



Mass Insight Education & Research

Continuation Submission to CO School Redesign Request for Information 2019

I. RFI Cover Page



School Redesign Request for Information 11

Part I: Cover Page – Organization Information

Organization Information		
Organization Name:	Mass Insight Education & Research	<input type="checkbox"/> New or <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuation Submission
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Organization Category (select all that apply)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Network, Charter Management Organization or Charter School <input type="checkbox"/> Turnaround Leader Development Provider <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Management Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Engagement Specialist		
Preferred Geographical Region(s) in Colorado to Work In (select all that apply)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metro Denver <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Front Range (Colorado Springs, Ft. Collins) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural / Mountain / Western Slope		

Indicate the school district(s) or BOCES your organization is willing and able to engage with:
 Mass Insight is willing and able to work with all districts/BOCES.

District name	City	County name
ANY SCHOOL DISTRICT or BOCES	ALL	ALL
Academy 20 School District	Colorado Springs	El Paso
Adams 12 Five Star Schools School District	Thornton	Adams
Adams County 14 School District	Commerce City	Adams
Adams-Arapahoe 28j School District	Aurora	Arapahoe
Agate 300 School District	Agate	Elbert
Aguilar Reorganized 6 School District	Aguilar	Las Animas
Akron R-1 School District	Akron	Washington
Alamosa Re-11j School District	Alamosa	Alamosa
Archuleta County 50 Jt School District	Pagosa Springs	Archuleta
Arickaree R-2 School District	Anton	Washington
Arriba-Flagler C-20 School District	Flagler	Kit Carson
Aspen 1 School District	Aspen	Pitkin
Ault-Highland Re-9 School District	Eaton	Weld
Bayfield 10 Jt-R School District	Bayfield	La Plata
Bennett 29j School District	Bennett	Adams
Bethune R-5 School District	Bethune	Kit Carson
Big Sandy 100j School District	Simla	El Paso
Boulder Valley Re 2 School District	Boulder	Boulder
Branson Reorganized 82 School District	Branson	Las Animas
Briggsdale Re-10 School District	Briggsdale	Weld
Brush Re-2(J) School District	Brush	Morgan

II. Narrative Response

- a. Provide an update on your organization's work and progress since the original RFI submission in 2018.

Mass Insight Education & Research Theory of Action

In 2007, Mass Insight Education & Research published The Turnaround Challenge¹, a research report and call to action that highlighted the need for intervention in America's lowest-performing schools – former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan called the report, "the Bible of school turnaround." The report also established the framework for our school turnaround theory of action.

Since 2009, Mass Insight has worked with schools, districts, and state education agencies in Massachusetts and across the country to redesign the systems that support chronically underperforming schools and to drive gains in student achievement. We recently revisited our theory of action based on our ten years of experience in turnaround. Our new theory of action puts increasing focus on the instructional core and collective responsibility for student success:

We believe that if we work with state education agencies, districts, and schools to ensure schools have:

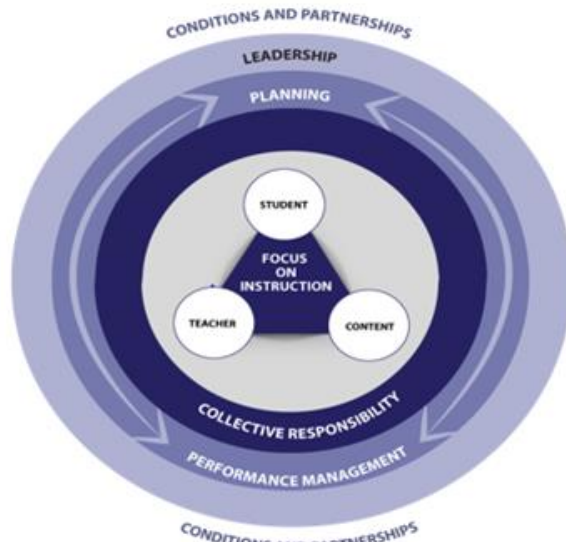
Conditions: Sufficient school-level control over people, time, money, and program to address the root causes of low performance;

Planning: Evidence-based, actionable improvement plans that address the root causes of low performance informed by a review of existing conditions and input from school, district, and community stakeholders;

Leadership: A principal who can manage and communicate complexity while maintaining focus on the school's vision and key priorities;

Focus on Instruction: Processes and supports that help teachers work together to constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice so that students can engage in deep learning tasks;

Collective Responsibility: The school faculty and staff ensure there is collective responsibility for both the quality of instruction and student learning and success;



¹ Mass Insight Education and Research. Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, Inc., 2007, *Mass Insight Education*, www.massinsight.org/resources/the-turnaround-challenge/



Performance Management: Consistent processes for using data to measure both implementation and outcomes to determine what’s working and inform efforts to improve; and

Partnerships: Partnerships that help the school meet the multiple needs of teachers and students.

THEN schools will dramatically improve and student learning will increase.

Mass Insight School and District Supports

Mass Insight Education & Research works with schools and districts to advance elements of our theory of action by providing support in the following areas: whole system, instructional transformation, talent development, culture shift, and turnaround leadership.

Areas of Support	Overview of Mass Insight Supports
<u>Whole System</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. District Diagnostics2. District Strategic Planning3. Transformation Zone Development
<u>Instructional Transformation</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight’s research-based School Readiness Assessment)2. Distributive Leadership Structures and Effective Professional Learning Community (PLC) Models
<u>Talent Development</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight’s research-based School Readiness Assessment) and/or District Diagnostics2. District and School-wide Coaching Models
<u>Culture Shift</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight’s research-based School Readiness Assessment)2. School Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) Development3. Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategies
<u>Turnaround Leadership</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight’s research-based School Readiness Assessment)2. School Improvement Planning3. Performance Management4. Principal Supervisor Coaching, and Development of Principal Support and Management Models



Whole System

We believe that the school is the unit of change and improvement and therefore, “one size fits all” support from district offices is unlikely to reverse a history of low performance. Our systems-level support involves working closely with districts and schools to create the conditions and differentiated supports necessary for individual schools to meet their unique student needs. We do this by offering three supports:

1. District Diagnostics
2. District Strategic Planning
3. Transformation Zone Development

District Diagnostics

Mass Insight begins our work with the assumption that a district’s role is to support schools to improve. Mass Insight provides districts with system-wide district diagnostic assessments to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities, specifically focusing on the following critical elements* of our [District Diagnostic Framework](#) around how a district organizes and operates to best support schools:

1. **Vision, strategy, and culture:** Clear vision, strategy and manageable set of priorities for the district that recognize the local environment (e.g., regulations, statutes, contracts, funding, politics, governance) and district’s capacity for change while promoting a district-wide culture of excellence and high expectations for all.
2. **Organizational clarity and collaboration:** Clear central office and governance structures, systems, processes, and policies that work together to advance the district towards its vision.
3. **Focus on instruction:** Curriculum, materials, tools and supports that help school leaders, teachers and other school staff constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice.
4. **School management:** Policies, structures, and systems that create the conditions needed for school success, maintain accountability for results, and enable effective school leaders.
5. **Talent management:** Systems and processes to recruit, place, develop, and retain talented staff.
6. **Stakeholder engagement and communications:** Intentional systems and processes to maintain open lines of communication with staff, family and community stakeholders.
7. **Central services and operations:** Effective delivery of services to schools, allowing school-based educators to focus on teaching and learning.
8. **Finance:** Alignment of financial resources with district needs and priorities.



