expulsions
- School attendance data:
 - Frequency counts of late notices
 - Frequency counts of absentees
- Frequency counts of bullying incidents
- Frequency counts of parent communications expressing school safety concerns
- Frequency counts of team or PLC meetings
- Frequency counts of teacher celebrations (teacher of the month, team of the month and so on)
- Attendance records for teachers invited to leadership meetings
- Frequency counts of comments and suggestions submitted to the school's website
- Attendance records and minutes for parent focus groups
- Periodic student well-being or attitudinal survey results
- Periodic teacher well-being or attitudinal survey results
- Reports generated through online behaviour management resources (such as www.ClassDojo.com)

Acknowledging and Celebrating Success

Periodically, quick data should be aggregated and reported. For example, once a month, school leaders could report the results from quick conversations, quick observations and easy-to-collect quantitative data at a staff meeting. School status could be discussed and success celebrated. The following vignette depicts how this might manifest.

Clear Creek Secondary School achieved level 1 high reliability status at the end of the previous year and has been monitoring quick data related to that level since the beginning of the current year. At the school's monthly staff meeting, the leadership team presents quick data from the past month and celebrates successes. This month, the one-page summary passed out to staff members shows that quick conversation data were collected for three questions related to indicators of importance to the school. Results are indicated using column graphs. Easy-to-collect quantitative data for level 1 are also summarised. This month's easy-to-collect data includes frequency counts of late notices and rule violations. At the bottom of the page, a narrative summarises quick observation data related to the same indicators. Dr Rogers, the principal, gives teachers several minutes to read the results and then highlights celebrations.

"Notice that we had no unsatisfactory answers for two of the questions in our quick conversation data!" he says.

He asks two teachers to comment on how the school's success in those areas, along with the low number of late notices and rule violations, facilitated their personal success in the classroom, before moving on to the quick observation data.

"I want to specifically celebrate the group of teachers who facilitated the meeting for students, parents and school community members last month. That meeting was cited multiple times in quick observation data as an incident that indicated that students and parents have opportunities to provide input into the operations of the school. Let's give them a round of applause!" he says.

Staff members clap, and Dr Rogers concludes by explaining what quick data the leadership team are planning to collect during the next month.

Resources for Level 1

A school might use the following resources (listed chronologically; most recent first) to facilitate work at level 1:

- *Leaders of Learning: How District, School, and Classroom Leaders Improve Student Achievement* (DuFour & Marzano, 2011)
- *Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching* (Marzano, Frontier & Livingston, 2011)
- *The Highly Engaged Classroom* (Marzano & Pickering, 2010)
- *On Excellence in Teaching* (Marzano, 2010b)
- *District Leadership That Works: Striking the Right Balance* (Marzano & Waters, 2010)
- *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction* (Marzano, 2007)

- *School Leadership That Works: From Research to Results* (Marzano et al., 2005, 2006)
- *Classroom Management That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Every Teacher* (Marzano, 2004a)
- *What Works in Schools: Translating Research Into Action* (Marzano, 2004b)

Other resources related to PLCs (the critical commitment for level 1), school safety, formal input, celebration and management, and other level 1 topics can also be used.

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