

# NEW LEADERS URBAN EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK



## INTRODUCTION

### Why we developed the UEF

A principal's job, first and foremost, is to diagnose their school's needs and match them to effective principal actions and school practices that drive student success. Successful principals use their diagnosis to build an action plan that pushes their school—and student achievement—to the next level.

New Leaders developed the Urban Excellence Framework™ to understand exactly what schools achieving dramatic gains are doing and to share that knowledge throughout our community of leaders. Armed with this knowledge and aligned system supports, we have every confidence that schools led by New Leader Principals will see the transformative success necessary to drive significant gains in student achievement and close the achievement gap.

### Research and methodology

Our findings to date are based on an extensive review of the available research on the practices of effective schools, turnaround schools, secondary schools, and leadership; over 100 visits and case studies of schools that were identified after achieving dramatic gains; a review of all resources available through New Leaders' Effective Practice Incentive Community; and the collective knowledge of many New Leaders staff, principals, and leaders in the education reform field.

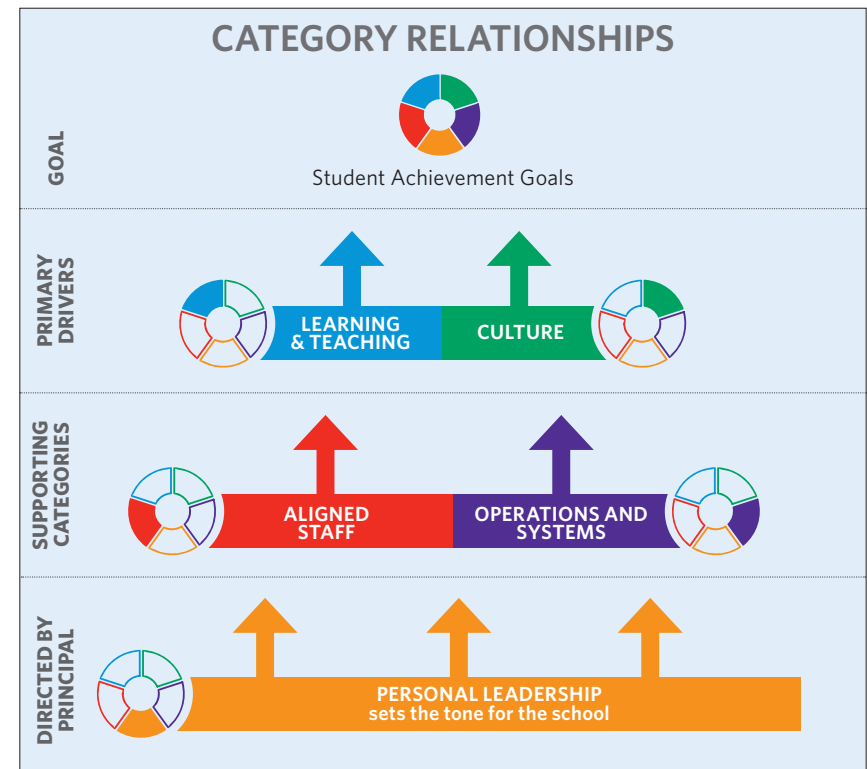
## UEF STRUCTURE AND KEY INSIGHTS

### Categories

The Urban Excellence Framework focuses on *five categories* of school practices. Among them are two primary drivers of student achievement: rigorous, goal and data-driven *learning and teaching* and achievement and belief-based school-wide *culture*. Two additional categories of a principal's work are essential to supporting these drivers: building and managing a high-quality *aligned staff* to the school's vision and instituting *operations and systems* to put the vision into place. Undergirding all of these categories is the *personal leadership* modeled by a principal who sets the tone for all student and adult relationships and practices in the school.

### Key Levers

Each category is divided into a set of Key Levers, each representing a collection of practices evident in our highest gaining schools.





# LEARNING AND TEACHING CATEGORY MAP



## LEVER 1

### CURRICULUM ALIGNED TO BOTH STATE AND COLLEGE-READINESS STANDARDS



*What students need to know and be able to do*



#### CONCEPTS

- **Alignment to Standards:** Standards to identify and define what students need to know and be able to do
- **Scope and Sequence:** A curriculum map built on standards with a clear scope and sequence
- **Lesson Plans:** A translation of the curriculum map into daily, weekly, and monthly activities driven by practices and strategies
- **Curricular Materials:** Materials are matched to both the standards and learning needs



## LEVER 2

### CONSISTENT AND QUALITY CLASSROOM PRACTICES, ROUTINES, AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



*How students are taught and the classroom environment*



#### CONCEPTS

- **Routines and School-Wide Practices**
- **Instructional Strategies:** How best to deliver content



## LEVER 3

### UTILIZATION OF DIVERSE STUDENT-LEVEL DATA TO DRIVE INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT



*How student progress is measured and used to guide and improve instruction*



#### CONCEPTS

- **Data Collection and Analysis**
- **Formative/Interim Assessments**
- **Grading**