9. **Data:** Data is available and informs decision-making at all levels of the district and in schools.
10. **Focus on equity:** Policies, structures, systems, and resources to ensure equitable, high quality education for all students.

**We can also give extra attention to specific areas identified by district leadership.*

The diagnostic process includes three phases of work, including in-depth review of district data and documents, site-visit interviews and focus groups with district stakeholders, and the development of a final report with diagnostic findings and recommendations. These diagnostics often inform district strategic planning processes.

District Strategic Planning

Mass Insight begins all of our work with first understanding local context and needs. At the systems-level, we work with districts to conduct strategic planning processes designed specifically for local context and needs. We work with district leadership to lay out a process for engaging stakeholders, facilitate root cause analysis of low performance, and develop a coherent theory of action and strategies to improve performance. Our team has extensive experience working with district leadership to set up customized processes for building stakeholder investment in the plan, and for managing the plan to impact - what we call [performance management](#).

Transformation Zone Development

In our 2007 report, The Turnaround Challenge, Mass Insight proposed a new strategy for school improvement through the creation of zones. The zone structure is intended to achieve sustainable and dramatic improvement in a cluster of schools and establish a model for broader district and system transformation. Zones are carved out spaces that allow a strategically selected group of schools (ideally four to seven) with some common interests, such as K-12 attendance patterns or similar identified challenges, to operate under different operating conditions and receive different supports than other schools in the district. Zones are managed and supported by an internal or external zone office that carves out the middle ground between the top-down control of the central office and the inefficiencies of school-level control.

We support zone design, development, and implementation, through a customized approach that aligns with the district's vision for a zone and engages community voice in the process. [Our approach to zone design](#) includes strategic school selection based on needs, creation of zone office governance structures, securing school-level conditions and autonomies necessary to address school needs (in the areas of people, time, budget and program), and engaging community members. By creating a space



within the district that adopts model organizational practices to provide schools with more flexible operating conditions that address the root causes of low performance, zones help districts implement sustainable strategies that can turn around low-performing schools and be scaled district-wide. The model transforms governance and management structures within districts to create streamlined, adaptable organizations that manage, support, and lead schools based on identified needs.

The zone model also provides greater accountability for increased performance. Zone directors report to the Superintendent and are held accountable for managing school performance and achieving determined performance outcomes. To support zone performance management, Mass Insight facilitates improvement planning, goal setting, and ongoing processes for assessing zone effectiveness and impact. In some districts, we have established performance contracts between zone directors and district leadership to codify expected outcomes and accountability measures.

Instructional Transformation

We believe that a focus on instruction is essential for school success, and we believe that context matters. We work with schools and districts to cultivate processes and supports that help teachers work together to constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice so that students can engage in deep learning tasks. We do this by offering two key supports:

1. Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight's research-based School Readiness Assessment)
2. Distributive Leadership Structures and Effective PLC Models

Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight's research-based School Readiness Assessment)

Mass Insight's work with schools and districts begins by understanding school strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. We do this through our School Readiness Assessment (SRA), an evidence-based comprehensive needs assessment designed to gather stakeholder input, surface priorities for improvement, inform planning efforts, and arm school leadership teams and/or school leaders with vital data and recommendations. [Mass Insight's SRA tool](#) and process evaluates the extent to which elements of our [theory of action](#), with a deep emphasis on instructional quality, are present in a school, including:

- **Conditions:** Sufficient school-level control over people, time, money, and program to address the root causes of low performance;

- **Planning:** Evidence-based, actionable improvement plans that address the root causes of low performance informed by a review of existing conditions and input from school, district, and community stakeholders;
- **Leadership:** A principal who can manage and communicate complexity while maintaining focus on the school's vision and key priorities;
- **Focus on Instruction:** Processes and supports that help teachers work together to constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice so that students can engage in deep learning tasks;
- **Collective Responsibility:** The school faculty and staff ensure there is collective responsibility for both the quality of instruction and student learning and success;
- **Performance Management:** Consistent processes for using data to measure both implementation and outcomes to determine what's working and inform efforts to improve; and
- **Partnerships:** Partnerships that help the school meet the multiple needs of teachers and students.

Each SRA includes the following: 1) a comprehensive data and document review conducted prior to a school visit, 2) an on-site school visit consisting of focus groups and observations, and 3) final analysis and report of findings. Often, the SRA process informs school improvement planning with an emphasis on ensuring rigorous instruction that meets student needs and results in improved student outcomes.

Distributive Leadership Structures and Effective Professional Learning Community (PLC) Models

Rick DuFour said, "The professional learning community model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn²." Mass Insight works with principals and instructional leadership teams (ILTS) to help build and sustain PLCs that ensure student learning. Our PLC work varies widely depending on school level, the current state of PLCs in the school, and the willingness and capacity of teachers to engage in collaborative planning. Mass Insight's goal is for every teacher to engage with colleagues in the ongoing exploration of DuFour's three crucial questions: *(1) What do we want each student to learn?, (2) How will we know when each student has learned it?, and (3) How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?*

Mass Insight's PLC work ranges from establishing new PLC models and monitoring structures to fine-tuning the work of existing PLCs and to building capacity of PLC

² DuFour, Richard. "What Is a Professional Learning Community?" *Educational Leadership*, vol. 61, May 2004, pp. 6–11., www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may04/vol61/num08/What-Is-a-Professional-Learning-Community%2%A2.aspx.



facilitators to continuously improve the effectiveness of their PLCs in ensuring student success. We have also developed PLC monitoring dashboards and protocols to support principals, ILTs, and PLC facilitators with understanding schoolwide and individual PLC effectiveness and development over time. By involving multiple stakeholders in school improvement efforts and distributing leadership, schools build ownership and accountability for student and school success.

Talent Development

Talent is a necessary condition for schools to improve and for students to achieve. Mass Insight believes all students need to have consistent high-quality educators in front of them every day, which means that schools must be equipped with strong talent recruitment, development, and retention systems and structures. We provide two key supports to help districts and schools understand and address talent needs:

1. Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight's research-based School Readiness Assessment) and/or District Diagnostics
2. District and School-wide Coaching Models

Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight's research-based School Readiness Assessment) and/or District Diagnostics

Through [Mass Insight's School Readiness Assessment](#) (SRA), we seek to understand school and system strengths, challenges and opportunities with talent recruitment, development, and retention. Our goal is to help school and district leaders understand, prioritize, plan for, and address areas of need. To understand talent needs, specifically, we gather input from school and district stakeholder focus groups, and we gather talent-related artifacts and data. Potential artifacts include staff demographics data, vacancies and retention data, professional development plans, staff recruitment materials, staff evaluation processes, teacher attendance data, union contracts, etc.

District and School-wide Coaching Models

Having great coaches is not enough to ensure that teachers receive great coaching. Working with districts across the country, Mass Insight has synthesized what goes into a great instructional coaching program, and where there are common pitfalls. We start with our [Instructional Coaching Framework](#) and work with schools and districts to bring best practices to life through intentional design, training, and custom performance management systems aligned to our framework. Building on our national research, our tailored supports to districts integrate elements of improvement science, networked improvement communities, and the instructional rounds model. We help districts and schools establish the conditions, coach capacity, and ongoing systems/structures to enact effective instructional coaching models.



