

# Knowing Your Impact As An Instructional Leader

*Insights, 2023*

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Leadership Development  
Consultant with The Learning Bar*

Thank you  
for the gift of  
working with  
you!



# My Journey ...

- Teacher, Principal, LMS—5 years
- Superintendent 10 years in New Brunswick
- Leadership Coach/Consultant since 2010



## Leadership Academy

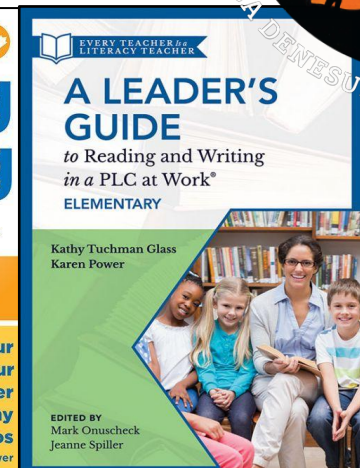
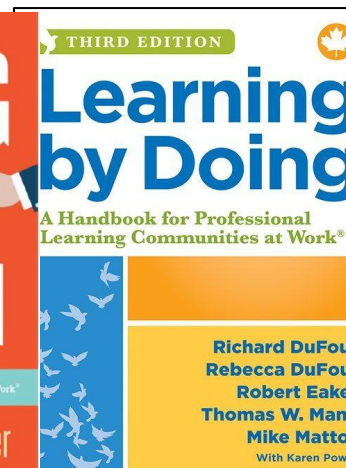
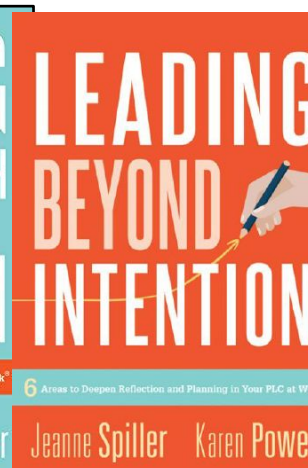
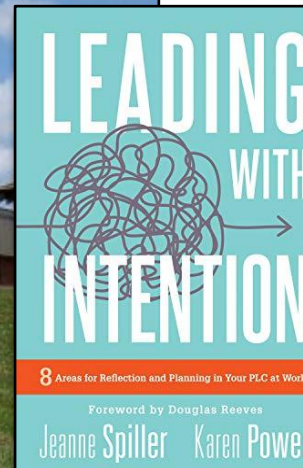
Build instructional leadership to improve students' literacy skills

For at least twenty years, researchers and educators have called for changing the way we teach reading. The science of reading supports a phonics-based approach in which children learn to sound out words rather than the current approach, "three-cueing", in which students learn to read, mostly, by looking at pictures and guessing the word. Making this change stands to improve the reading skills of thousands of children.



