# Reflecting on Your System's Starting Point

At TNTP, we have articulated six key levers that systems can use to improve students' experiences: the system's vision for the student experience; high-quality instructional resources; educator experience, selection, support, and collaboration; authentic community and stakeholder engagement; organizational management, and equity-centered policies and daily practices. This is not an exhaustive list of all the resources and structures that systems have at their disposal; rather, it is a list of the levers that must be functioning effectively in a system if that system and its leaders hope to improve student experiences or accelerate student learning.

Below, we've detailed a spectrum that will support districts to determine their strengths in each of those key levers that will help our partnering systems determine if they are ready to plan, test, scale, or deepen their instructional work or strategies. The table below includes examples of what we look for each lever within each category.

This table should not be seen as a rubric or evaluative tool for systems. It's meant to help systems reflect on where they are in their journey to improved student outcomes. If, in reviewing this tool, you find yourself (along with other leaders and stakeholders in your system) nodding along with the majority of the bullets in a single column, that is most likely where your system's strategy should start. As new students and educators matriculate through your system or as new research or data is gathered and shared, systems may find the need to shift from deepening actions to planning or testing actions—the borders between each category can be fluid. Systems may find that some levers (or even elements of a lever) are in the planning phase, while others are deepening. The goal is to get to the point of harmonious integration between the levers. Systems should not rush to get one lever to deepening at the expense of other levers. Each lever must be working in concert, as fostering meaningful student outcomes requires action with each of these essential levers.

These levers and the questions connected to them are not a list of linear actions meant to be converted into a spreadsheet with checkboxes; rather, they represent a framework for thinking about the health and effectiveness of our system as it relates to the student experience. This list is also not organized by priority, meaning you should not read this and think that educator experience is more critical than stakeholder engagement but less important than materials. These are integrated levers that inform each other, tied to the vision driving the entire system's work and identifying goals for student experiences. When these levers work together, we see a few things happening. First, we see all students, no matter their identities and backgrounds, having the types of instructional experiences that put them on a path to achieving the goals and opportunities that they, their families, and their caregivers desire for their futures. And we see educators and systems able to immediately respond and offer individualized, tiered, and strategic supports to all students when and if stakeholders see a child is not having those experiences.

**Vision for the Student Experience:** How does your system envision, articulate, and enact the academic and cultural experience you expect all students[1] to have in your school buildings? How does your system measure the effectiveness and impact of the articulated vision? To what extent does your vision center on and address students that have historically been denied access to equitable, high-quality learning experiences?

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| **Intentions** | ← | → | **Outcomes** |

| Plan | Test | Scale | Deepen |
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| ▪ We do not have a stated vision for all students' academic and cultural experiences. <br><br> ▪ If present, our vision may not permeate the system or may only be known or understood in small pockets. <br><br> ▪ If present, our vision may be broad but not content-specific. <br><br> ▪ If present, our vision may have embedded blindspots and may not attend to the needs of all students. <br><br> ▪ If present, our vision may not foster a sense of belonging in all students. <br><br> ▪ If present, our vision may only be espoused but not enacted in our classrooms. | ▪ We have a stated vision for all students' academic and cultural experiences. <br><br> ▪ Our vision permeates small pockets of the system. <br><br> ▪ Our system has content-specific visions in some but not all subjects. <br><br> ▪ Our vision is present but has embedded blindspots or may not attend to the needs of all students. <br><br> ▪ Our vision fosters a sense of belonging for some but not all students. <br><br> ▪ We do not yet use the vision to make decisions. | ▪ We have a stated vision for all students' academic and cultural experiences. <br><br> ▪ Our vision is beginning to permeate the full system, with large pockets of educators and stakeholders capable of speaking to what the vision looks like in classrooms. <br><br> ▪ Our system has content-specific visions in all subjects. <br><br> ▪ Our vision attends to the needs of all students. <br><br> ▪ Our vision fosters a sense of belonging for all students. <br><br> ▪ We sometimes use the vision to make decisions. <br><br> ▪ Our vision is enacted in many of our classrooms. | Your system has accomplished the descriptors in "scale," and: <br><br> ▪ The vision permeates the full system, with almost all educators naturally speaking to what the vision looks like in classrooms. <br><br> ▪ We consistently use the vision to make decisions. <br><br> ▪ Our vision is enacted in almost all of our classrooms. |

[1] Throughout this document terms and phrases like students, all students, every student and all learners are used to draw leaders' attention to the need to reflect on, deeply understand the assets of, and attend to the needs of all students within their instructional system. While attending to all students is critical, it is especially important for students that have historically been denied access to equitable, high- quality learning experiences (namely students of color, multi-lingual learners, students from low-income backgrounds, or students with learning and thinking differences).