Culture Shift

We believe that by strategically organizing the ways that adults work together, school leaders can help build a culture in which there is collective responsibility for student learning and success. Mass Insight's work on structures and processes to support a culture shift towards collective responsibility includes three key supports:

1. Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight's research-based School Readiness Assessment)
2. School Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) Development
3. Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategies

Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight's research-based School Readiness Assessment)

In order to change school and teacher practice, it is important to build a culture of shared ownership for student success and accountability for positive change. This begins by first understanding a school's strengths, challenges, and needs related to school culture and collective responsibility. We assess this through [Mass Insight's School Readiness Assessment](#) (SRA), by gathering input from school stakeholder focus groups (e.g., teachers, students, families, support staff), conducting classroom and common space observations, and analyzing data and artifacts (e.g., staff and/or surveys, climate and culture data, etc.). Additionally, we believe that rigorous, standards-aligned instruction, with supports and scaffolds for students with special education needs and language development needs, is further evidence of a positive school culture focused on student learning. Our SRA process places a strong emphasis on quality of instruction, as well as systems and structures necessary to support teacher development and collaboration to strengthen instruction and school culture.

School Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) Development

Strong school Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) play a critical role in implementing the school improvement plan (SIP), building consistent, aligned, and rigorous instructional practices, and building collective responsibility for the quality of instruction and student learning. ILTs can also be a barrier to progress if they are not carefully structured and led. Therefore, Mass Insight helps build the capacity of instructional leaders (e.g., principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, and department chairs/teacher leaders) to implement and monitor school-wide instructional change through ILT development and continuous improvement. We begin by understanding the existing leadership structure and then we work with the principal to create an ILT or strengthen an existing ILT. Our work on ILTs may include help with determining ILT membership to ensure representation of grade and subject PLCs, facilitating the development of ILT protocols and norms, coaching principals on ILT leadership, and



planning for and facilitating ILT retreats to prepare the principal and ILT to drive implementation of school improvement priorities.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategies

We approach all of our work through an equity-lens and pay considerable attention to who's voice is "in the room." Within all parts of our work, stakeholder voice, input, understanding, and support are essential to the success and sustainability of school or district change efforts. In our partner engagements, we actively build in opportunities for authentic stakeholder voice. We also support our partners with understanding stakeholder needs and desires to customize communications and engagement strategies. Our stakeholder and community engagement work often includes development of communications frameworks, tools, and processes for authentically gathering input and feedback, communicating key messages, and building positive relationships with stakeholder communities.

Turnaround Leadership

We believe that strong school leadership is an essential element of school improvement. School leaders need to manage and communicate complexity while maintaining focus on the school's vision and key priorities. Mass Insight has nearly a decade of experience building school leaders' capacity and helping to create organizational structures that support a culture of shared ownership, collaboration, inclusiveness, and decision-making. We build capacity for turnaround leadership through the following three supports:

1. Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight's research-based School Readiness Assessment)
2. School Improvement Planning
3. Performance Management
4. Principal Supervisor Coaching, and Development of Principal Support and Management Models

Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight's research-based School Readiness Assessment)

To effectively lead and sustain school turnaround efforts, district and school leaders need a strong understanding of a school's unique needs and greatest priorities, as well as a strong leader who effectively invests and mobilizes stakeholders in a vision for school change, sustains a focus on results and student learning, manages and develops talent, and maximizes resources to meet school needs. We assess these leadership qualities through [Mass Insight's School Readiness Assessment](#) with the goal of



understanding school and leadership strengths, challenges, and opportunities to inform planning, performance management, and leadership support.

School Improvement Planning

We believe that schools need evidence-based, actionable plans that address the root causes of low performance informed by a review of existing conditions and input from school, district, and community stakeholders. We also believe that school leaders need to own the plan and lead its implementation. Consequently, we work with principals, instructional leadership teams, and district leaders to build, implement, and monitor robust school improvement plans. Beginning with a needs assessment, Mass Insight works with the school leader to organize a school planning process and assemble a representative school improvement planning team, which usually includes the school's Instructional Leadership Team, as well as parent and sometimes student representatives. We facilitate collaborative planning sessions with the planning team to identify the root causes of low performance, establish priorities and SMART goals, identify improvement strategies, build action plans, and agree to processes for managing plan implementation.

Performance Management

Our approach to performance management is rooted in the belief that sustainable change requires the school leader and a representative team (e.g. Instructional Leadership Team) to take ownership for the success of the school improvement plan. We work with the school leader and leadership teams to build internal accountability by establishing a regular process for managing improvement plan performance that focuses on three questions: Are we doing what we said we would do in our plan? Is it making a difference? If not, what do we need to change? Our work includes creating data dashboard and trackers, establishing protected time and processes for teams to examine data for continuous improvement, and building capacity of school leadership teams to measure plan impact and make adjustments based on data through Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles. We also conduct this type of work at the district level to support implementation and effectiveness of a district strategic plan.

Principal Supervisor Coaching, and Development of Principal Support and Management Models

We believe that a principal's knowledge and skills are not fixed but can be developed and strengthened with coaching and support. Every principal reports to a superintendent or other district administrator who could help the principal reflect on his/her practice and develop his/her skills and knowledge. Too often, in both small and large districts, supervision is focused on compliance rather than building principals' capacity as instructional leaders. We work with districts to build the capacity of principal



supervisors to coach and mentor principals on the skills and knowledge required to lead school improvement. Our work involves building a coherent and effective structure for managing schools and developing principals based on evidence about how schools improve. We help identify, train, and support principal supervisors who have the capacity to coach, mentor, and manage principals and oversee schools. We also provide principal supervisors with ongoing coaching and support. Mass Insight works with district leadership to build and/or strengthen school management structures to ensure that principal supervisors have time, authority, and capacity needed to effectively supervise and develop principals.

b. Describe any new work you have done or are doing in Colorado schools and districts since the original RFI submission in 2018.

New/Current Work in Colorado Schools and Districts

Since 2018, Mass Insight Education & Research has partnered with Aurora Central High School (ACHS) to understand challenges affecting the quality of instruction and begin to establish systems and structures to address identified challenges. During that period Mass Insight facilitated a collaborative process for ACHS to define a clear instructional vision for high-quality instruction, which identifies key instructional practices to prioritize given the unique student population. Following the creation of the instructional vision, Mass Insight supported the development and piloting of a new model for professional learning communities (PLCs) focused on strengthening teacher practice relative to the Instructional Vision and incorporating intentional student work and data analysis as part of the planning cycles. Through this approach, teachers received structured support for lesson planning and delivery, paired with student work and data analysis. Now that foundational instructional systems and structures are in place, ACHS is well-poised to deepen and calibrate the capacity of instructional leaders in the instructional vision. Current Mass Insight supports focus on building expertise and capacity of a core group of instructional leaders to develop teachers' rigorous, standards-based instruction through high-quality PLCs, professional development, and effective coaching and observation feedback.

III. Capacity: Does your organization currently have the capacity to serve additional schools and districts in Colorado? If yes, indicate how many new schools or districts your current capacity would allow for. If no, explain what additional capacity you would need to put in place, and any other constraints such as timelines or minimum participating schools or districts.

