Building Distributive Leadership Capacity → Planning and Rollout → Driving Instructional Improvement → Reflecting and Making Adjustments

Establish Instructional Leadership Teams

Who Is the Primary Audience for This Guide? School Leaders
When Is This Guide Most Useful? From Selection to Rollout

Vision of Excellence

An effective Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) helps a school improve teaching and learning through increased collaboration and distributive leadership. Schools with strong ILTs are more effective at assessing the progress of teachers and students and making adjustments as needed. Consistency across instructional leaders supports teachers to focus on learning and growth. In order to be successful, the school leader must support the ILT's work toward a common vision and ensure that the ILT speaks with one voice on the school's approach to teacher leadership and collaboration.

Essential Questions

- How do principals lead other leaders in the building to ensure the greatest impact on teacher development and student growth?
- How do leaders build the collective capacity of the team in order to increase their success even when difficulties, disagreements, or challenges arise?
- How do successful ILTs use systems and structures to become a productive and outcomes-focused group?

Objective 1: Crystalize the Purpose and Goals of the ILT

Key Action Steps

✓ **Revisit your school's vision and design for Teacher Leadership & Collaboration with the ILT**
  - Set aside time for conversations with the ILT early and often about the school's vision for teacher leadership and how you will collectively work to achieve it.
  - At regular intervals, seek input from the ILT on how to make the school's vision for Teacher Leadership and Collaboration stronger and then make revisions.

✓ **Conduct preliminary meetings of next year's ILT to set norms and expectations**
  - In the spring, bring together the following year's ILT to build relationships and set the stage for the next year of work. Conduct conversations to collaboratively develop an ILT vision, purpose and goals statement with Senior/Team Leads, Assistant Principals (APs), and other school-based leaders (e.g., Dean of Instruction).
  - With your ILT, use a protocol to discuss characteristics of an effective ILT member and team. Synthesize their responses and revisit this throughout the year.
  - Set aside time to practice messaging about the ILT to teacher teams and the school as a whole, so that members speak with one voice.

SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOLS

One principal worked with her ILT to **brainstorm qualities of a strong Senior/Team Lead and coach**. They asked themselves questions such as:
  ✓ What does a strong Senior/Team Lead look like?
  ✓ What does an effective coach sound like?
  ✓ What commitments should we make to achieve these ideals?
She synthesized the results of this brainstorm on a poster and hung it in her office. They revisit it regularly during 1:1s and whole group meetings to provide focus and inspiration.

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Objective 2: Examine Where You Are as an ILT and Determine Where You Need to Go

- ✓ **Assess ILT needs**
  - Using data protocols, support the ILT to assess school-wide teacher and student data and make recommendations for areas to focus on during the year. Be sure to focus on data connected to your UIP that you will progress monitor throughout the year.
  - Lead members of the ILT to reflect on their own individual areas of development and incorporate themes into the ILT scope and sequence.
- ✓ **Draft a scope and sequence for the ILT and revise as needed**
  - Using the information gathered above, draft a year-long scope and sequence for the ILT. Ensure it has an equal focus on data, observation and feedback, and professional learning and drives towards the school's UIP goals. Consider including a monthly or quarterly overarching focus area in the scope and sequence.
  - Set aside regular time to revisit the scope and sequence with the ILT, and make revisions as necessary to meet the needs of the ILT, teachers and students.

  Refer to **Support Improvement of ILT and Senior/Team Leads** for additional resources and action steps that that you can use to support the professional growth of instructional leaders throughout the school year.

Objective 3: Develop Structures, Systems, and Agreements for ILT Meetings

- ✓ **Craft agreements and norms for how ILT members will engage with one another**
  - Collectively with the ILT, establish norms and/or commitments for all ILT interactions and meetings. Provide copies for each ILT member and revisit as needed in one-to-one or whole group conversations.
  - Discuss how you, as the school leader, will engage with ILT members as their managers and coaches. Discuss expectations with the ILT, gather input, and draft School Leader to Senior/Team Lead coaching agreements. Be sure to differentiate between expectations that are non-negotiable and those that can be adjusted person to person.
- ✓ **Develop routines for ongoing ILT meetings**
  - Revisit school and ILT vision at the start of each meeting to remind ILT members of the larger purpose.
  - Provide an agenda template, and ask ILT members to submit agenda items prior to meetings. Consider using Google Docs to collaboratively build the agenda.
  - Include short-term feedback mechanisms for ILT meetings (e.g., plus/delta or stop/start/continue protocol. Revisit feedback from previous meetings at the start of each session. Commit to using a long-term feedback mechanism such as a thinking map reflection protocol regularly.
  - Set up professional learning activities around focus areas outlined in the scope and sequence, adjusting these as needed.
- ✓ **Support collaboration between ILT members**
  - Provide informal collaboration and support opportunities inside and outside of ILT meetings. School leaders can create regular consultancy or "office hour" times for ILT members to receive support from the school leader or each other.
  - Ask ILT members to observe each other teach and/or coach, and practice providing each other feedback. Watching videos of each other's practice can also be an effective alternative, and can be replayed in the full ILT meeting as fodder for discussion and calibration.
  - Have members bring data and/or artifacts (e.g., student work, scripted observation, teacher team data) and discuss. To focus the discussion, provide guiding questions that revolve around the focus areas outlined in the scope and sequence.
  - Provide space for ILT members to practice difficult conversations with each other prior to their having the conversations with teachers.