**FRONTIER**  
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## INSIGHTS 2023



*Over the years, I have learned:*

*It doesn't matter where I work...*

*It's not about right or wrong...*

*Or good or bad...*

*It is about **getting better for our students.***

*The “why”...*

***High Levels of Learning for ALL STUDENTS***

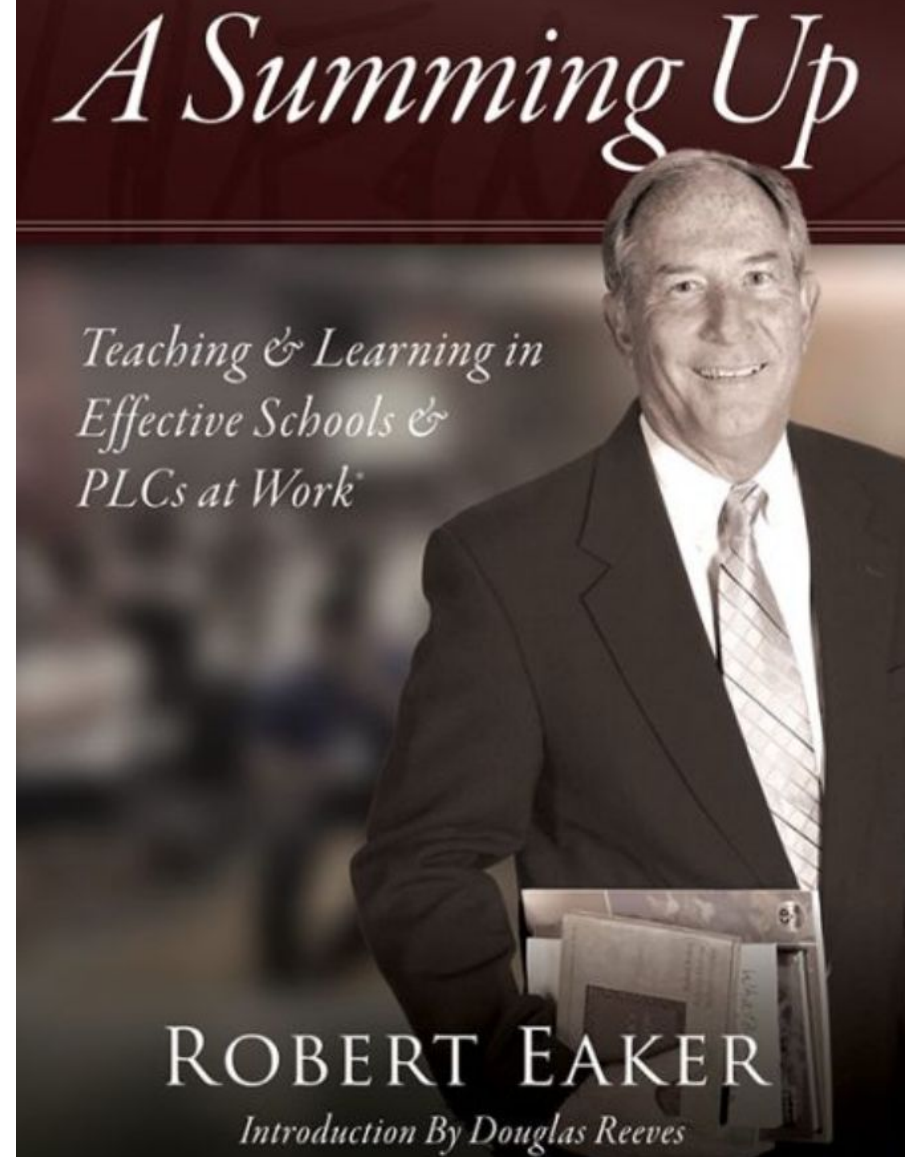
# Our Time Together Today

- What is the value of intentionally focusing time and attention on instructional leadership?
- What are strategies that support the shift from management to instructional leadership as part of your personal leadership journey?
- How do you create opportunities to use evidence to inform next steps as you lead school or district/board improvement?

*“We have learned that significant, positive gains can be made in a relatively short period of time if leaders **do the right things** for the right reasons in the right ways.”*

*- Dr. Robert Eaker*

*-Author, former fellow with the National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development*



# Leading a Shift to Success

***Knowing*** what happens in your school and classrooms is step one in leading a shift to success.

***Understanding effective classroom instruction*** and the importance of intentional observations and feedback leads a shift to success.

***Creating time for instructional conversations*** leads a shift to success.



# Alberta's Leadership Quality Standard

## Leadership Quality Standard

Alberta Education

*“Quality leadership occurs when the leader’s ongoing analysis of the context, and decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities apply, results in **quality teaching** and **optimum learning** for all school students.”*

*p. 2*



MINISTERIAL ORDER #002/2020

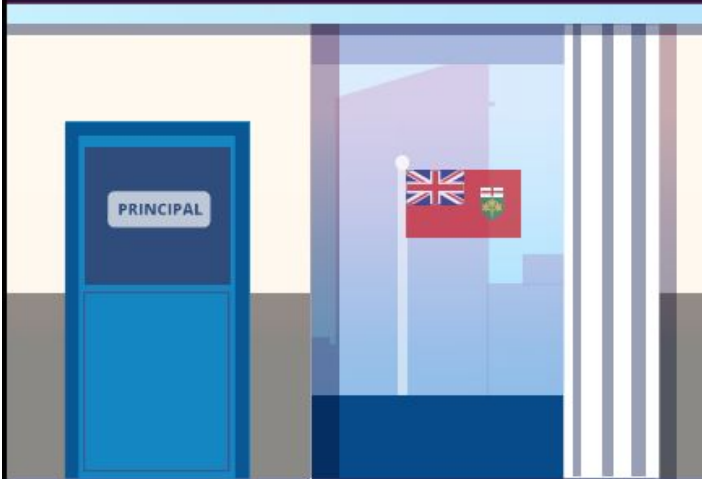
Alberta



# Principals' Work and Well-Being in Ontario

Dr. Katina Pollock  
Dr. Fei Wang

## Booklet #1 Work Intensification of Principals



PART OF A SERIES OF 4 BOOKLETS

Overall, how well principals feel they manage their work:



# How Principals Spend Their Time

## Average Hours Spent per Week on Work-Related Activities



Many principals would like to spend **LESS** time on **student discipline and attendance (57.7%)**.

They would also like to decrease the number of hours spent on activities related to managerial and administrative matters such as:

- Administrative Directives (53.1%)
- Internal School Management (43.8%)
- School Board Committees (29.6%)
- Building Maintenance (28.0%)

Principals also felt that the following activities should have **MORE** time dedicated to them:

- Classroom Walk-Throughs (75.2%)
- Curriculum & Instructional Leadership (74.5%)
- Principal's Own Professional Development (74.0%)



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## Turn and Talk Reflection

***What does “instructional leadership” mean to you?***

# What does John Hattie say about Instructional Leadership?



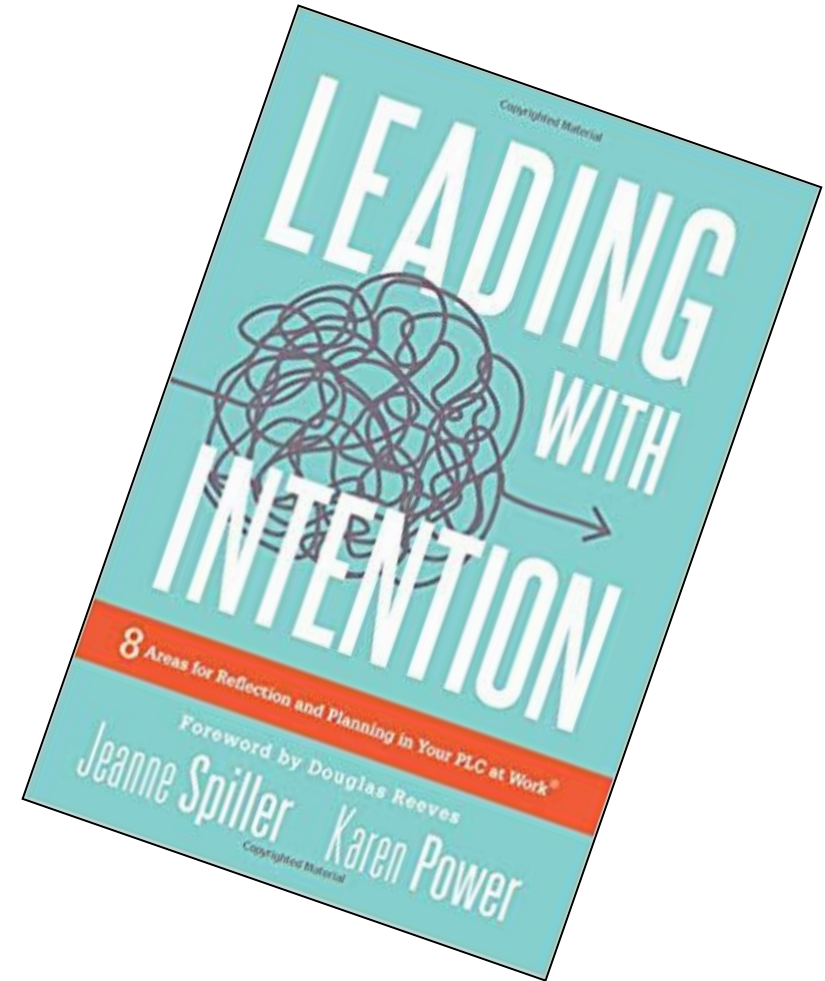
- Believing that student learning is about what teachers and **leaders do or do not do**
- Focusing on the **impact of teaching on learning**
- Setting challenging targets to **maximize student outcomes**
- Seeing assessment as **feedback on adults' actions**
- Evaluating every staff member's impact on **student learning**
- Understanding the importance **of listening** to student and teacher's voices
- Creating an environment in which everyone can **learn from errors** without losing face.