Current Capacity



Mass Insight currently has capacity to engage in at least one new school/district partnership in Colorado. With a few months of notice, we can be prepared to quickly expand our capacity to engage in two to three additional partnerships. We will assemble a team best-suited to fulfill the specific needs of additional schools or districts with which we partner, and ensure the team is fully prepared to support the work. Mass Insight hiring processes are continuously recruiting high-quality candidates so that we can effectively engaged in new partnerships. For long-term partnerships with the need for an embedded presence, Mass Insight can recruit and hire locally.

IV. Evidence of Track Record of Improved Student and School Outcomes:

a. Provide concrete evidence from your three most recent engagements with schools and districts (Colorado schools and districts are preferred, if available). Include a description of the criteria and the data that you use to determine the impact of your work. Highlight the context and location of where this work has occurred.

Our Track Record

Mass Insight Education & Research is a Boston-based non-profit organization committed to transforming public schools into high-performing organizations and closing achievement gaps. For the last 10 years, Mass Insight has worked with schools, districts, and state education agencies across the country to redesign the systems that support low performing schools and student performance and establish the conditions and capacity for district and school turnaround. Mass Insight has a track record of success supporting schools, districts, and states with school improvement. Case studies that showcase evidence of our effectiveness are included below.

Aurora Public Schools and Aurora Central High School, Aurora, CO (2015-present)

Aurora Public Schools (APS) engaged in an ongoing partnership with Mass Insight beginning in 2015 to (1) design and develop a five-school transformation zone and the necessary district supports to implement the zone strategy; 2) Design and facilitate a school redesign support strategy focused on the development of focused, community-owned, robust school improvement plans; and 3) Increase the capacity of zone staff, including the Executive Director, to manage and support school improvement efforts. Additionally, Mass Insight is a management partner to Aurora Central High School (ACHS) to support school improvement efforts and build instructional leadership capacity.

ACTION Zone: APS and the five zone schools have achieved a number of successes related to the development of the ACTION Zone and made progress towards long-term improvement goals. Mass Insight's support during the planning year (SY 2015-16)



focused on the creation of the zone, the zone's governance structure and management unit, school improvement planning, and the procurement of necessary conditions for improvement. The second year of Mass Insight's support (SY 2016-17) focused on implementing the zone structure. The work included coaching the principal supervisor on supporting and coaching zone school leaders, establishing school and zone-level monitoring processes, supporting talent management at the school levels, and providing supports to school-level instructional leadership teams. Following the first full year of implementation (SY2016-2017), leading indicators in most zone schools were positive.

- Behavioral referrals decreased at three of five schools, by as much as 39%.
- Out-of-school suspensions decreased at three of five schools, by as much as 49%.
- Four out of five schools increased median growth percentages on the Colorado Growth Model in ELA, with Central High School (the lowest performing high school in the state) achieving the highest increase.
- Two out of five schools increased median growth percentages in Math on the Colorado Growth Model.
- Two out of five schools increased PARCC proficiency scores in Math.
- Two out of five schools increased PARCC proficiency scores in ELA.
- ACHS improved one level from Turnaround Plan to Priority Improvement Plan, moving out of the state's lowest accountability category.

Aurora Central High School: Since 2018, Mass Insight Education & Research has partnered with Aurora Central High School (ACHS) to understand challenges affecting the quality of instruction and begin to establish systems and structures to address identified challenges. During that period Mass Insight facilitated a collaborative process for ACHS to define a clear instructional vision for high-quality instruction, which identifies key instructional practices to prioritize given the unique student population. Following the creation of the instructional vision, Mass Insight supported the development and piloting of a new model for professional learning communities (PLCs) focused on strengthening teacher practice relative to the Instructional Vision and incorporating intentional student work and data analysis as part of the planning cycles. Through this approach, teachers received structured support for lesson planning and delivery, paired with student work and data analysis. Now that foundational instructional systems and structures are in place, ACHS is well-poised to deepen and calibrate the capacity of instructional leaders in the instructional vision in order to develop teachers' rigorous, standards-based instruction through high-quality PLCs, professional development, and effective coaching and observation feedback. ACHS has seen multiple improvements since 2015. Examples of these improvements include:

- Median growth on PSAT/SAT scores increased across all grade-levels, with as much as a 17 point increase for 10th graders in reading and writing.



- Course pass rates have increased; in 2015, 27% of credits were an 'F', while in 2019, only 17% were an 'F'.
- The percentage of college credits earned increased from 84% in 2015-16 to 93% in 2018-19.
- Graduation rates increased from 44% in 2015 to 70% in 2018.
- Staff culture has improved, with 90% of staff survey participants wanting to continue teaching at the school in 2019, versus only 11% in 2018.

York City School District, York, PA (2015, 2018)

At the request of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Mass Insight conducted a district diagnostic review of the York City School District in spring 2015. York City was a persistently low performing district in state financial recovery status. Following the diagnostic, Mass Insight facilitated development of district recovery plan to address the needs surfaced in the diagnostic review. Mass Insight also helped district leadership build a process for managing plan implementation and tracking progress.

Three years later, in spring 2018, PDE asked Mass Insight to conduct a follow-up district diagnostic review to determine the extent to which the district had implemented its plan and whether it had made a difference. The 2018 review found that York had completed over 90% of its plan and that the plan had made a significant difference in school and district effectiveness and student achievement. The district's elementary students consistently exceeded state academic growth expectations for both math and ELA. At PDE's request, Mass Insight is now doing similar work in several other low-performing Pennsylvania districts.

Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation, Evansville, IN (2012-present)

Mass Insight began work with the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) in 2012. Mass Insight supported the district in making key organizational changes to ensure appropriate supports were in place for its turnaround and transformation schools. EVSC, with Mass Insight's support, identified a number of schools that were candidates for a turnaround with the right district structures and supports. Mass Insight then worked with the district and these schools to secure a number of autonomies—freedoms from standard district practices—that would allow the schools to create the necessary conditions and capacity for rapid turnaround, and placed them in a transformation zone. Zone schools also received additional support from a team of dedicated zone staff, increased academic supports, and annual School Readiness Assessments conducted by Mass Insight to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement. Following initial success improving leading indicators in the zone schools, Mass Insight conducted a district diagnostic that led to a central office reorganization and scaling promising zone strategies district-wide.



Ideas and innovations incubated in the zone inform overall district strategy in several areas. Building on the lessons of the zone, the district reorganized its school management and support structure and created four to seven school units based on elementary to middle to high school feeder patterns. Mass Insight helped the district select and train region supervisors who were responsible for developing principals and organizing and delivering district supports to their schools. The effects are at least three-fold: (1) principals benefit from more support and intensive job-embedded leadership development; (2) because they spend more time in school buildings, principal supervisors garner deep insights into schools and are able to identify needs and deliver more effective supports; (3) school principals are held more directly accountable to the regional supervisors.

b. Self-assess the evidence base for the interventions your organization provides using the following Evidence-Based Intervention (EBI) tiers. Which EBI tier best describes your work, and why?

Tier 1 – Strong Evidence

Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented randomized control experimental studies.

Tier 2 – Moderate Evidence

Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.