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| • We do not have data and data systems aligned to our vision.<br><br>• We do not have mechanisms for knowing if our vision is on or off track.<br><br>• We do not have strategies for intervening at the macro or micro level if we find that our vision is off track. | • Our vision is enacted in a small number of our classrooms.<br><br>• We have data and data systems aligned to some elements of our vision.<br><br>• We have mechanisms for monitoring our vision at the macro level (system- wide or school-wide) but not at the micro-level (by classroom or by student).<br><br>• We have strategies for intervening on our vision at the macro or micro level but not both. | • We have data and data systems aligned to all aspects of our vision.<br><br>• We have mechanisms for monitoring our vision at the macro and micro level.<br><br>• We have strategies for intervening on our vision at the macro and micro level. | |

**High-Quality Instructional Materials:** High-Quality Instructional Resources: What resources and materials (i.e., curricular and classroom resources, assessments, intervention resources) does your system use to realize your vision? Are these resources and materials high-quality, and do they meet the needs of all students? Have you examined these resources to determine if and to what extent they attend to all learners—specifically, multilingual learners, students with learning and thinking differences, and students that have experienced continued over-remediation or unfinished instruction? How does your system measure how educators implement these resources and materials or how students engage with them? Are your instructional resources being implemented with integrity? How do you know?

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| Plan | Test | Scale | Deepen |
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| ▪ We do not yet have high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) for both core and intervention time across content areas and grade levels. | ▪ We have HQIM for both core and intervention time in most content areas and grade levels. | ▪ We have HQIM for both core and intervention time in almost all of our content areas and grade levels. | Your system has accomplished the descriptors in "scale," and: |
| ▪ We do not have a common definition or understanding of HQIM or our vision of HQIM is narrow and not reflective of the needs of our students. | ▪ Our definition for HQIM is narrowly focused on alignment to standards but does not articulate the academic, cultural, or linguistic needs of our students. | ▪ Our definition of HQIM is expansive and recognizes the academic, cultural, and linguistic needs of students. | ▪ We are able to use data from our student assessment program to identify which of our students are not yet effectively supported – and we problem solve around reentering the planning or testing phase to ensure that those students achieve at high levels. |
| ▪ Our assessment program is not aligned to our instructional materials, so we are unable to use data to effectively support all students. | ▪ Our assessment program is aligned to our instructional materials, but we don't yet use the data to effectively support all students. | ▪ Our assessment program is aligned to our instructional materials, and many of us use the data to effectively support all students. | ▪ We are able to use student engagement data, grade-appropriate assignment data, and strong instruction data to coach our teachers and school leaders to improve students' experiences. |
| ▪ Materials and supplements may exist but do not effectively support all learners. | ▪ We have HQIM, but we know that many of us don't use those materials consistently. | ▪ Most of us consistently use our HQIM with integrity to support all students. | |
| ▪ We don't yet measure our students' engagement or their access to grade- appropriate | ▪ Materials and supplements may exist and support some but not all learners. | ▪ Our materials and supplements support all of our learners. | |
| | | ▪ We measure our students' engagement and their access to grade-appropriate assignments and strong | |

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| assignments or strong instruction.<br><br>- Students have incoherent experiences because our core and intervention materials are misaligned.<br><br>- We do not have mechanisms for monitoring the implementation or impact of materials.<br><br>- We stick with or select materials that are not rooted in evidence-based research for improving student outcomes. | - We measure our students' engagement and their access to grade-appropriate assignments and strong instruction.<br><br>- Students' experiences are becoming more coherent because our core and intervention materials are aligned.<br><br>- We have mechanisms for monitoring materials implementation but not impact or vice versa.<br><br>- We select materials that are evidence based in some areas and stop using materials that show no impact on student outcomes. | instruction – and we use that information to determine which students still do not have equitable access to high-quality experiences.<br><br>- Students' experiences are coherent because our core and intervention materials are aligned.<br><br>- We have mechanisms for monitoring materials implementation and impact.<br><br>- We use evidence-based materials and stop using materials if our students do not demonstrate greater learning after a few years of implementation. | |

**Educator Experience, Selection, Support, and Collaboration:** How does your system envision, articulate, and enact the educator experience and educator expectations? How does your system build and support educator capacity to improve practice and ensure that you retain your most vital educators? How does your system recruit and select educators – and do educators reflect the community they serve and your vision for educators?