## LEVER 4

### PYRAMID OF ACADEMIC PREVENTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS



*Supports for students below grade level and preventions for students at risk*



#### CONCEPTS

- **Interventions and Preventions**



# CULTURE CATEGORY MAP



## LEVER 1

**CLEAR SCHOOL MISSION AND VALUES ARE FOCUSED ON COLLEGE SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT**



*The descriptive vision of success that guides the direction of the school and the principles that are used implement the mission*



### CONCEPTS

- **Vision, Mission and Values:** Creation and refinement of a clear and compelling vision, mission, and set of values



## LEVER 2

**ADULTS TRANSLATE THE MISSION AND VALUES INTO BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS THAT INCLUDE A CODE OF CONDUCT**



*Ways in which adults and students display the vision, mission and values through specific behaviors*



### CONCEPTS

- **Behaviors:** Behaviors derived from the vision, mission, and values are described and taught
- **Code of Conduct:** Code of conduct for behavioral expectations
- **Pyramid of Behavioral Interventions<sup>1</sup>**



## LEVER 3

**ADULTS CREATE A CULTURE OF ACHIEVEMENT AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS WHERE ALL STUDENTS ARE VALUED**



*Ways in which adults take responsibility for creating positive school cultures by supporting the presence and strength of student voice*



### CONCEPTS

- **Adults Build Student Relationships:** Adults build strong relationships with students
- **Cultural Competency and Diversity**
- **Student Voice:** Structural opportunities for students to effectively use their voices
- **Aspiration/Life Plan:** Building aspirations for college, career and life success



## LEVER 4

**FAMILIES ARE PURPOSEFULLY ENGAGED IN THE ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUCCESS OF STUDENTS**



*Processes to intentionally include students' families in the work of the school*



### CONCEPTS

- **Family Engagement:** Family engagement that supports the college going and life planning for students

<sup>1</sup>**Sequencing Note:** Principal should establish the Pyramid of Behavioral Interventions after defining the consistent behaviors and implementing the code of conduct. Many students will demonstrate positive behaviors based on the consistent and effective implementation of the code of conduct. The Pyramid of Behavioral Interventions should then be established to support the 10-20% of students who will need additional interventions and supports beyond the consistent code of conduct.



## ALIGNED STAFF CATEGORY MAP



### LEVER 1

#### RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND PLACEMENT OF STAFF



*Processes to identify, hire and place staff to get the right people "on the bus"*



#### CONCEPTS

- Recruitment
- Selection and Hiring
- Placement



### LEVER 2

#### DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH- PERFORMING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM



*Leader develops staff and creates a Leadership Team to support instructional excellence*



#### CONCEPTS

- **Building Teacher Leaders:** Pipeline Development
- **Leadership Team Development:** Development of the Leadership Team
- **Leadership Team Supports:** Create structures to support the Leadership Team



### LEVER 3

#### MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT OF INDIVIDUAL STAFF PERFORMANCE



*Processes to monitor and evaluate staff performance*



#### CONCEPTS

- **Outline Performance Expectations**
- **Teacher Assessment:** Assess teacher skill and effectiveness
- **Observation and Feedback**
- **Monitoring**
- **Evaluation**



### LEVER 4

#### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING STRUCTURES TO DRIVE INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT



*Processes and structures to create a professional learning community that helps to develop staff skill and expertise*



#### CONCEPTS

- **Professional Learning**
- **Teacher Team Structures**



# OPERATIONS AND SYSTEMS CATEGORY MAP



## LEVER 1

### TRACKING OF CLEAR AND FOCUSED SCHOOL GOALS AND STRATEGY ADJUSTMENT BASED ON PROGRESS

*Processes and structure to  
define and track clear goals*



#### CONCEPTS

- **Goals and Priority Areas:** Create clear goals and identify priority areas
- **Action Plans:** Create action plans and milestones



## LEVER 2

### TIME USE ALIGNED WITH SCHOOL-WIDE GOALS

*The processes and structures to  
use time effectively and efficiently*



#### CONCEPTS

- **Calendar**
- **Scheduling:** Weekly and Daily Schedules



## LEVER 3

### BUDGET, EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS, AND FACILITIES ALIGNED TO STRATEGIC PLAN

*Processes, structures and systems  
to ensure that the budget and  
physical space support learning*



#### CONCEPTS

- **Budget and Resources**
- **External Partnerships**
- **Facilities**



## LEVER 4

### POLITICAL CONTEXT AND SCHOOL SYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS MANAGED TO ENSURE A FOCUS ON LEARNING

*Processes to navigate the context  
within which the school operates*



#### CONCEPTS

- **Stakeholder Relationships:** Build and manage stakeholder and community relationships
- **District Relationships:** Build and manage district relationship



## PERSONAL LEADERSHIP CATEGORY EXPLANATION

New Leaders has always recognized that leadership is an essential component of school transformation. In our research of effective school practices we have learned that not only is leadership essential, but that the principal sets the tone for all student and adult relationships in the school. Our field research and assessments of leader practices indicate that the level of Personal Leadership skill of a principal is one key differentiator in driving student achievement gains, successfully managing adults, and retaining their positions

Each category of the UEF includes principal actions, but the personal leadership category outlines key actions that must be in place at all times and through all of the school's stages of development. These actions allow the leader to maintain focus on the school's goals and to ensure that all of their actions mirror the vision, mission, and values of their school community. This category is divided into five key levers that describe the personal leadership behaviors that support school success: Belief-Based, Goal-Driven Leadership; Culturally Competent Leadership; Interpersonal Leadership; Adaptive Leadership; and Resilient Leadership.