Tier 3 – Promising Evidence

Supported by one or more well-designed and well implemented correlational studies (with statistical controls for selection bias).

Tier 4 – Demonstrates a Rationale

Practices that have a well-defined logic model or theory of action, are supported by research, and have some effort underway by an SEA, LEA, or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness.

Evidence-Based Intervention (EBI) Tiers

Mass Insight's approach to supporting schools and districts is design-based and grounded in research and evidence-based best practices. Much of our work falls under the following evidence-based intervention tiers:

- Tier 2 – Moderate Evidence: *Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.*
- Tier 3 – Promising Evidence: *Supported by one or more well-designed and well implemented correlational studies (with statistical controls for selection bias)*



- Tier 4 – Demonstrates a Rationale: *Practices that have a well-defined logic model or theory of action, are supported by research, and have some effort underway by an SEA, LEA, or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness.*

EBI Tier	Mass Insight Interventions	Rationale
Tier 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District and School-wide Coaching Models• Principal Supervisor Coaching, and Development of Principal Support and Management Models	There is a wealth of evidence and research pointing to the effectiveness of practice-based professional development and coaching to improve teaching and learning. Mass Insight's coaching framework is grounded in research and current best practices around adult learning psychology, supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.
Tier 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distributive Leadership Structures and Effective Professional Learning Community (PLC) Models• School Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) Development• Performance Management• Transformation Zone Development	Mass Insight's supports around PLCs, ILTs, and performance management are grounded in research and well-designed studies around how educators and instructional leaders collaborate, analyze data, and make small adjustments to strategies to ensure desired outcomes. While there may not be randomized control experimental studies, there are research and studies to point to the effectiveness of these structures at contributing to improved outcomes. Our work in these areas is based on best practices from Richard DuFour, Wallace Foundation's research on effective principal leadership, and principles of improvement science, among others. Additionally, our Zone model is based on research from our 2007 report, The Turnaround Challenge, which included correlational studies.
Tier 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive School Needs Assessments (Mass Insight's research-based School	Mass Insight's supports around needs assessments, school and district planning, and stakeholder and community engagement are based in a well-defined logic model, are supported by research, and have become



	<p>Readiness Assessment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• District Diagnostics• School Improvement Planning• District Strategic Planning• Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategies	<p>nationally recognized best practices for continuous improvement efforts. Mass Insight's research-based theory of action names planning as a key element of school and district success, and comprehensive needs assessments are a critical starting point to effective planning. Additionally, stakeholder and community input is important to drive and sustain change efforts.</p>
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Attachments

- A. [Mass Insight's District Diagnostic Framework](#) (page 20)
- B. [Mass Insight's School Readiness Assessment Tool](#) (page 23)
- C. [Mass Insight's Approach to Zone Design](#) (page 30)
- D. [Mass Insight's Instructional Coaching Framework](#) (page 33)



Attachment A. Mass Insight Education & Research – District Diagnostic Framework

Element	In the highest performing districts
Vision, strategy, and culture: Clear vision, strategy and manageable set of priorities for the district that recognize the local environment (e.g., regulations, statutes, contracts, funding, politics, governance) and district's capacity for change while promoting a district-wide culture of excellence and high expectations for all.	District leadership sets high expectations for both student achievement and school and district staff performance. The district has a strategic plan with a limited number of priorities that are aligned to the district mission and vision, address documented district challenges, recognize and address local conditions and gaps in student achievement. School, district and community stakeholders understand plan priorities and believe that implementing the plan will improve district performance. Each strategy has a clear theory of action that describes the change and expected impact. The district has a process for managing and monitoring plan implementation and tracking and reporting on impact.
Organizational clarity and collaboration: Clear central office and governance structures, systems, processes, and policies that work together to advance the district towards its vision.	The district recognizes that schools are where student learning takes place and organizes its human and financial resources to meet the needs of schools and principals. The respective roles and responsibilities of district and school staff are clear and understood by school and district staff. The district has clear structures, systems, processes, and policies for identifying school needs and coordinating services to schools across offices. District offices communicate with schools in a coordinated and consistent way and provide regular opportunities for school feedback on the nature and quality of their services. School board members understand and act consistent with their governance role and responsibilities.
Focus on instruction: Curriculum, materials, tools and supports that help school leaders, teachers and other school staff constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice.	The district has a vision and plan for ensuring high-quality instruction for all students in all schools. It ensures that schools have high-quality, standards-based curricula and materials for all subjects. The district ensures schools have assessments that are aligned with standards and the curriculum and ensures teachers have the time, support and protocols needed to use assessment data to inform their instruction.
School management: Policies, structures, and systems that create the conditions needed for school success, maintain accountability for results, and enable effective school leaders.	The district ensures principals have support for developing coherent school improvement plans that address the root causes of low performance. Principal supervisors have a positive relationship with principals that is focused on results. They understand the strengths and challenges of the schools they supervise and help their principals develop and implement their improvement plans. District policies and procedures encourage principal supervisors and district offices to differentiate both district supports and conditions to meet school needs. Principals

	are held accountable for both the implementation of their plans and the achievement of their students
Talent management: Systems and processes to recruit, place, develop, and retain talented staff.	The district accurately projects annual teacher vacancies and has plans in place for recruiting so that principals can select from several quality candidates for each opening. The district supports new teachers with induction and extra support during their first two years in the classroom. District-sponsored professional development is practice-based and differentiated to meet teacher needs. Evaluation of all staff focuses on building on strengths and addressing weaknesses to improve performance. The district used evaluation data to identify, develop and retain the highest performers. The district also has systems for identifying and developing potential school leaders—principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches and department chairs. The district’s talent office collects and uses data to manage its work. Relations with collective bargaining units, particularly the teacher’s union, are positive and focus on working together to advance student learning.
Stakeholder engagement and communications: Intentional systems and processes to maintain open lines of communication with staff, family and community stakeholders.	The district has multiple channels for both disseminating and collecting information from its most critical stakeholders—teachers, families, students, community leaders and other staff, and stakeholder perspectives inform district decisions. The district website provides families with the information they need to enroll and be effective partners in their children’s learning. The district surveys families and teachers annually and publishes and uses the information to get better. Families feel welcome in schools, and there are effective and supportive partnerships with community organizations that align with district and school priorities. Information for families is available in their native languages.
Central services and operations: Effective delivery of services to schools, allowing school-based educators to focus on teaching and learning.	There is a shared belief that the primary function of the district office is to serve the schools. Both school and district office staff are clear about who makes what decisions and who is responsible for what. The district uses key performance indicators, including input from school staff, to measure the effectiveness of district office functions. Both internal and external service providers are accountable for the quality of their services, and budget and contract decisions are informed by the performance data. School-based staff can access appropriate central office staff with questions and concerns, and service requests are addressed quickly.
Finance: Alignment of financial resources with district needs and priorities.	The district budget directs financial resources toward school needs and priorities. The school and district budgeting processes are clear and transparent and engage relevant internal and external stakeholders. Projections of revenues and expenses are reliable and the great majority of funds follow students. Flexible Title funds are used strategically to address student needs. Principals have sufficient understanding and control over their budgets so they can allocate resources to meet school needs. The district pursues grants and other funding sources when they align with school and district priorities.
Data: Data is available and informs decision-making	The district uses data to drive decisions. District information systems are accessible and accurate and used by school and district staff to inform decisions. The district



at all levels of the district and in schools.	disaggregates student data by subgroups at district and school levels. A limited number of district-wide performance measures are used to track the progress of district-wide improvement strategies. Teachers and school leaders have timely access to the information they need to inform instruction and serve their students. The district provides staff with guidance, protocols and schedules for the use of data.
Focus on equity: Policies, structures, systems, and resources to ensure equitable, high quality education for all students.	The district is committed to the success of all students, and staff believe that all students can succeed. In addition to complying with laws and regulations, the district ensures that services for students with special needs are of the highest quality. District policy and practice also recognizes that some groups of students have had less access to equitable education opportunities and therefore takes intentional steps to address disparities. This includes using resources to ensure equitable, high quality education for all students.