**“Every student deserves a great teacher,  
not by chance, but by design.”**

—Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, & John Hattie

# Our Eight Areas of Leadership Focus

- **Intentionality**
- Organization
- Shared leadership
- Evidence-based decision making
- Prioritizing the student
- Leading instruction
- Communication
- Community and relationships



What often separates effective leaders from those with ineffective practices is a ***leader's ability to stay focused on the right work.***

Distractors, too many initiatives, misuse of time, and an overall inability to determine a small number of goals that intentionally set direction for the school are often missing pieces of leadership practice.



# Leading Instruction with Intentionality



Figure 1.7: Template for Establishing Cohesiveness

1. What are the priorities of your school?	2. Why are these your priorities?
3. Is there a shared understanding of the why behind your priorities?	4. If yes, how do you know? If no, what are your next steps?

Figure 1.7: Template for Establishing Cohesiveness

1. What are the priorities of your school?	2. Why are these your priorities?
a) Increase effective literacy instruction in my school.	<p><i>A Sample to Nudge your Thinking!</i></p>
b) Create more understanding of how to use assessments to understand student literacy needs.	
c) Increase student reading levels by 15%.	



# Aligning your Time with the Priorities



***TIME....***

***THE STRUGGLE IS  
REAL!***

# Aligning your time with what you prioritized

How could you use this tool to consider how you currently use of your time?

Figure 1.5: Assessment Tool for Simplifying Focus and Actions in Daily Practice

Directions: Use the following five-point scale to self-assess your focus on priorities.

1. I am totally distracted from this priority and recognize I have not created a simplistic way for others to understand this focus.
2. I struggle some days with staying focused on this and believe others are not always sure this is a focus.
3. I speak about this priority often and have set up structures and systems that help others understand this work; however, my daily actions are not always aligned with this priority.
4. I believe most days my actions and messages represent the simplicity of what I want to accomplish at this school. However, there are times I do allow distractors to get in the way.
5. I am strongly aligning all of my actions and messages so it is simple for others to understand this is a priority.

Priorities	Score and reflection	What actions can I take to increase my focus and simplify the direction if necessary?
Priority one	I give myself a score of _____ because	
Priority two	I give myself a score of _____ because	
Priority three	I give myself a score of _____ because	