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| **Intentions** | → | **Outcomes** |

| Plan | Test | Scale | Deepen |
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| ▪ We do not have a vision for our educators' experience.<br><br>▪ We have not clearly articulated expectations for our educators.<br><br>▪ We have a vision for educator experience or educator expectations - but not both.<br><br>▪ We do not have role-specific clarity in our expectations for educators.<br><br>▪ Our vision for the educator experience or our educator expectations do not align with our vision for the student experience.<br><br>▪ We do not have an educator capacity- building strategy. If we have one, it isn't coherently aligned to our vision for the student experience.<br><br>▪ We do not have a clear recruitment and selection | ▪ We have a vision for our educators' experience, but most of our staff are unaware of its existence.<br><br>▪ We have clearly articulated role-specific expectations for our educators, but most of our staff are unaware of them.<br><br>▪ Our vision for the educator experience and our educator expectations are aligned with our vision for the student experience.<br><br>▪ Our educator capacity- building strategy is aligned with our vision for the student experience, but we don't yet consistently execute effective capacity building for our educators.<br><br>▪ We don't yet monitor the effectiveness of our educator capacity building so we can improve it. | ▪ Our staff are familiar with our vision for educators' experiences and our role-specific expectations.<br><br>▪ We monitor the effectiveness of our educator capacity-building strategy, and we use what we learn to improve.<br><br>▪ We have stopped capacity-building efforts that were not leading to improvement in our classrooms, even if they were long- standing.<br><br>▪ We have a clear understanding of recruitment and selection strategies that will lead to a more diverse set of educators, and we implement those strategies.<br><br>▪ We have a clear understanding of retention strategies that will support our system in retaining our irreplaceable staff and educators. | Your system has accomplished the descriptors in "scale," and:<br><br>▪ We consistently leverage our vision for educators' experiences and our role-specific expectations, as well as our vision for students' experience, to make decisions about how to build educator capacity.<br><br>▪ We are able to identify specific aspects of our vision for educators' experiences that we aren't yet realizing – and we can generate ideas to test to improve those aspects of the experience.<br><br>▪ Our educator capacity-building is consistently effective at improving educators' classroom practices.<br><br>▪ We have a diverse set of educators who are consistently retained year over year. |

- process for all roles in our system.
- Our recruitment or selection processes do not result in a diverse set of educators that reflect our students and our vision for the student experience.
- We cannot identify our irreplaceable staff and educators.
- We don't retain our irreplaceable staff and educators at a high rate.
- Our educators do not report high levels of satisfaction with our instructional culture.
- Our educator effectiveness and student outcome results show no correlation.

- We have a clear recruitment and selection process for all roles.
- Our recruitment and selection processes have been evaluated for their blindspots, and we have made shifts that we can test to see if we improve the diversity of our workforce.
- We can identify our irreplaceable staff and educators, but we have made shifts that we can test to see if they support our system in retaining them.
- Our educators report being somewhat satisfied with our instructional culture.
- Our educator effectiveness and student outcome data are somewhat correlated.

- Our educators report being satisfied with our instructional culture.
- Educator effectiveness and student outcome data are highly correlated.

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**Authentic Community and Stakeholder Engagement:** How does your system build and manage the relationships and rapport between students, staff members, families, caregivers, and community members? How does your system share instructional data and progress monitoring trends with stakeholders? Do these engagement efforts provide stakeholders with the information that they need and request? How does your system share knowledge and data with community members and key stakeholders such that they can fully engage in and support your system in its instructional strategy, design, and implementation efforts? How does your system use input from stakeholders to advance the efforts and impact of your work? Do your family and caregiver engagement efforts resonate with and reflect the identities of all students within your system?

