

Figure I.5: Success Tool—Common Pitfalls

Instructions: Use this list of pitfalls as a checklist to help your team members recognize if or when they, or the school, are in or near pitfalls. Consider the guidance and questions after each pitfall. Discuss the likelihood that your team can avoid the pitfall.

Facilitation tip: Display or post the fifteen pitfalls for easy reference during the conversation.

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| ☐ 1. A small number of people are involved in the development of the school-improvement plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The goal is for the team to be composed of a diverse group of people, including administrators, teachers, support staff, and other stakeholders. + What is the makeup of your team? (See chapters 2, 4, 6, and 8.) |
| ☐ 2. The plan is communicated to a limited number of people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Everyone who can contribute is engaged in planning, giving feedback, and contributing to the process so that you gain commitment from those closest to the work ahead. + How engaged are your team members? Are they sharing the work? (See chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8.) |
| ☐ 3. Limited analysis is conducted, so the factors causing gaps in performance are not adequately examined. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The team conducts a deep, thorough analysis to identify factors causing gaps in performance rather than superficial symptoms. + Is the analysis thorough enough? Do you skip over any factors? (See chapters 1 and 3.) |
| ☐ 4. Cause analysis is limited to a few issues and does not lead to identification of the factors impacting improvement, innovation, and implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The team applies a systemic lens when doing the cause analysis to uncover factors impacting improvement, innovation, and implementation. + Does your team consider factors at multiple levels, such as in the school or the school district? (See chapter 3.) |
| ☐ 5. When selecting interventions, the team focuses on solutions rather than the sets of interventions needed to successfully explore, install, and implement those solutions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The team focuses on selecting the best sets of interventions to solve identified problems and carefully considers how to install and implement them. + Does your team think about or consider a combination of solutions? (See chapter 3.) |
| ☐ 6. Periodic checks meet compliance requirements, but the team might not use them to inform iteration, make decisions, and drive celebrations of progress. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Benchmarks or periodic checks are built into the plan, and the team uses them to inform iteration, make decisions, and drive celebrations of progress. + Does your team set key dates, benchmarks, and periodic checks? Do you plan time to check progress against goals? (See chapter 9.) |
| ☐ 7. The school-improvement plan is not broken down into action plans that engage all the stakeholders who can make a difference. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The school-improvement plan has corresponding action plans that clearly engage all stakeholders in making a difference. + Does your team have action plans that engage others? (See chapters 4 and 5.) |

☐ 8. A few people are working hard to drive improvement rather than building the capacity of the whole school to engage, improve, innovate, and implement. + The school-improvement plan and goals are shared by all and lead to improvement, innovation, and implementation. + Do you have evidence that the responsibility for the work is shared? (See chapter 7.)
☐ 9. Meetings do not focus on the work to be done or products and outputs that will be created in the meeting or afterward according to deadlines. + Meetings focus on the work to do, including products and outputs to create by set deadlines. + Do your meetings stay focused on the work? (See chapters 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10.)
☐ 10. Professional learning is prescribed without determining and addressing other factors impacting educator performance. + Professional learning is relevant to the adults in the building and addresses the factors impacting educator performance. + Does your team participate in learning that is relevant to accomplishing the goals you have agreed on? (See chapters 1,3, 4, and 5.)
☐ 11. Capacity building is focused on what people should know rather than what they must do. Educators lack the support to transfer their learning to effective performance on the job. Without sufficient practice of the tasks and feedback against clear criteria, they fail to reach proficiency. + Professional learning builds educators' capacity by supporting the transfer of learning to the job and providing sufficient practice of the tasks with feedback against clear criteria to reach proficiency. + Is your team making sure that training is effective? (See chapter 7.)
☐ 12. The school jumps to full implementation without taking time to explore and ensure that sufficient infrastructure and resources are in place. + Teams take the time to explore and ensure sufficient infrastructure and resources are in place before moving to full implementation. + Does your team make sure that what is required to implement changes exists? (See chapters 5 and 10.)
☐ 13. Change is seen as an organizational process rather than a people process, and the process of change is not understood or considered during work with stakeholders. + The school views change as a people process that is understood when working with stakeholders. + Does your team talk about change as a people process, and does your team take responsibility for engaging the people who are expected to change? (See chapter 8.)
☐ 14. There is a disconnect between vision and action. + There is clear alignment among the school's vision, goals, and actions. + Are you and your team checking that what you are doing is aligned with your goals? (See chapter 6.)
☐ 15. School improvement is an event to check off. + School improvement is a systemic, systematic, engaging process where everyone works to set and meet shared goals for the success of students, educators, and the community. + How committed is your team to following a systematic process while maintaining a systemic view? (See chapters 1–10.)