# Figure 1.1 Template for Reflecting on Intentionality During the Day

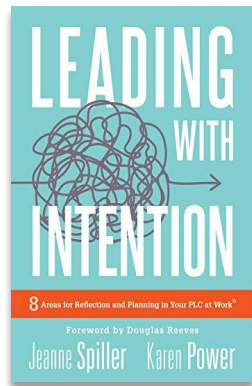
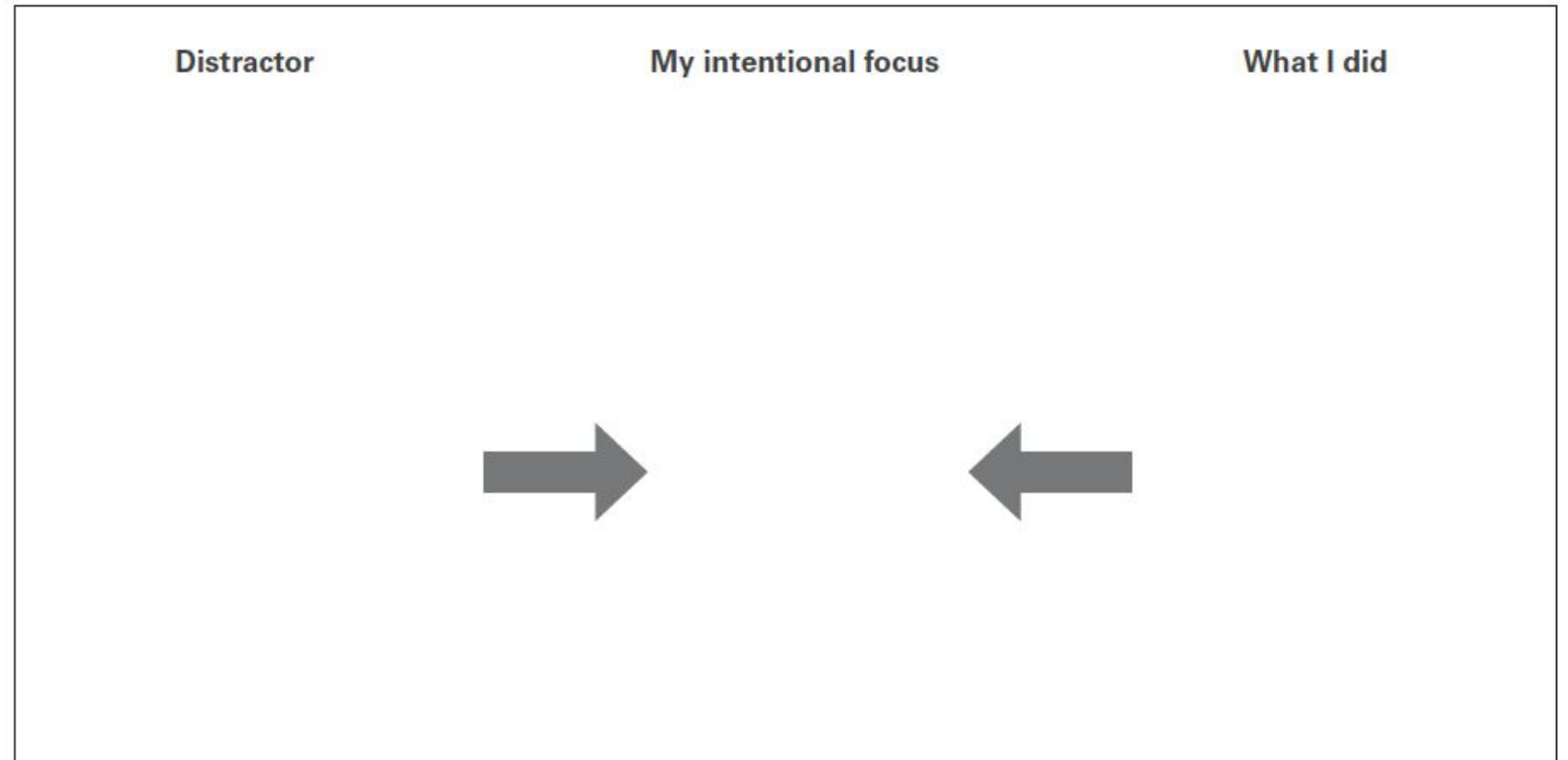


Figure 1.1: Template for Reflecting on Intentionality During the Day



# Example

## Distractor

Mr. Smith came to my office and asked if I had a minute to talk.

## My Intentional Focus

Visit Ms. Peters' Language Arts class to see her small-group instructional practices.

## What I Did

I told Mr. Smith that I had a class to attend, and I would see him during his preparation time.



Figure 1.4: Daily Time Log Template

# Intentional Instructional Support

Category	Day One	Day Two	Day Three
Daily Focus			
Review literacy lesson plan for Grade 2 Dillon's class			
Meet with Ms. Dillon to plan instructional observation			
Conduct classroom observation of Dillon's literacy block			
Meet with Ms. Dillon to discuss observation			
Attend collaborative team meetings			
Conduct professional development on structured lesson			



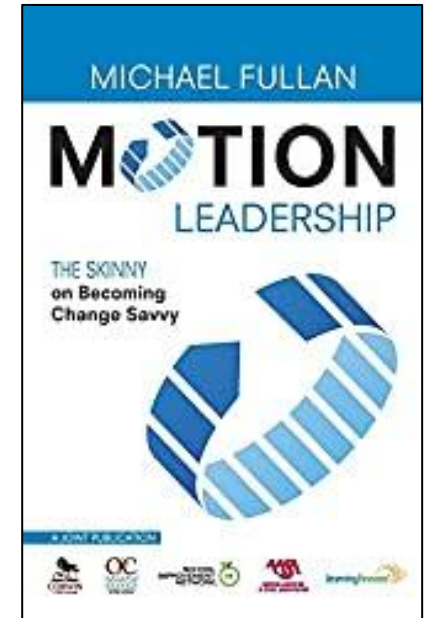
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# Partner Reflection

*How can taking the time to prioritize and focus on instruction aid your leadership?  
What are your challenges?*