Attachment B. Mass Insight Education & Research - School Readiness Assessment Tool

PROGRESS CLASSIFICATION KEY
Not Developed: no or extremely limited evidence of implementation and/or success; work has not yet started
Partially Developed: some evidence of successful implementation
Mostly Developed: considerable evidence of successful implementation
Fully Developed: robust evidence of successful implementation
Not Able to Assess: not enough evidence to determine progress

Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Progress Classification	Discussion of Evidence
Focus on Instruction: <i>Processes and systems help teachers work together to constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice, ensuring students engage in deep learning tasks.</i>	Instructional Vision There is an instructional vision that is clear, focused on students, aligned with standards, and helps build an understanding of the actions that educators must take to accelerate student learning. The vision is widely understood and drives school decision-making. All teachers and administrators can describe how their work moves the school closer to meeting the vision.		
	Readiness to Learn The school implements consistent and equitable policies, procedures, and practices to create a culture of high expectations, mutual respect, and a focus on teaching and learning. As a result, students and teachers feel safe and supported at school. Student and family needs are identified and connected with resources and services to ensure all students can engage in learning. The school has programs and structures (such as looping, advisory, morning meetings) to ensure that every student has a strong relationship with an adult.		
	Teacher Development & Feedback There are systems, structures, and practices that prioritize teacher development based on data and feedback cycles that include follow-up.		

	All teachers describe receiving frequent, consistent, coherent, and coordinated high-quality feedback on teaching that is grounded in an instructional vision and that will lead to better student learning.		
	Teacher Collaboration (PLCs) Teachers working in teams have time, systems and structures to maximize collaborative time in instructional teams (such as by grade level or content area). Teachers work towards commonly set and motivating goals that help all students progress towards the highest priority academic standards; these teams receive high-quality feedback and enjoy a trusting culture that includes open and constructive dialogue.		
	Curriculum, Standards & Assessment Instructional work is guided by curricula aligned to standards and across and between grade levels. Teacher-designed as well as externally-developed interim and summative assessments are aligned with both standards and the sequence of instruction. These assessments yield frequent, accurate, and actionable data about student progress towards the highest priority standards.		
	Data-Driven Decision-Making for Classroom Instruction The academic progress of all students is monitored. Systems, structures, and processes support teachers—individually and in teams—to frequently and routinely use a variety of student academic data to pinpoint class and student needs. This information drives on-going instructional decisions, including grouping, differentiation, enrichment, and intervention.		
	Rigorous Classroom Practice All students describe, and are observed, learning high-level and grade-level appropriate knowledge and skills in classrooms where each student is challenged; teachers are observed bringing the school's instructional vision to life in their classrooms. All students demonstrate progress toward stated learning objectives through their work or responses.		
	Supports for Special Populations		

	There is a strategy in action for ensuring that special populations of students—including special education and ELL—receive integrated, inclusive, and high-quality instructional support. Students' progress is monitored to ensure that they are moving expediently towards success in an inclusion environment. A variety of models and supports, including interventions, ensure students are adequately challenged and ultimately successful.		
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Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Progress Classification	Discussion of Evidence
Collective Responsibility: <i>The school faculty and staff ensure there is collective responsibility for both the quality of instruction and student learning and success.</i>	Systems and structures for school-wide continuous improvement Leadership effectively implements systems and structures to cultivate shared ownership for school-wide continuous improvement for both the quality of instruction and student learning. A representative group of building leaders, teachers, and staff (e.g., ILT) takes ownership for implementation and progress monitoring of school improvement.		
	School-wide beliefs and trust Staff have, and inculcate in students, the belief that all students can and will learn. This motivates all to continuously improve teaching and learning. Staff demonstrate individual and collective responsibility for student learning and behavior that extends beyond individual classrooms or departments and permeates the school. Staff intentionally promote high expectations for students, which result in all students feeling valued, supported, and challenged to learn in and out of school. Staff set, share, and model high professional expectations for themselves, their colleagues, and all students. Interactions between adults in the building are positive and supportive, resulting in a sense of trust and partnership among staff. There is a shared culture of continuous improvement for student, staff, and schoolwide success.		

Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Progress Classification	Discussion of Evidence
Planning: <i>Evidence-based, actionable improvement plans that address the root causes of low performance, informed by a review of existing conditions with input from school, district, and community stakeholders.</i>	Planning Processes School stakeholders are actively engaged in evidence-based processes to identify and analyze root causes of low performance. These processes include honest conversations about how the school works and an examination of data. The processes produce no more than four major improvement strategies that planning participants believe can be implemented and will lead to substantial improvement.		
	The School Improvement Plan The school has one evidence-based, actionable school improvement plan that addresses the root causes of low performance. The school plan focuses the school's energy and resources on no more than four strategies that will impact the instructional core and increase student learning. The plan identifies a set of action steps for each strategy, and, for each action step, assigns responsibility, provides a timeline, and identifies critical milestones. Teachers in the school can describe the school improvement strategies and explain how they expect the strategies to lead to improvement.		

Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Progress Classification	Discussion of Evidence
Performance Management: <i>Consistent processes for using data to measure both implementation and outcomes to determine what's working</i>	Plan Implementation & Management A team of school leaders meets frequently and regularly to manage plan implementation and impact with a focus on the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have we done what we said we would do in the plan? If not, why not?</i> • <i>Is it making a difference? What's the evidence?</i> • <i>What do we have to do differently?</i> 		
	Monitors Key Indicators to Inform Decisions and Actions The school identifies and monitors a limited number of leading and		

<i>and inform efforts to improve.</i>	lagging indicators to measure schoolwide progress, catch warning signs, and/or plan next steps. Data is relevant, timely, accessible, accurate, and disaggregated by subgroup. There are clear roles and responsibilities for data collection and reporting. Teams regularly analyze data to identify root causes, establish key actions, and track progress of action items for continuous improvement.		
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Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Progress Classification	Discussion of Evidence
Partnering: <i>Partnerships that help the school meet the multiple needs of teachers and students.</i>	Family and Community Engagement The school intentionally builds community and family partnerships that honor and recognize families' existing knowledge and skills. The school connects with and engages families through intentional programming and ongoing dialogue designed to strengthen family-school partnership and further student learning. Staff demonstrate cultural competence and respect for the culture and community norms of their students and families.		
	Strategic Partnerships The school has a limited number of partnerships that support specific school and student needs. School staff are aware of the partnerships and can access resources for their students. The school regularly reviews the effectiveness of partnership programs and makes changes as needed to meet student needs. Partnerships are actively managed to streamline efforts and impact.		

Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Progress Classification	Discussion of Evidence
Conditions: <i>Sufficient school-level</i>	Larger systems, structures, and practices (e.g. district, union, state, etc.) enable school-level control of conditions necessary to implement the plan and address the root causes of low performance		

control over people, time, money and program to address the root causes of low performance.	The district recognizes that the school is the unit of improvement and allows for flexibility in the use of people, time, funding, and program to meet school needs. Systems and structures are clear and aligned so that principals can focus on what's most important.		
	Sufficient school leader authority over conditions to implement the plan and address root causes of low performance The principal has the authority to create staff configurations and work assignments in alignment with the school's instructional model, design the right positions, and fill positions with the right people to do their most effective work. The principal has the authority to make changes to the school schedule to meet school needs such as PLCs, interventions, and/or other school-based professional development activities. The principal has the authority to align the school's financial resources with school plan priorities. The principal has sufficient authority to shape teaching approaches and related services around the school's mission and local circumstances.		

Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Progress Classification	Discussion of Evidence
Leadership: <i>Principal who can manage and communicate complexity while maintaining</i>	Stakeholder Investment and Mobilization Principal effectively constructs and adapts communication and actions to inspire and invest stakeholders in a clear, compelling, and inclusive vision for change. Staff receive timely and transparent updates on progress toward the vision. Staff understand the vision, their role in the vision, and rationale for changes. Principal builds a culture of collective responsibility by mobilizing and empowering teams that support and sustain the vision over time.		

<i>focus on the school's vision and key priorities.</i>	<i>Sustained Focus on Results</i> Principal models and sets high expectations for all staff, creating a culture of accountability for student learning. Principal prioritizes efforts that advance progress towards school goals. Principal effectively advocates for school needs with the district and reaches beyond the building to pursue needed resources and bring in best practices.		
	<i>Talent Management</i> Principal works with the district to forecast staffing needs and recruit quality candidates. Principal implements formal and rigorous staff selection, hiring, and induction processes. Hiring and assignment processes match staff to specific positions based on skill. Positions have clear roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations that align with the school mission and plan. All teachers receive accurate and specific feedback through the evaluation process. Principal is intentional about retaining high-performing staff.		
	<i>Resource Maximization</i> Principal is adept at maximizing resources to meet school needs and accomplish school goals. Principal demonstrates persistence, ingenuity, and resourcefulness in identifying untapped resources in the areas of time, money, programs, and partnerships. Those resources are effectively deployed.		

Mass Insight's Approach to Zone Design

September 2019

Mass insight
education & research

Mass Insight Theory of Action

We believe that if schools have:

Conditions: Sufficient school-level control over people, time, money, and program to address the root causes of low performance;

Planning: Evidence-based, actionable improvement plans that address the root causes of low performance informed by a review of existing conditions and input from school, district, and community stakeholders;

Leadership: A principal who can manage and communicate complexity while maintaining focus on the school's vision and key priorities;

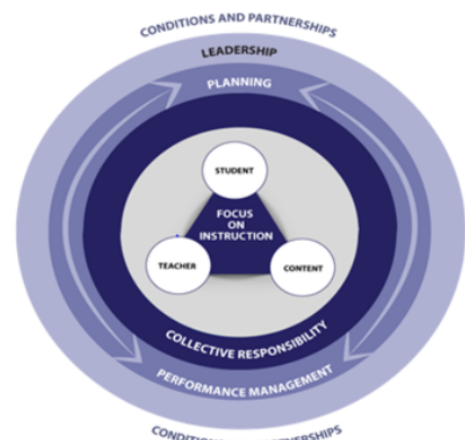
Focus on Instruction: Processes and supports that help teachers work together to constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice so that students can engage in deep learning tasks;

Collective Responsibility: The school faculty and staff ensure there is collective responsibility for both the quality of instruction and student learning and success;

Performance Management: Consistent processes for using data to measure both implementation and outcomes to determine what's working and inform efforts to improve; and,

Partnerships: Partnerships that help the school meet the multiple needs of teachers and students,

THEN schools will dramatically improve and student learning will increase.



STRENGTH ON STRENGTH

Our Approach to Transformation Zones

Why have a zone?

We believe that the school is the unit of change and improvement and therefore, “one size fits all” support from district offices is unlikely to reverse a history of low performance.

Overtime the zone model aims to accomplish two goals:

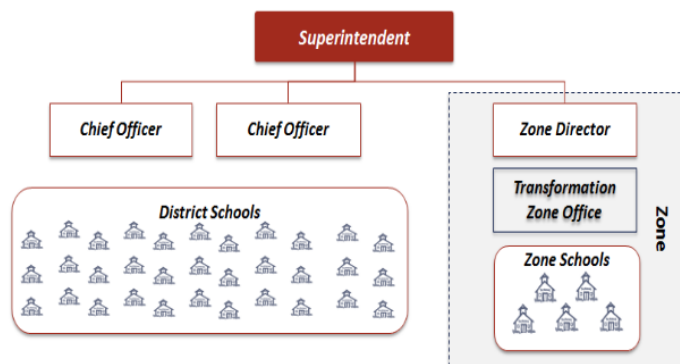
1. Achieve sustainable and dramatic improvement in a cluster of schools; and
2. Simultaneously establish a model for broader district and system transformation.

STRENGTH ON STRENGTH

Our Approach to Transformation Zones

What is a zone?

- Carved out space that allows a set of schools to operate under different conditions and receive different supports than other schools in the district.
- Intentionally selected group of schools (ideally 4-7) with some common interests, e.g., K-12 attendance pattern, similar identified challenges, etc.
- Zone Director reports to the Superintendent; principals report to the Zone Director.



STRENGTH ON STRENGTH

Our Approach to Transformation Zones

How does a zone work?

- Zone office is led by a zone director who is free from oversight or interference from the district to provide the necessary conditions for improvement.

Internally, a **zone director reports directly to the superintendent** so that he/she can immediately elevate and resolve district policies and practices.

Externally, a **zone director reports to a separate governing entity** from the school district.

- Principals of zone schools report to the zone director.
- Zones are staffed with people who have the capacity and experience to help schools address challenges identified in their improvement plans.

STRENGTH ON STRENGTH

Mass Insight's Approach to Zone Design

Understanding Zone Context



Understand context and stakeholders to adapt approach and engagement strategy

School Selection



Understand school root causes and needs

Zone Office Design



Develop organizational structure and key roles and responsibilities to meet zone school needs

Governance and Conditions



Secure MOUs, performance contracts, waivers, etc.

Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

STRENGTH ON STRENGTH



Attachment D. Mass Insight Education & Research – Instructional Coaching Framework

Conditions: *what foundational elements lay the groundwork for successful instructional coaching?*

Element	Common Pitfalls	Rubric Descriptor: Highly Effective
Connection to Instructional Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Clear vision for strengthening instruction ❖ Clear how coaching advances vision ❖ Clear communication of vision and the role of coaching to achieve the vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leadership does not know what coaches are doing • Coaches are “sent into” a school to advance a vision in which the school leadership is not invested • Coaches and/or coachees cannot explain connection between the work they are doing and school improvement goals/strategies 	<p>All stakeholders understand the strategic instructional vision and can articulate a common understanding of the role of a coach in helping teachers deliver effective instruction. Coaching priorities are aligned to the strategic instructional vision and data is used to inform goals and the content of the coaching.</p>
Roles and Responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Focused and realistic expectations and/or job descriptions ❖ Communication of coach role to all stakeholders ❖ Proactive planning to avoid coach overload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches report that they do not have time to coach (because they are doing so many other things) • Coachees or coaches are not sure what coaches are supposed to do • Coaches’ calendars show minimal evidence of instructional coaching activities • Coaches pick up administrative slack - i.e. do not coach due to coordinating testing, addressing student discipline, or organizing senior prom 	<p>Coach expectations and outcomes are defined, realistic, goal-orientated, and aligned to school/district/program priorities. It is clear to all stakeholders how teachers in the school/district/program will be coached, by whom, and to whom the coach reports. Systems are proactively organized to ensure that coach responsibilities are streamlined to focus on coaching.</p>
Time for Coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Master schedule accounts for coaching time ❖ Aligned coach schedule ❖ Routinized coach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches report they do not have time to coach • After informal observations (walkthroughs) of teachers, there is no follow up conversation • Coachees report sporadic and/or infrequent contact with coaches • Coach calendars show minimal evidence of instructional coaching activities 	<p>The school schedule is aligned and structured so that the coach, coachee, and coach’s supervisor can effectively carry out all stages of the coaching cycle (assess, plan, and act) both routinely and for all designated coachees.</p>



Coach competencies: *what makes the most effective instructional coaches successful?*

Element	Common Pitfalls	Rubric Descriptor: Highly Effective
<i>Recognize and Communicate Vision of Excellent Classroom Instruction</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Vision for excellent classroom instruction ❖ Communication of vision ❖ Sees and communicates the path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches are content experts that focuses primarily on content and little on classroom practice • Confused coachees – coaches could do it as teachers, but they can't explain it – especially common for coaches who were recently strong teachers and now struggle to transfer • Coaches may be communicating a misaligned or “low-bar” vision, sometimes because they do not know what excellent instruction looks like for the grade/content in which they are coaching 	<p>The coach recognizes excellent instruction and effectively communicates what excellent instruction looks like to lead a collaborative and adaptive process to build coachee capacity in alignment with the school/district/program's vision for instruction.</p>
<i>Set Goals</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Goals guide work ❖ Goals target classroom root causes ❖ Tracking towards goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checklists guide the work – everyone is very busy without clear results; coaches may develop “checklists” of action steps rather than SMART goals • Coaches overly rely on instincts to develop goals • Goals do not match root causes - coachees may be working towards implementing a coach's “pet strategy” • Goals may be overly broad - i.e. “improve student engagement and achievement” 	<p>The coach ensures that there are SMART goals that will guide teacher actions for improvement. Goals consistently pinpoint actions needed to address root causes and support the coachee's effort to align instruction to students' needs and the school/program/district vision.</p>
<i>Plan and Execute Coaching Cycles</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Coach planning ❖ On-going assessment of progress ❖ Robust toolbox for coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches are unable to articulate how they ensure follow-through • Feedback is delayed • Coaches do not engage in coaching conversations with coachees • Coaches under-prioritize planning elements of the coaching cycle, instead staying busy at the expense of higher impact strategies • No use of objective data about teacher progress 	<p>The coach executes time-bound coaching cycles that include the phases of assess, plan, and act. During the coaching cycle, the coach employs an evidence-based approach in the Assess phase, differentiates based on coachee need during the Plan phase, and ensures follow-through during the Act phase, all of which informs the start of the next cycle.</p>

Continued – Competencies: what makes the most effective instructional coaches successful?

<p>Provide Effective Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Motivates range of coachees ❖ Ensures dialog ❖ Prompts reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches do more thinking/talking than teachers when providing feedback • Coaches communicate an overwhelming number of things to work on • Coaches miss components of an effective conversation (i.e. praise, practice, etc.) • Coaching conversation does not have a specific direction or goal - is not aligned to root cause/goal 	<p>The coach strategically involves the coachee in the feedback conversation (which, as needed, consistently includes “off-stage” practice opportunities) and goal setting process, building the coachee’s ownership, ability to implement best practices, and grow.</p>
<p>Build Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Relationship-building ❖ Credibility ❖ Reliability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches display a one-size-fits all approach to building trust • Coaches do not effectively walk the line of support/accountability - i.e. “if you don’t do this, your eval will suffer” • Coaches have difficult conversations that result in excessive tears/anger/frustration/resignation INSTEAD of improved practice OR having difficult conversations that <i>result in the teacher feeling like an unacceptable practice is actually acceptable</i> • Coaches display and/or articulate a mindset that Trust and Coaching are separate from each other. That you one must come before the other rather than each informing/impacting the other. 	<p>The coach’s communication is collaborative and authentic, building a strong connection. The coach differentiates for their coachees and context; navigating difficult conversations successfully. The coach is reliable and demonstrates the knowledge, experience, and skills to ensure that coachees are set up for success. Coachees believe that the coach has what it takes to support them in their development.</p>



On-going Systems: which processes help to continuously improve and sustain successful coaching?

Element	Common Pitfalls	Rubric Descriptor: Highly Effective
Alignment of Development Efforts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Alignment to vision ❖ Alignment to other instructional initiatives and programs ❖ Coordination of feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers confused about what feedback to prioritize • Too many voices - e.g. teachers receiving coaching from a district coach, a building coach, and a third party • Sporadic use of teacher time, including instructional initiative overload - e.g. teacher goes to a district training on guided reading, attends a staff meeting PD about PBIS, and works with a coach on how to structure station work 	<p>In addition to tightly aligning and organizing coaching efforts towards a shared vision of excellent instruction, coaching efforts are regularly inventoried and evaluated to assess impact and ensure continued alignment. Leaders can articulate how coaching supports the vision of excellent instruction and proactively work to ensure alignment. Duplicative and misdirected efforts are quickly eliminated and systemic measures are taken to mitigate feelings of disjointedness and fatigue.</p>
Performance Management of Coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Clear indicators for success ❖ Regular review of data ❖ Data-driven action planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No response or incomprehensible answer from coaches or coach supervisors to the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “how do you know coaching is effective?” ○ “how do you know your teachers are getting better?” • Measuring impact of coaching based only on perception of coach • Not soliciting coachee feedback • Coaches are unsure what they themselves need to get better at to be more effective in their work 	<p>Throughout a cyclical progress monitoring system, the effectiveness of coaches is systematically measured through analysis of the work of coaches and their impact on teachers. Data prompts leaders to provide coaches with effective feedback in order to fill exposed/diagnosed gaps.</p>
Targeted Coaching for High Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Coachees are strategically targeted ❖ Differentiation by need ❖ Greatest efforts yield greatest returns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches working only or nearly only with the lowest performing teachers - especially those on improvement plans or struggling with classroom management • Teachers unsure of how coaching connects to their development • Veteran teachers not getting coached/developed 	<p>Coaching plans are continuously reviewed in order to most strategically target development efforts of coachees best positioned and poised to effect change in alignment with instructional vision. Flexible grouping of who is receiving coaching and nimbleness to respond to gaps in progress monitoring systems ensure that coachees deemed lower-priority do not drain coach time.</p>