

The District Strategic Planning Process: *Moving Beyond the Essentials*

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Presentation Overview

This presentation will focus on an evidence-based approach to assist leaders in creating the necessary structure and culture in which the District Strategic and School Renewal plan process will be a successful part of a school improvement initiative.

Areas of Focus

- Quality Strategic Planning Essentials
- The Role of District/Building Leaders in the Strategic Planning Process
- Fundamental School Improvement Strategies
- Common Challenges of the Strategic Planning Process
- The Power of Collaboration
- The Innovation & Support Team (*Responsibilities*)

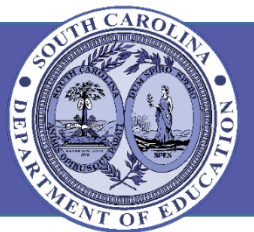


Strategic Plan

Formal Definition

A **dynamic** process that formalizes and communicates the school district's mission, vision, values, goals, and objectives, and the **actions** needed to achieve those goals and objectives.

This process will enable internal and external stakeholders to voice and agree on the same priorities and focus on the same path to improvement.

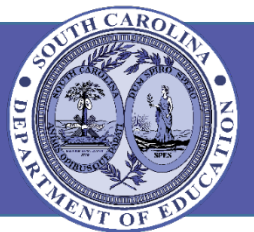


Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

(R 43-261)

- All districts are required to have a District Strategic Plan
- All schools are required to have a School Renewal Plan
- The plans are on a five-year cycle with annual updates
- Submissions are due by April 30th each year
- Purpose of the Plans is to coordinate and align improvement initiatives

<https://www.ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/state-accountability/district-strategic-and-school-renewal-plans/>



District Strategic and School Renewal Plan Components

- ✓ Assurances
- ✓ Stakeholder Involvement
- ✓ Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA)
- ✓ CNA Executive Summary
- ✓ Performance Goals
- ✓ Interim Performance Goals
- ✓ Strategies and Action Plans
- ✓ Evaluation of the Strategies



District Strategic and School Renewal Plans

Performance Goals

DISTRICT

- Each district must complete at least one goal for
 - Student Achievement
 - Teacher/Administrator Quality
 - School Climate
 - Gifted and Talented

*Innovative Initiatives or Priorities

SCHOOLS

- Each school must complete at least one goal for
 - Student Achievement
 - Teacher/Administrator Quality
 - School Climate



Quality Strategic Planning: *Essential Elements*

- Effective school improvement planning models emphasize comprehensive needs assessments, strategic prioritization of needs, and data-driven decision-making through ongoing monitoring.



Transformations do not take place until the culture of the school permits it.



Quality Strategic Planning: *Essential Elements*

- **Culture** - The organization's culture is one of the most important determiners in the successful execution
 - Building and sustaining an organizational **culture** that facilitates and accelerates change (Collaboration and distributive Leadership) **Relationships!**
 - Fostering a sense of personal **accountability** for strategy execution and ownership at every level (High Expectations) **People will only follow you as deeply as they trust you.**

“Do not expect changes in student outcomes before you have changes in adult practices.”



Quality Strategic Planning: *Essential Elements*

- **Structure/Strategy** - Strategy sets the direction and focus and elaborates plans and the environment for educators to understand the organization's goals.
- Developing a strategic plan is vital to an organization's success. An organization must be able to efficiently execute that strategy to achieve its performance improvement goals.
 - **Needs Assessment**- identify and assess key deficiencies and provide prioritized recommendations to support improvement
 - **Differentiated Intervention**- tiers of technical assistance designed to tailor support to the specific needs of the school, grade level, or teacher.
 - **Focused Improvement**- diagnosing deficiencies, identifying clear and effective improvement strategies, implementing **evidence-based practices**, and **monitoring**



Examine Educational Factors

The data analysis should include educational factors that matter for student learning:

- Aligned curriculum
- Effective instruction
- Strong leadership
- Supports for students and teachers
- A safe and positive climate
- Family and community engagement
- Equitable access to resources



What is the Role of Leadership?