# Michael Fullan- Elements of Successful Reform

1. ***A small number of ambitious goals***
2. A guiding coalition at the top
3. High standards and expectations
4. ***Collective capacity-building with a focus on instruction***
5. ***Individual capacity-building linked to instruction***
6. Mobilizing the data as a strategy for improvement
7. Intervention in a non-punitive manner
8. ***Being vigilant about distractors***
9. Being transparent, relentless and increasingly challenges





# **Intentional Conversations About Instruction**



# Dedicating Time to Instructional Observations with Intentionality

- ✓ Intentional Lesson Planning focused on a well structured literacy block- **What are your expectations?**
- ✓ Intentional Pre-Observation Conversations- **How do you make time for this?**
- ✓ Intentional Observations with detailed “look-fors” **What do you focus on when you go in to a classroom with intentionality?**
- ✓ Intentional Post-Observation Conversations **What are the questions that will guide the discussion?**
- ✓ Intentional Follow Up and Progress Monitoring- **How do provide pressure and support?**

It doesn't matter where we look at the research, it points to a relentless, intentional focus on instruction.



# ***Instructional Leadership versus Management***

- ***Shared leadership***
- ***Intentional actions and conversations that build collaboration, learning and results to improve student success***
- ***Tight expectations based on priorities that improve learning for all students***

# Collective Teacher Efficacy

***Teacher self-efficacy*** is the extent to which a teacher believes he or she can engage students in learning and achieve learning goals, even for the most challenging students.

***Collective teacher efficacy*** is the shared belief among colleagues that together they can improve student learning and well-being, even when they are working in the most demanding contexts.



# Key Leadership Areas

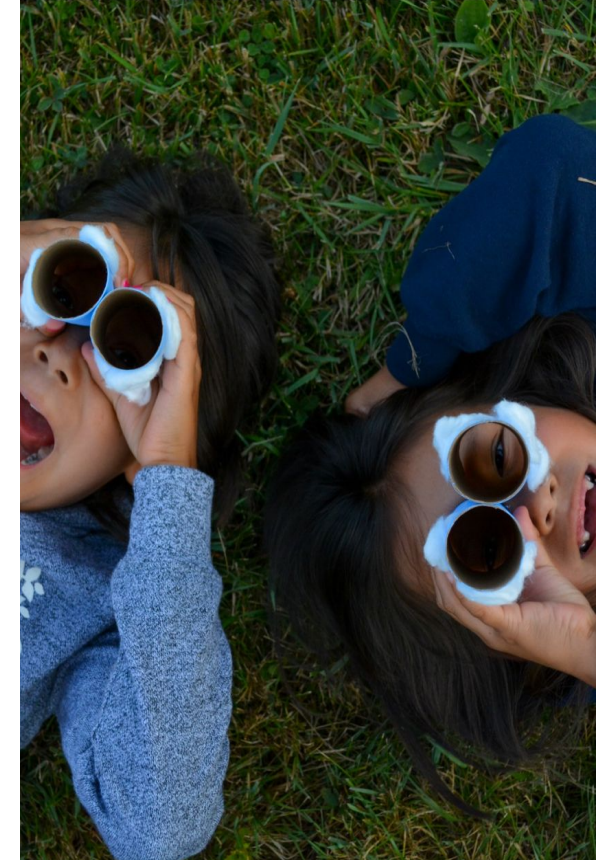
- Shared leadership
- Collective Efficacy
- **Intentionality**
- Student-centered
- Instructional focus
- ***Evidence-based decisions***
- Communication



# Student by Student/Skill by Skill Leadership

Guiding Questions for you, as leader:

- What are the essential, foundational skills that students must learn and how will we know if they are learning?
- How will we ***formatively assess, daily, weekly***, etc. so that we can intervene and change instruction as needed?
- How will we ***progress monitor student by student/skill by skill?***



Student ▼	Times assessed ▼	Last assessment ▼	Score by challenge																								
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Jennifer	3	12-06-21	4	4	4	4	4	3	2																		
Emma	2	11-24-21	4	4	3	3	2																				
Dorothy	2	11-23-21	4	4	3	2																					
Sara	1	10-10-21	3	2																							
Michelle	1	10-11-21	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2																
Sharon	1	10-10-21	4	4	2																						
Jessica	1	10-14-21	2																								
Karly	1	10-15-21	4	4	3	3	3	1																			
Donna	0																										
Kenyon	0																										
Total Students Mastered			7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