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| Intentions | ← → | Outcomes |

| Plan | Test | Scale | Deepen |
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| ▪ We have few plans for engaging students, staff, student families and caregivers, and community members.<br><br>▪ We make significant decisions without engaging our students, staff, families and caregivers, or community members.<br><br>▪ We make efforts to engage our stakeholders, but the stakeholders who currently engage are not representative of our student population.<br><br>▪ Our stakeholder engagement efforts are only in English, not in all of our students' and caregivers' home or colloquial languages.<br><br>▪ We make efforts to engage our stakeholders, but the strategies we use privilege | ▪ We have emerging plans for engaging students, staff, student families and caregivers, andcommunity members.<br><br>▪ We often give students, staff, student families and caregivers, and community members the opportunity to share input that influences significant decisions we make.<br><br>▪ We are making efforts to engage our stakeholders and have ideas about how to make sure we consistently engage a representative set of stakeholders.<br><br>▪ Our stakeholder engagement efforts are in all of our students' and | ▪ We have consistent plans for engaging students, staff, student families and caregivers, and community members.<br><br>▪ We consistently give students, staff, student families and caregivers, and community members the opportunity to share input that influences significant decisions we make.<br><br>▪ The group of stakeholders we consistently engage is representative of our student population.<br><br>▪ Our stakeholder engagement efforts are in all of our students' and caregivers' home or colloquial languages.<br><br>▪ We consistently use a variety of engagement strategies that require a variable amount of | Your system has accomplished the descriptors in "scale," and:<br><br>▪ The group of stakeholders we consistently engage is over-representative of student identities in our system that we know we need to better serve.<br><br>▪ We consistently leverage the assets of our community to better serve our students, including authentically partnering with community-based organizations. |

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| stakeholders with significant time or resources to give.<br><br>▪ We collect feedback and the perspectives of stakeholders, but we rarely use it to inform decisions.<br><br>▪ Our stakeholders don't believe we share essential data and knowledge with them. When we do share data or knowledge, it is limited to positive information that feels palatable to stakeholders.<br><br>▪ Our stakeholders believe our communication is unclear.<br><br>▪ We use the positive feedback from our stakeholders but disregard negative feedback. | caregivers' home or colloquial languages.<br><br>▪ We have begun to leverage engagement strategies that require a variable amount of time or resources from those stakeholders who we're engaging.<br><br>▪ We collect feedback and the perspectives of stakeholders and have started to use it to inform decisions.<br><br>▪ Our stakeholders are not sure if we share essential data and knowledge with them. When we do share, it is both positive and challenging information.<br><br>▪ Our stakeholders believe our communication is clear.<br><br>▪ We use both positive and challenging feedback from our stakeholders to improve our work. | time or resources from the stakeholder who we're engaging.<br><br>▪ We collect feedback and the perspectives of stakeholders and consistently use it to inform decisions.<br><br>▪ Our stakeholders believe we share essential data and knowledge with them in a transparent way.<br><br>▪ Our stakeholders believe our communication is clear and inspiring.<br><br>▪ We consistently improve our work using feedback from our stakeholders – and we share with them how we used their feedback to improve. | |

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**Organizational Management:** How does your system utilize change management and continuous improvement processes to improve student and staff experiences? How does your system use these processes to expose potential and actual inequities within your system?

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| **Intentions** | | | **Outcomes** |

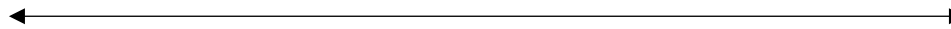| Plan | Test | Scale | Deepen |
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| ▪ We do not have the knowledge, skills, mindsets, or habits necessary to effectively manage change or continuously improve. <br><br> ▪ We do not use have change management plans. <br><br> ▪ We have not built continuous improvement processes into our system's approach to work. <br><br> ▪ We have a stated approach to change management or continuous improvement, but we don't use it frequently. <br><br> ▪ We have an approach to change management and continuous improvement, but we do not attend to potential or actual inequities within our systems using that approach. <br><br> ▪ We do not engage essential stakeholders – including staff inside our system - in our change or improvement efforts. | ▪ We are beginning to build the knowledge, skills, mindsets, or habits necessary to effectively manage change or improve. <br><br> ▪ We have selected a system-wide change management framework and started to articulate change management plans. <br><br> ▪ We have selected a system-wide continuous improvement framework and started to use it. <br><br> ▪ We are beginning to attend to potential and actual inequities in our system using our change management and continuous improvement approach. <br><br> ▪ We are beginning to engage essential stakeholders – including staff inside our system – in | ▪ We have the knowledge, skills, mindsets, or habits necessary to effectively manage change or improve. <br><br> ▪ We consistently use our change management framework and communicate about change management plans to our stakeholders. <br><br> ▪ We consistently use our continuous improvement framework and communicate about our improvement efforts and results to our stakeholders. <br><br> ▪ Our change and continuous improvement efforts are focused on addressing potential and actual inequities within our system. <br><br> ▪ We consistently engage essential stakeholders – including staff inside our system – in our change and improvement efforts. <br><br> ▪ We articulate how long a given change will work and how we'll | Your system has accomplished the descriptors in "scale," and: <br><br> ▪ We filter every change idea through our vision for the student experience. <br><br> ▪ Change ideas consistently come from our stakeholder engagement efforts, not just from our central office staff. <br><br> ▪ We consistently adjust course on our change and improvement efforts. <br><br> ▪ We spend most of her time on initiatives that are connected to improving our students' experience in alignment with our vision, and we end initiatives that aren't connected to improving our students' experience in alignment with our vision. |