Research confirms what we know:

- Leaders/Principals influence student achievement
- Leaders/Principals influence teacher and staff decisions
- Leaders/Principals influence policy and program implementation
- Leaders/Principals' roles have changed, with more responsibilities for instructional oversight layered upon responsibilities for school management



Thoughts about Leadership

- **Leading is Teaching**

“If you can’t teach, you can’t lead.”

- Dr. Jim Mahoney

- **Leaders are Servants**

“You don’t have to be great to serve but you have to serve to be a great leader.” - Jon Gordon

- **Dispositional vs Positional**

“Leadership is an action, not a position.”

- Donald McGannon

- **Collective Leadership (Leadership is Shared)**

“True leaders don’t create more followers. They create more leaders” - Tom Peters

- **Leaders develop Cultures**

“Great leaders succeed because they bring out the greatness in others.” - Jon Gordon

- **Vision Oriented & Student-Centered**

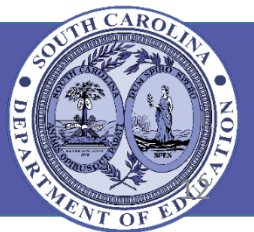
“There is nothing more demoralizing than a leader who can’t clearly articulate why we’re doing what we’re doing.”

- James Kouzes & Barry Posner

- **Leaders are Responsible (Accountability)**

“The lowest performing teacher in your building sets your standard for what is acceptable.”

- Rich Hawkins

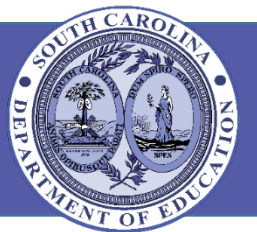


A primary reason for our lack of success is...



...our addiction
to excess!

The result of your needs assessment must be a focused plan with a limited number of strategic goals.



Research consistently shows that supporting adult learning is directly and positively linked to enhancing children's achievement.

Drago-Severson, 2009

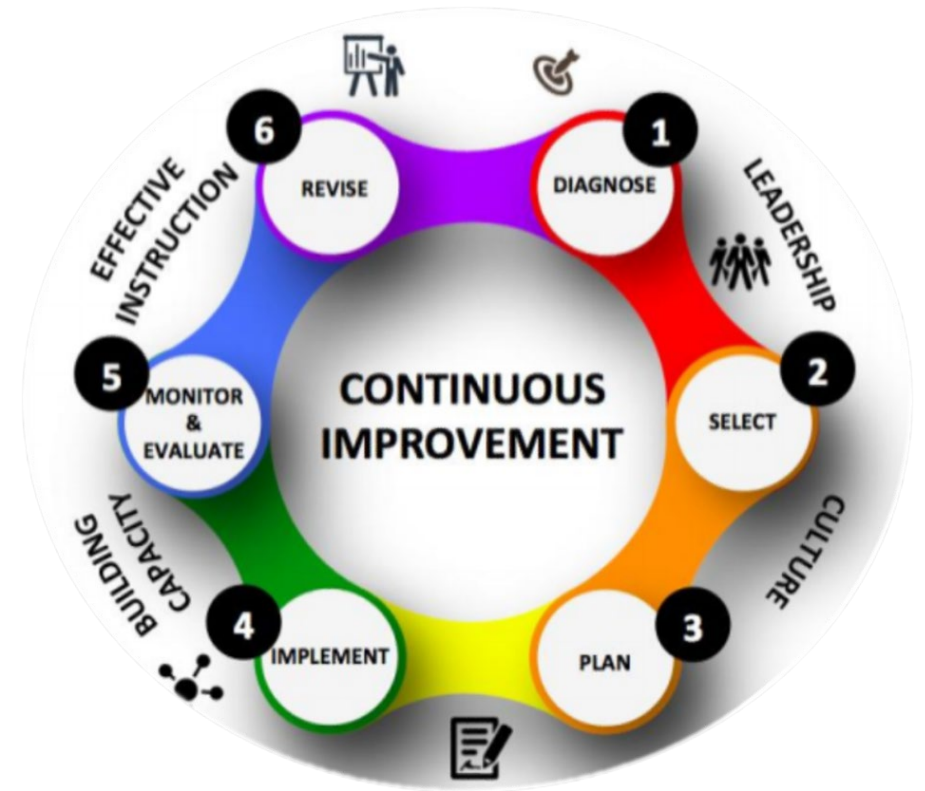


“Teachers don’t leave schools, they leave leaders.”