2 students have not yet been assessed

7 students have mastered concepts about print

6 students have mastered lowercase letters

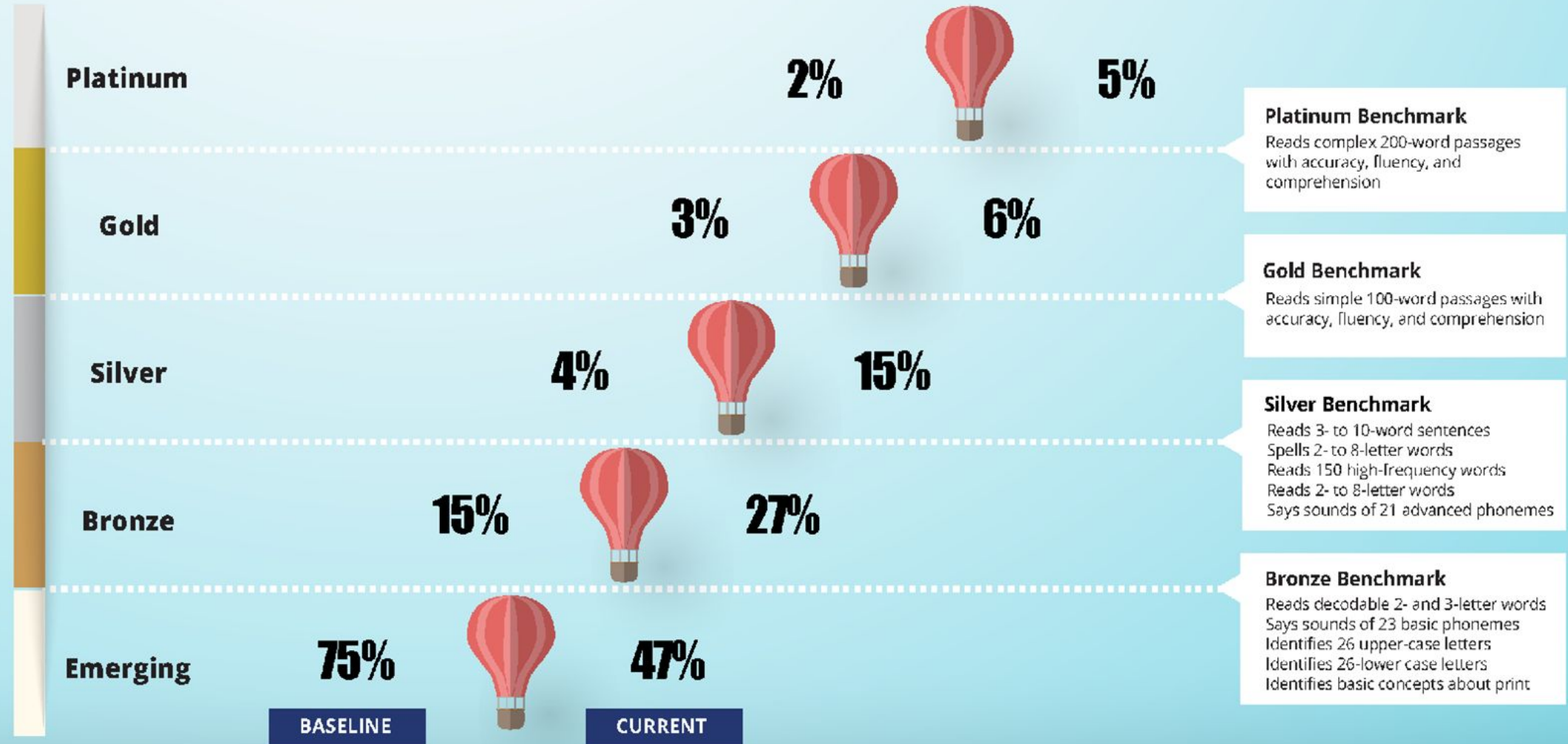
5 students have mastered uppercase letters

1 student can say the sounds of all 44 phonemes, decode words with blends, and read 100 high-frequency words

