SWiFT
education center
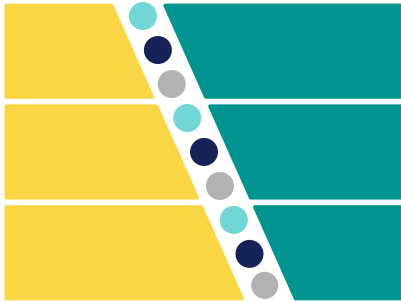
Strong and Engaged Site Leadership

Take the specific action steps below to implement this feature in your school.

Lead development of a clear vision statement.

- Develop a clear vision statement through a process that includes representatives from all stakeholder groups, that is, faculty, staff, families, community members, and students.

- When developing a vision statement, ask such questions as: Does proposed vision statement relate to our goals for instructional outcomes? Does it reflect our school and community values and beliefs? Does it reflect inclusion of diverse learners?

- If you develop alternative vision statements, ask all stakeholders to vote for the one they think best reflects their values and goals for the school.

- Once you finalize the vision statement, make sure it is more than just a piece of paper that gets put in a binder. Regularly reference the vision statement and use it to guide schoolwide decisions.

Regularly attend instructional meetings and conduct classroom visits.

- When visiting classrooms and attending instructional meetings, make clear your expectations for teachers and staff. Tell teachers what you want to observe, and use the visit as an opportunity to provide positive feedback to teachers. For example, if in a recent professional learning session you covered ideas for differentiation, tell teachers you will be looking for application of the material during classroom visits. Recognize and praise teachers for applying what they learned. You may even want to leave a nice note on the teacher's desk to recognize the best practices you observed.

- Make sure classroom visits are frequent and not always about evaluation. Use the visits as a way to better get to know staff and students. Remember, classroom visits can be intimidating for teachers. To minimize fear, visits from school leaders should become a regular and routine experience that includes positive interactions.

- Schedule time to participate in instructional meetings, such as grade level meetings and any meetings when student data is utilized and reviewed.

Create a leadership team that facilitates decisions related to schoolwide systems and practices.

- Form a leadership team that is representative of all stakeholder groups. Consider including different grade level or content area representatives, such as specialized and general educators, related service providers, family and community members, and student representatives.

- Schedule meetings to occur at least twice a month.

- Develop a written document that outlines the purpose and functions of the leadership team, including making decisions related to schoolwide systems and practices.

- Ensure the leadership team uses schoolwide data to guide the decisions it makes. Consider using data to identify strengths and opportunities, and to set priorities for action.

Create opportunities for all stakeholders to contribute to school decisions.

- Distribute leadership roles and authority to school teams.

- Create teams that can meet identified needs in the school, such as a team that plans interventions for a multi-tiered system of support or teams that review student progress monitoring data for indications of effective interventions as well as the need for changes in interventions.

- Empower teams to make decisions related to their team's primary purpose.

- Invite representative family and community members, support staff, and students to serve as members of the teams. Collect and use survey data from all stakeholders when making key schoolwide decisions.

Regularly use academic and behavior data to guide decisions.

- Develop a system for collecting and reporting academic and behavior data.

- Reinforce school teams use of these data to guide their decisions.