School Improvement Strategies

- School improvement must be viewed as an organizational **strategy**, rather than an exercise in compliance.
- This improvement cycle gives districts a template for focused and intentional actions that lead to continuous improvement.







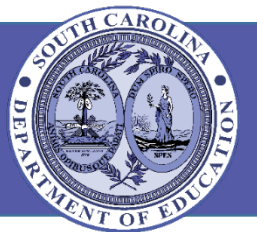
South Carolina School Improvement Model



School Improvement Strategies

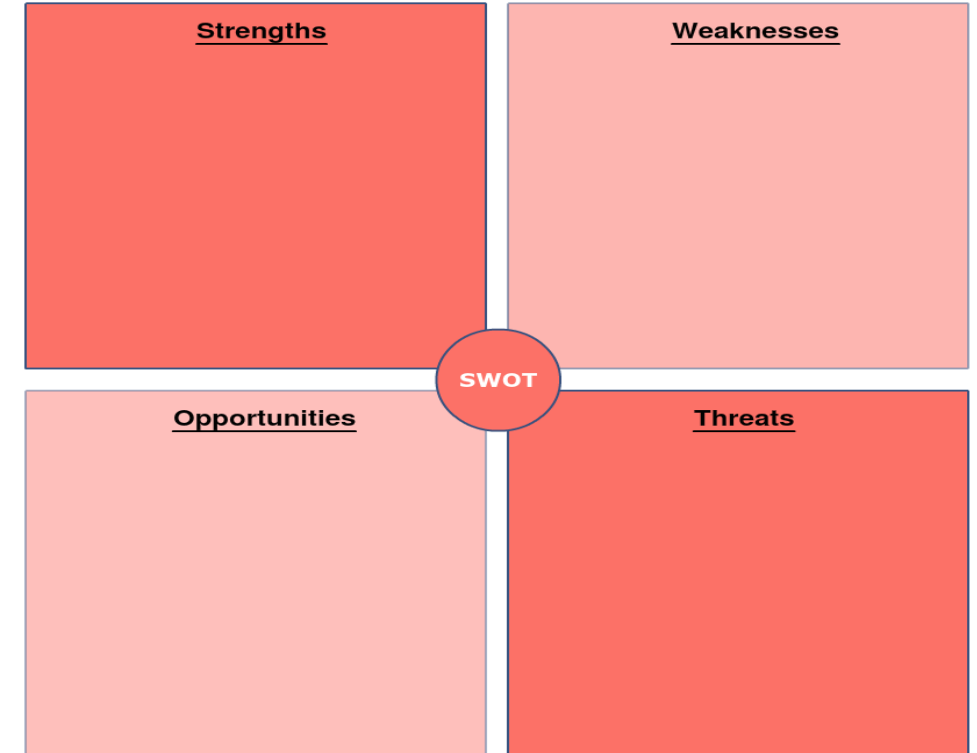
Key Questions to Consider

-  Where are we now?
-  Where do we want to be?
-  How will we get from where we are to where we want to be?
-  What are we learning?



SWOT Analysis: a technique for assessing four aspects of your organization.

- What challenges arose during the past school year/s that have not yet been resolved?
- What challenges do we expect might arise during 2023-2024?
- What processes and programs are helping us innovate and transform?
- How can we leverage these opportunities?
- Who are the people who have stepped up to the challenges?



