12 Roles of
FACILITATORS
FOR SCHOOL
CHANGE

Second Edition

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Contents

Part I

Process Leader

Introduction

Today's organizations have begun to shed the mechanistic, Newtonian worldview that was prevalent in past years (Wheatley, 1992). The mechanistic view dictated that objectives and goals be met through sterile, automatic, lockstep tasks.

Growing, thriving companies have adopted a quantum worldview. "To live in a quantum world, to weave here and there with ease and grace, we will need to change what we do. We will need to stop describing tasks and instead facilitate process" (Wheatley, 1992, p. 38).

Modern organizations recognize that they are composed of complex, dynamic processes. They understand that "the process of organizing is much broader and more basic than the task of achieving goals" (Morgan, 1986, p. 72).

The Process Leader is a key player in any organization that desires real change. She moves organizations from mechanistic thinking to process thinking. She orchestrates and conducts processes rather than imposes goals and objectives. She challenges the mechanistic tendency to value stability and pushes for radical reform in approaching tasks and relating to people. She can discern when chaos or upheaval is helpful. School systems that have spent years expanding bureaucratic control and stability need a Process Leader to guide them through chaos to a more vibrant and responsive organization.

Process Leaders "need both technical and change process expertise" because the change process is complex (Fullan, 1991, p. 226). They need not be experienced in curriculum, school management, or child development, but they need to know a variety of tools for leading schools from where they are to where they want to be. Currently, schools are inundated with top-down legislative and administrative mandates. Teachers attend numerous inservice

events on new instructional approaches. Every newly discerned gap in society is turned over to the schools to solve.

The Process Leader helps local schools design workable solutions for their unique situations. She brings together administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members to decide on plans and solutions. She encourages participation and consensus so that she might receive support and commitment for the change process. She attempts to involve all stakeholders in planning and implementing reform.

The Process Leader may assume three roles: architect, carpenter, or contractor. The architect sees the big picture and focuses on the goal of improving student learning and achievement. The carpenter builds consensus and promotes shared decision making. The contractor steers the process and puts the focus on creating visible achievements so that those who participate in the process reap the benefits of change.
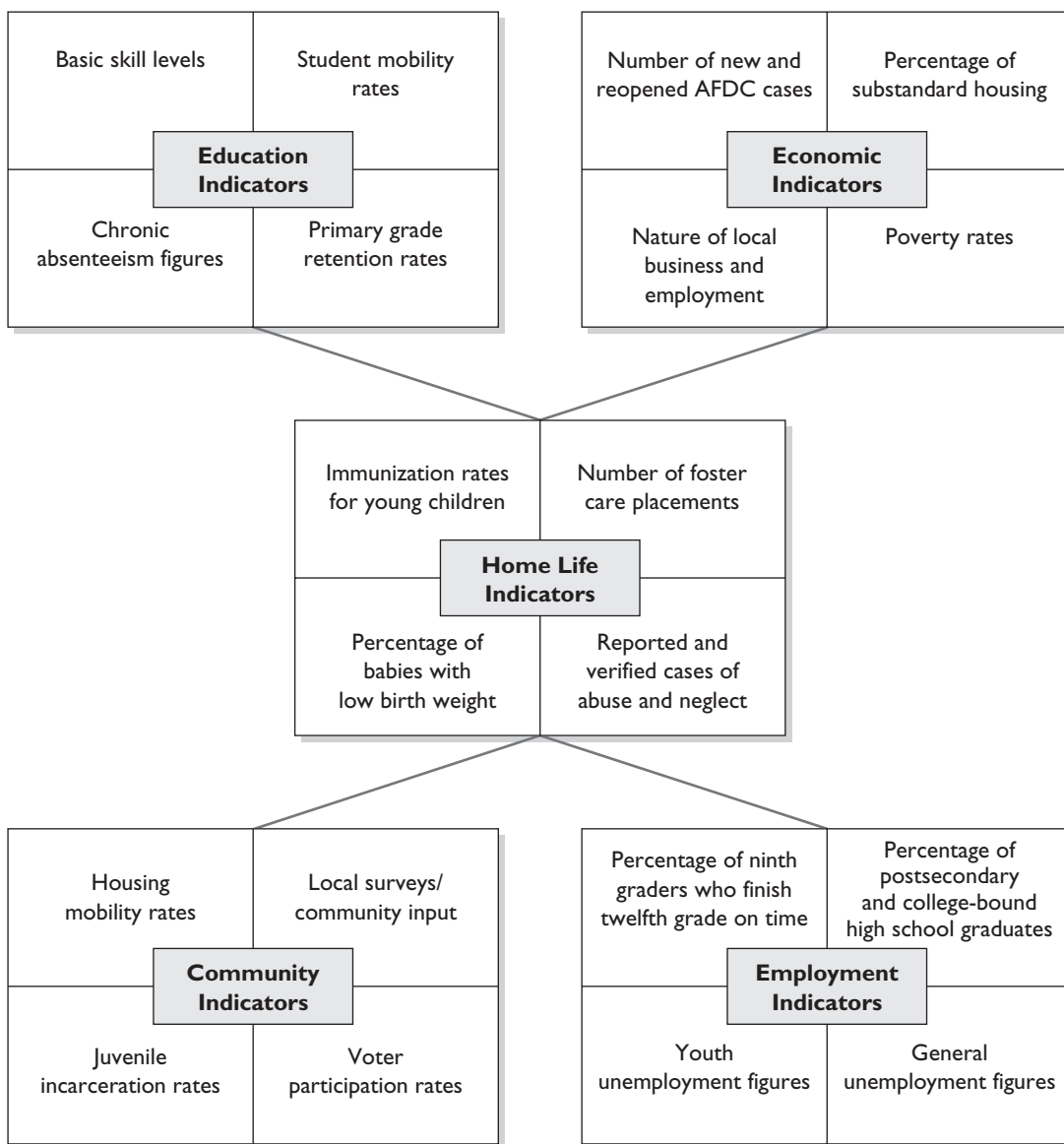
Practical Tool 1

