

Clarity of Purpose

- Are district leaders absolutely clear that the fundamental purpose of the district, and everyone within the district, is to ensure high levels of learning for all students?
- Are all major decisions within the district filtered through this learning mission?
- Is there evidence of a common vocabulary and clear understanding of key terms throughout the district?

Aligning Policies, Practices, and Procedures

- Have district leaders aligned policies, practices, and procedures with the district learning mission?
- Have district leaders assisted principals in developing school schedules that allow time for collaborative teams to meet and for students to receive additional support and enrichment within the school day?
- Have district leaders aligned position descriptions and performance appraisal practices with the learning mission?

Limiting Initiatives

- Have district leaders made visible and repeated efforts to limit district initiatives?
- Are approved initiatives directly tied to the four critical questions of learning?

The Principal Principle

- Have district leaders clearly articulated the role expectations of principals?
- Is there a clear understanding that improving student learning is the primary responsibility of principals?
- Is there a clear understanding that it is the principal's responsibility to enhance the effectiveness of each team?
- Have district leaders organized principals into a collaborative team?
- Is student learning the primary focus of districtwide principal meetings?
- Does the principal team anticipate issues and questions that might arise as PLC practices are implemented?
- Do principals practice and rehearse the work that will ultimately be expected of teacher teams?

Figure 4.3: Critical questions for district office consideration.

- Do principals share learning data and strategies for improvement?

Collaborative Teams

- Does the district insist that each school organize into collaborative teams?
- Have schools developed written position descriptions for the position of team leader?
- Has each school collaboratively developed criteria for the selection of team leaders?
- Does the district provide training for team leaders?

What Do Teams Do?

- Have district leaders clearly articulated what teams are expected to do and the products they are expected to produce?
- Is the work of teams tied directly to the four critical questions of learning?
- Have quality standards been collaboratively developed and articulated?
- Do district leaders provide principals and teams with training and resources they need in order to successfully do their work?

Time and Support

- Is there a clear expectation that each school will develop a system to provide students who are experiencing difficulty in their learning with additional time and support within the school day, regardless of the teacher to whom they are assigned?
- Is there a clear expectation that each school will develop a system to extend and enrich the learning of students who demonstrate proficiency?
- Does each school have a plan to monitor the effectiveness of this system?

A Focus on Results

- Is there a clear expectation from district leaders that each team (and principal) will monitor the learning of each student, skill by skill?
- Do district leaders monitor student learning on a frequent and timely basis, and are decisions made based on analysis of student learning data?