Reflective Questions

- Look at Michigan, Georgia, Arizona



Select Intervention Strategies:

Sources

- [SC Innovation Station](#)
- What Works Clearinghouse
- Evidence for ESSA
- IDEAs that Work
- SCDE Instruction Hub



Improvement Cycle – Core Principles

1. A focused plan **aligns** vision, mission, and philosophy.
2. The process is **continuous**, and the plan is a **dynamic** document.
3. The process relies on **quality**, **deep data** interpretations.
4. The process is completed in a **collaborative** and inclusive way.



Purpose is the reason you
journey. Passion is the fire
that lights your way.



Improvement Cycle - Core Principles

5. The process produces one focused, integrated plan that directs all work and resources.
6. The process expects **substantive changes in student performance and adult practices** as a result of implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the process and plan.
7. An efficient communication approach ensures all stakeholders are consistently informed of progress at each stage.



Common Challenges of Strategic Planning

- Lack of Time
- Insufficient Tools
- Asking Wrong Questions- Are you asking the deep and “tough” questions?
- Jumping to Solutions- Leaders often jump to the task of brainstorming solutions before truly understanding the problems to be solved.
- Ineffective Implementation and Monitoring



Common Challenges of Strategic Planning

Executive Summary of Needs Assessment Challenges

- Not identifying a need as the basis of the plan
- Failure to make the appropriate correlations
- Failure to analyze data at a deep level

Any discrepancies in the following areas identified by the school and district report cards must be included in the plan:

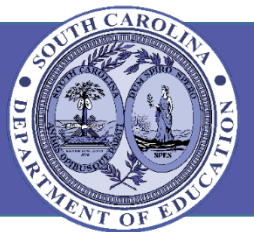
1. Achievement	5. Discipline
2. Achievement by Subgroup	6. Teacher/Administrator Quality
3. Graduation Rate	7. Other Priority Areas
4. Attendance	



Common Challenges of Strategic Planning

Sample Strategic Performance Goals

- By 2025-2026, 60% of 3rd-8th graders will score “Meets or Exceeds” on the ELA and Math benchmarks as measured by Spring MAP scores.
- Increase the percentage of students with End of Course Assessment results of C or higher for Algebra I from 66% to 75% by the 2027-2028 school year.
- Increase the cumulative average of teachers’ scores on the SC Teaching Standards 4.0 Rubric from 2.5 to 3.0 by 2029.
- By June of 2027, school report card surveys will show: Parents satisfied with the learning environment will increase 1 percentage point each academic year from 95.9% to 99.9%. (OR) Teachers satisfied with the learning environment will remain at 100% each academic year.



Collaboration

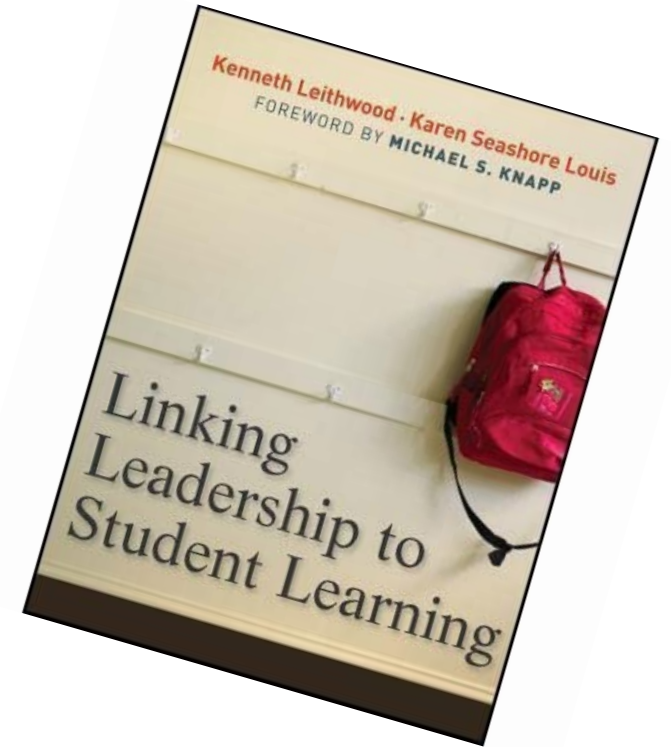
In the thousands of cases we've studied, we've yet to encounter a single example of extraordinary achievement that didn't involve the active participation and support of many people.... Leadership is not a solo act; it's a team performance... Collaboration is a social imperative. Without it, people can't get extraordinary things done in organizations.