Needs Assessment Grid

Description

The Needs Assessment Grid helps a group collect and organize information about district and community needs. When all data are gathered, the facilitator leads the group in analyzing the information and making plans for the future.

Example

Basic skill levels	Student mobility rates
Education Indicators	
Chronic absenteeism figures	Primary grade retention rates

Number of new and reopened AFDC cases	Percentage of substandard housing
Economic Indicators	
Nature of local business and employment	Poverty rates

Immunization rates for young children	Number of foster care placements
Home Life Indicators	
Percentage of babies with low birth weight	Reported and verified cases of abuse and neglect

Housing mobility rates	Local surveys/ community input
Community Indicators	
Juvenile incarceration rates	Voter participation rates

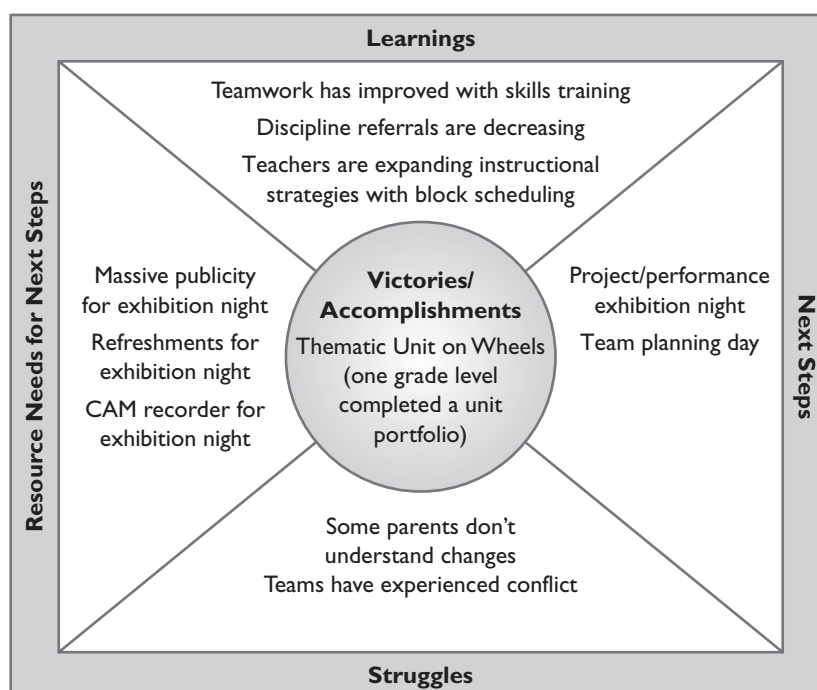| Percentage of ninth graders who finish twelfth grade on time	Percentage of postsecondary and college-bound high school graduates
Employment Indicators	
Youth unemployment figures	General unemployment figures

Practical Tool 4

Reporting Format for School-to-School Sharing

Description

This tool offers a guideline for how schools can share accomplishments with other schools in a concise and powerful way. This format keeps the report focused, upbeat, and informative. This format can be the basis of ongoing written communications or can be adapted for face-to-face meetings with groups of teachers from different schools.

Example

Learnings

Teamwork has improved with skills training

Discipline referrals are decreasing

Teachers are expanding instructional strategies with block scheduling

Resource Needs for Next Steps

Massive publicity for exhibition night

Refreshments for exhibition night

CAM recorder for exhibition night

Victories/ Accomplishments

Thematic Unit on Wheels (one grade level completed a unit portfolio)

Next Steps

Project/performance exhibition night

Team planning day

Some parents don't understand changes
Teams have experienced conflict

Struggles

Instructions

Note: A blackline master of the Reporting Format for School-to-School Sharing is provided in Appendix A, page 232.

1. Distribute a blank school-to-school reporting format to each team. Ask teams to fill out the formats. (You may choose to have teams draw large formats on chart paper, so that they may display their work to the other teams.) Teams may choose to add visuals to the verbal report for extra emphasis.