

# Leadership Capacity Building for Inclusive and Sustainable School Improvement

Developing State and District Capacity for Systems-Based Educational Reform

## Guiding Principles and Theory of Action

### Guiding Principles

1. The educational system is complex and multi-tiered, involving multiple linkages and communication channels across and among all tiers of the system.
2. Individuals and groups in the system have different assumptions about the most effective ways of improving schools, and individuals continually interpret and adapt education policy based on their assumptions, values and core beliefs.
3. Implementation of school improvement strategies will vary according to the extent that core beliefs and assumptions vary across individuals and organizational levels of the system.
4. The elimination of discrimination and active implementation of policies and practices that lead to equitable educational opportunities appropriate for each student subgroup are key factors in the development of an inclusive approach to school improvement.

### System Building – Fostering Internal Coherence

The alignment and shared understanding of school improvement processes and approaches within and across levels of the multi-tiered educational system will lead to a more inclusive and effective system of support for all schools.

### Collaborative Research – Theory of Action

Increased coherence can be achieved through four steps:

1. Describing the existing system, its processes and the assumptions of its members
2. Creating understanding of the current system by engaging with its leaders in discussions that enable them to understand it as it exists;
3. Using this approach to expand the choices they have at their disposal to make decisions about the system as a whole; and
4. Supporting reflective implementation of those choices.



The Comprehensive School Reform (CSR)  
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## Framework for Discussing System Coherence and Alignment – SAMPLE

	Purpose(s), rationales and assumptions	Implications of purposes, rationales and assumptions		
		Strategies and approaches to school improvement	Roles and responsibilities	Leadership Interactions
Interfering Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different assumptions about the most effective methods for inducing change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State-level units use different needs assessment and planning strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unclear roles related to monitoring and support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State-level units work in isolation without opportunity to regularly meet.</li> </ul>
Integrative Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building trusting relationships is critical for improvement and change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared emphasis on using data to inform school improvement processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State-level collaborative monitoring approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal structure (e.g., meeting time) for leaders to jointly discuss a collaborative approach to school improvement planning.</li> </ul>

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