-Kouzes & Posner, 2003

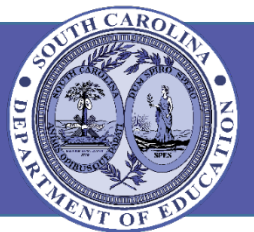


Leadership Study-Collective Leadership

- Nine states, 43 school districts, 180 schools
- Data from a total of 8,391 teachers and 471 school administrators
- The authors, after five years of research, could not find a single documented case of a school that managed to turn around its student achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership.



Leithwood & Seashore Louis (2012)

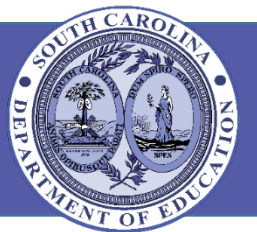


Two Overall Findings

1. Collective leadership (collective capacity) has a stronger influence on student learning than any individual source of leadership.
2. Higher-performing schools award greater influence to **teacher teams**



Seashore Louis et. al, 2010



Building Capacity

The Four Components of Capacity Building

- **HUMAN CAPITAL:** The knowledge, skills, commitment, disposition, and intellectual ability of the members of a school's staff;
- **SOCIAL CAPITAL:** The intangible network of relationships that fosters unity and trust within a school's staff;
- **PROGRAM COHERENCE:** The degree to which instruction, resources, and staff in the school are coordinated and integrated into a common framework; and,
- **RESOURCES:** The physical or organizational tools that a school has at its disposal to make its improvement goals a reality.



Innovation & Support Team

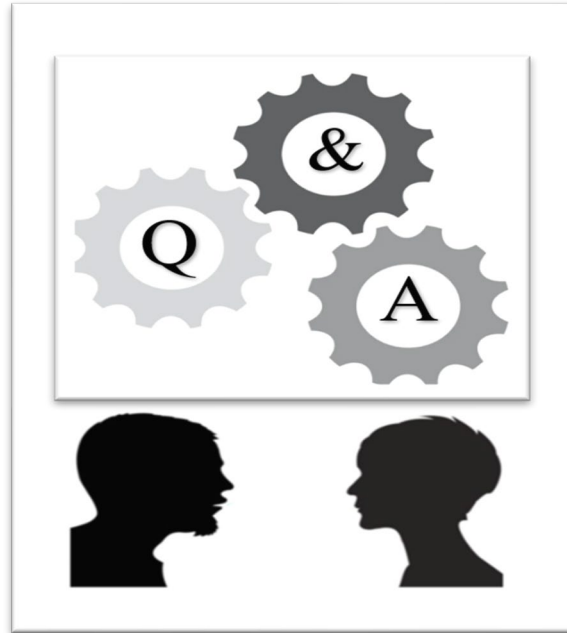
Responsibilities

- Review and approve district strategic and school renewal plans.
- Provide, broker, or facilitate professional learning opportunities, technical assistance, and/or resources for districts and schools specific to
 - identifying and effectively implementing evidence-based practices and interventions with fidelity that positively impact leadership, effective teaching and learning, school climate, and parent and community engagement.
 - using relevant data to guide the planning of expenditures of federal funds, evidence-based practices relative to teaching children of poverty, and school improvement planning.
- Manages and maintains the SC Innovation Station, an online resource portal that provides high-quality, research-based, vetted resources and professional learning opportunities to support educators at all levels.
- Collaborate across SCDE offices to provide targeted supports to identified districts and schools.



Questions & Answers...

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Innovation & Support Team

For further assistance contact the
Innovation & Support Team

Office of Federal and State Accountability
South Carolina Department of Education

<https://scinnovationstation.ed.sc.gov>

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