This is the only category that does not include school stages because the leader must demonstrate these actions across all stages of school development. These actions are fundamental and speak to the principal's overall belief, intent and approach to students, staff, families and community members. The manner in which these principal actions are implemented may change as the school improves and as more systems and structures are in place, but throughout their time as principal a leader must model personal leadership in their actions.

We have learned that successful leadership cannot be reduced to a single style or personality type. These are skills that can be developed and expanded over time—they are not innate or fixed. Successful leaders are interested in developing additional skills and are open to adapting their leadership style when necessary. To do so leaders need to take time to reflect on their actions, their perceptions and the ways in which they are reacting to challenges.

In essence, the principal's leadership style must strike a balance between being very firm about non-negotiables—clear expectations will be established so that all students and staff can do their work better, and the principal will relentlessly provide supports and follow up to ensure they are implemented—and demonstrating genuine engagement with others, humility, and relationship-building.

### **Belief-Based, Goal-Driven Leadership**

Strong leaders must have an unwavering belief in the ability of all children to achieve at high levels—they must inspire the staff with a sense of possibility and a concrete pathway to realize the school's vision. They must set ambitious, but achievable goals and keep them present for all members of the school community. Additionally, they hold themselves personally responsible for achieving the school goals.

### **Culturally Competent Leadership**

We recognize that leaders must consciously strive to create an inclusive environment. That begins with every leader developing an understanding of their individual biases and perceptions as well as the ways in which they are perceived by others. It includes actively addressing statements of bias, cultural incompetence and/or prejudice to ensure that the school is a safe and supportive place for all students.

### **Interpersonal Leadership**

To create change in a school a leader must be able to build strong and trusting relationships with multiple stakeholder groups. This includes the development of strong communication skills that are always respectful and that are tailored to meet the needs of various constituents.

### **Adaptive Leadership**

Leaders who are implementing changes in their schools must be able to support the staff, students, and families manage the emotions of change. The leader helps the school community live with discomfort as they change the culture and expectations in the school while maintaining a focus on the vision that the community has agreed upon.

### **Resilient Leadership**

Resilient leaders demonstrate resolve in the face of adversity and challenge; leaders must constantly look for solutions and be able to problem solve and identify creative solutions. Leaders must also reflect on their actions—they consciously use feedback and criticism to improve their leadership.



## PERSONAL LEADERSHIP CATEGORY MAP



### LEVER 1

#### **BELIEF-BASED, GOAL-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP**



*Leader consistently demonstrates belief in the potential of every student to achieve at high levels*



### LEVER 2

#### **CULTURALLY COMPETENT LEADERSHIP**



*Leader continuously dismantles inequitable and exclusionary practices and creates a fully inclusive environment where all children and adults thrive and learn at high levels*



### LEVER 3

#### **INTERPERSONAL LEADERSHIP**



*Leader builds trusting relationships and facilitates active communities of adults and students dedicated to reaching school goals*



### LEVER 4

#### **ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP**



*Leader mobilizes others to resolve challenges requiring changes in values, beliefs, assumptions, and/or habits of behavior*



### LEVER 5

#### **RESILIENT LEADERSHIP**



*Leader demonstrates self-awareness, ongoing learning, and resiliency in the service of continuous improvement*





© 2011 New Leaders Inc. All rights reserved.

30 West 26th Street | New York, NY 10010 | 646.792.1070 | [www.newleaders.org](http://www.newleaders.org)

Baltimore | California's Bay Area | Charlotte | Chicago | Jefferson Parish | Memphis | Milwaukee | Newark | New Orleans | New York City | Prince George's County | Washington, D.C.

New Leaders is a national nonprofit that develops transformational school leaders and promotes the system-level policies and practices that allow strong leaders to succeed. Founded in 2000, New Leaders provides leadership training in 12 urban areas: Bay Area (CA), Baltimore, Charlotte, Chicago, Memphis, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Jefferson Parish (LA), Newark, New York City, Prince George's County (MD), and Washington, D.C. Over the past 10 years, New Leaders has trained more than 700 school leaders who are raising student achievement and graduation rates in high-need schools across the country. Beyond its signature principal training program, New Leaders conducts leadership development with existing school and district administrators, and designs effective leadership policies and practices for school systems nationwide.

For more information, visit [www.newleaders.org](http://www.newleaders.org).