- We don't give change time to take effect, as we move from change to change quickly.
- Our change and improvement efforts aren't connected to our vision for the student experience.
- We make changes but don't have any measures to know how effective those changes were.
- Our data suggests that our system's efforts are not improving staff or student experiences.

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our change and improvement efforts.

- We are beginning to articulate how long a given change may take and how we'll know whether we need to adjust course as a part of our change management and improvement plans.
- We can explain how our change and improvement efforts are connected to our vision for the student experience.
- We are beginning to measure the effectiveness of our executed changes and improvement efforts, focused specifically on knowing whether our efforts are improving experiences for systematically marginalized students.
- Our data suggests that we can improve some student and staff experiences in some areas through our change or continuous improvement processes.

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know we need to adjust course – and we have begun to adjust course when we need to.

- Our change and improvement efforts are clearly connected to our vision for the student experience.
- We consistently measure the effectiveness of our executed change and improvement efforts, and we have made changes that have improved experiences for our systematically marginalized students in particular.
- Our data suggests that we can improve all student and staff experiences through our change or continuous improvement processes.

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**Equity-Centered Policies and Daily Practices:** Do your system's policies and daily practices build or erode student and community trust in your system's ability to provide strong, equitable instruction for all students? How do these policies and practices attend to the sociopolitical realities that impact student success in ways that counteract and disrupt the systemic inequities baked into the education system?

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| Intentions | ← → | Outcomes |

| Plan | Test | Scale | Deepen |
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| ▪ We don't engage in equity-focused work.<br><br>▪ We talk about the importance of equity but have not ensured we have the capacity, tools, money, resources, or people to address the inequities in our system.<br><br>▪ We talk about the importance of equity internally, but we don't address it with our external stakeholders or our community.<br><br>▪ We are reluctant to engage in an equity- focused examination or audit of our students' experiences.<br><br>▪ We have engaged in an equity-focused audit of our students' experiences, but we have discounted our findings or put the responsibility for our findings on our students or our community. | ▪ We are beginning to engage in equity-focused work.<br><br>▪ We have dedicated resources to build capacity to engage in equity-focused work.<br><br>▪ We are beginning to talk about the importance of equity-centered work internally and externally.<br><br>▪ We have engaged in an equity audit of our students' experiences within our system.<br><br>▪ We have shared the findings of an equity audit of our students' experiences, taking responsibility for the management of a system that has led to these outcomes. | ▪ We consistently engage in equity-focus work.<br><br>▪ We notice and have the capacity to address inequities when they occur in our system.<br><br>▪ We communicate consistently about the importance of our equity-focused work.<br><br>▪ We consistently examine and audit students' experiences to look for inequities in the quality of experiences we're providing to all students.<br><br>▪ We consistently engage our most impacted stakeholders in all of our work to ensure that we're looking for blindspots we might have.<br><br>▪ We have begun to hold ourselves accountable for creating equitable experiences for all of our students. | Your system has accomplished the descriptors in "scale," and:<br><br>▪ We are consistently open to finding and addressing additional inequities in our system. |

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| ▪ We have implemented new equity-based policies and changes without engaging in the stakeholders who were most affected by our previous policies.<br><br>▪ We don't hold ourselves accountable for addressing inequities. | ▪ We have engaged our most impacted stakeholders in our equity audit findings, beginning to articulate the set of next steps we need to take to ensure equitable experiences for all of our learners.<br><br>▪ We have articulated a way that we'll hold individuals in our system – as well as our system as a whole – accountable for addressing inequities. | | |