# Progress Monitoring – Student Progress

## Growth in Reading Achievement

in [redacted] School Division





# Progress Monitoring Responsibilities of Leaders

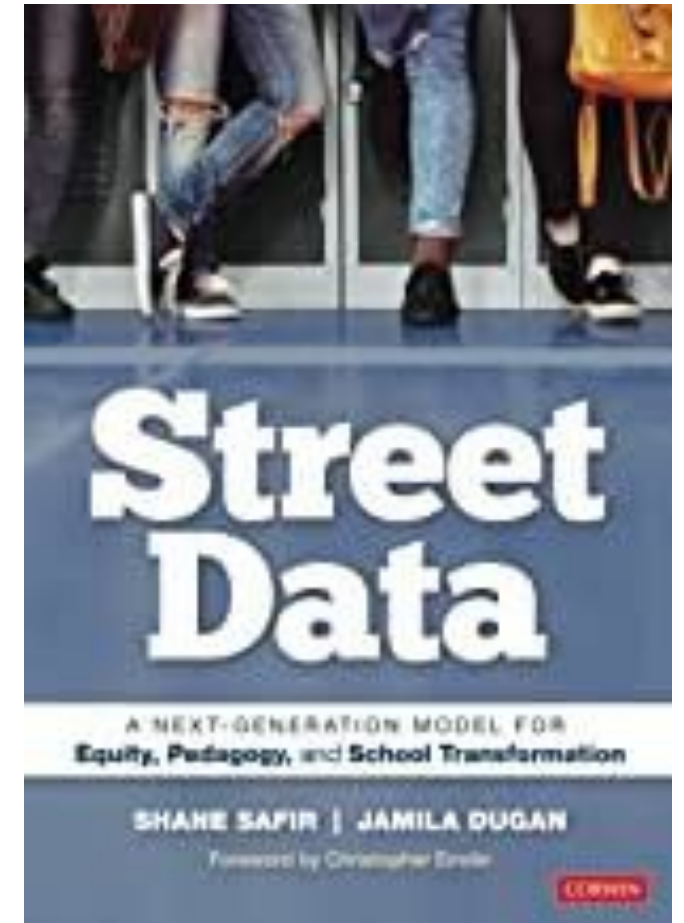
- Collect evidence and artifacts as part of accountability practices.*
- Hold ongoing school/district data discussions to continuously progress-monitor student learning and adjust school interventions and extensions.*
- Build collective ownership in the school of all students.*
- Ensure resources (time, materials, human resources, technology) are adequately provided to ensure the success of the project.*

# Street Data

“What if data could be humanizing, liberating, even healing?”

It can be if we change our data gathering approaches. Instead of seeking data from standardized sources, we can seek data from the “street”.

Street data can be found on the ground level, from the perspectives and experiences of the human beings in our communities; students, parents, teachers, staff and community members.”



# ***Seek First to Understand***

"If I were to summarize in one sentence the single most important principle I have learned in the field of interpersonal relations, it would be this: Seek first to understand, then to be understood."

—Dr. Stephen R. Covey



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## Turn and Talk Reflection

***What are some next steps for you to be more student-focused?***



# Considering “community” as you Build more Qualitative Approaches to School Improvement

# Community Outreach

- ✓ *Communicating plans, solutions and seeking feedback*
- ✓ *Being in the community as much as possible*
- ✓ *Creating connections with families, community members as often as you can*
- ✓ *Seek to understand your community*
- ✓ *Respect diversity*
- ✓ *Promote equitable practices and communicate your focus on equity*

You take care of critical issues and address what needs to be addressed, including difficult discussion that may be uncomfortable.

**“Clear is *kind*. Unclear is *unkind*.  
Courage over comfort.”**

**—Brené Brown**



# Turn and Talk Reflection

*What are some next steps for you to be more community-focused?*

*How do you take student learning to the community?*



# How we have the most impact?

## First Step

- Understanding and communicating our priorities
- Establishing tight expectations based on the priorities
- Communicating and modeling expectations
- Revisiting, reviewing, revising, celebrating

## Next Step

- Setting goals and progress monitoring based on the priorities
- Living the priorities in all actions, communication and expectations
- Keeping the distractors away!
- Revisiting, reviewing, revising, celebrating



***“Each choice that you make  
is a choice of intention.”***

- Gary Zukav *The Seat of the Soul* (2014)





# Setting Your Intentions What Will You Do Next?

# Thank YOU!

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