

**HELPING SCHOOL LEADERS DEVELOP THE
CAPACITY NECESSARY FOR CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT:**

McREL'S BALANCED LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK™

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INTRODUCTION

Efforts to understand the school improvement process and how it works to enhance students' academic achievement have flourished recently (Gamoran, 2003; Fullan, 2001; Wagner, 2002; Spillane & Seashore-Louis, 2002). The role of leadership also has been highly touted as necessary for improving schools for the benefit of all students (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2003; Cotton, 2003; Elmore, 2000; Donaldson, 2001). Yet, despite all we know about effective school improvement and leadership, sustainable school improvement is not happening in many schools (Elmore, 2000).

Although numerous characteristics of schools may contribute to this dilemma, one critical aspect may be how schools conceive of and engage in school improvement. In response to state and federal demands for higher achievement, many schools have undertaken numerous changes in an attempt to solve their student achievement problems. In many cases, however, schools have tried to improve achievement by importing the latest fads and programs or making structural changes that have had little impact on teaching and learning. As Elmore (2002) states:

The pathology of American schools is that they know how to change. They know how to change promiscuously and at the drop of a hat. What schools do not know how to do is to improve, to engage in sustained and continuous progress toward a performance goal over time. So the task is to develop practice around the notion of improvement. (p. 1)

Improvement in this sense means, among other things, using data to identify areas of student learning that need attention, understanding how students learn the knowledge or skills associated with that particular area of need, determining how to ensure that students' academic needs are met, monitoring school progress toward identified goals, and collectively learning from the actions taken. In contrast, many improvement efforts underestimate the school capacity that must be developed and the complexity of the change effort required for sustained progress.

The urgency associated with higher accountability requirements also forces principals to make frequent changes rather than focus on creating the optimal conditions for sustainable improvement. Principals frequently have to think in the short-term problem-solution paradigm rather than the long-term, capacity-building paradigm, which focuses on "creating emergent possibilities and leveraging those things that are working well" (Vogt, Brown, & Isaacs, 2003, p. 10). The literature on instructional leadership has suggested the need for a capacity-building paradigm, but little research has linked specific leadership actions with the organizational capacity necessary for sustainable school improvement.

The purpose of this monograph is to help make this connection clearer by describing the *Balanced Leadership Framework*TM developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). This framework shows how specific leadership responsibilities can be linked to areas of influence that are critical to continuous school improvement. To date, very little research has attempted to understand the effects of school leadership on student achievement mediated through factors like culture, improvement methods and strategies, or resources (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). As Hallinger and Heck (1996) note:

The review of research on principals reinforces the importance of beginning with theoretically informed models of leadership and how it influences school performance. If the impact of principal leadership is established through indirect means (e.g., school climate, school culture, instructional organization) we must advance our understanding of how such linkages are shaped by the principal. (p. 34)

In brief, McREL’s Balanced Leadership Framework™ assumes that for sustainable school improvement to be realized, school leaders, including principals and teacher-leaders, must better understand (1) the relationship between research-based leadership responsibilities and practices; (2) those areas of influence associated with sustainable school improvement including establishing a community of purpose; and (3) that change can vary dramatically in terms of its focus and magnitude (see Exhibit 1). The critical question for school leaders and leadership teams is, How can school leaders influence those components associated with sustainable school improvement in order to enhance student achievement? This monograph examines this question by first reviewing McREL’s latest research on leadership and the components of the Balanced Leadership Framework™.

Exhibit 1. McREL’s Balanced Leadership Framework



BACKGROUND ON LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

Since 1998, McREL has conducted a series of meta-analyses to determine which school, classroom, and leadership practices and student characteristics are empirically associated with increases in student achievement. McREL's most recent study involved a meta-analysis of more than 5,000 studies published over a 30-year period regarding the impact of principal leadership on student achievement (see Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). This meta-analysis was guided by the question, What can we learn from the research on leadership practices that are associated with increased levels of student achievement? Of the studies reviewed, only 70 met the following criteria for measures necessary to ensure comparability:

- Student achievement was considered the dependent variable as measured by a standardized, norm-referenced test or some other objective measure of student achievement.
- Teacher perceptions of leadership were considered the independent variable as measured by valid and reliable instrumentation.

Combined, these 70 studies involved 2,894 schools, approximately 1.1 million students, and more than 14,000 teachers. As a result of aggregating the results of these studies into a common metric, the overall sample size was increased and statistically significant findings emerged.

Relative to the leadership aspect of the Balanced Leadership Framework™, this meta-analysis resulted in two significant findings. First, principal leadership matters; the findings suggest that school leaders have a statistically significant effect on student achievement. This finding suggests an overall average effect size for leadership of .25 (expressed as a correlation), which translates into an average 10 percentile-point gain in student achievement on a norm-referenced test.

Second, 66 leadership practices were identified that correlate with increases in student achievement. These 66 practices have been organized around 21 leadership responsibilities. These leadership responsibilities and practices, and their respective average effect sizes, are reported in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2. Principal Leadership Responsibilities, Average *r*, and Associated Practices

Responsibilities	Avg. <i>r</i>	Practices Associated with Responsibilities
Affirmation	.25	Systematically and fairly recognizes and celebrates accomplishments of teachers and staff Systematically and fairly recognizes and celebrates accomplishments of students Systematically and fairly acknowledges failures and celebrates accomplishments of the school
Change agent	.30	Consciously challenges the status quo Is comfortable leading change initiatives with uncertain outcomes Systematically considers new and better ways of doing things
Communication	.23	Is easily accessible to teachers and staff Develops effective means for teachers and staff to communicate with one another Maintains open and effective lines of communication with teachers and staff
Contingent rewards	.15	Recognizes individuals who excel Uses performance vs. seniority as the primary criterion for reward and advancement Uses hard work and results as the basis for reward and recognition
Culture	.29	Promotes cooperation among teachers and staff Promotes a sense of well-being Promotes cohesion among teachers and staff Develops an understanding of purpose Develops a shared vision of what the school could be like
Curriculum, instruction, assessment	.16	Is involved with teachers in designing curricular activities and addressing instructional issues in their classrooms Is involved with teachers to address assessment issues
Discipline	.24	Protects instructional time from interruptions Protects/shelters teachers from distractions
Flexibility	.22	Is comfortable with major changes in how things are done Encourages people to express opinions that may be contrary to those held by individuals in positions of authority Adapts leadership style to needs of specific situations Can be directive or non-directive as the situation warrants
Focus	.24	Establishes high, concrete goals and the expectation that all students will meet them Establishes high, concrete goals for all curricula, instruction, and assessment Establishes high, concrete goals for the general functioning of the school Keeps everyone's attention focused on established goals
Ideals/beliefs	.25	Holds strong professional ideals and beliefs about schooling, teaching, and learning Shares ideals and beliefs about schooling, teaching, and learning with teachers, staff, and parents Demonstrates behaviors that are consistent with ideals and beliefs
Input	.30	Provides opportunities for input from teachers and staff on all important decisions Provides opportunities for teachers and staff to be involved in policy development Involves the school leadership team in decision making
Intellectual stimulation	.32	Stays informed about current research and theory regarding effective schooling Continually exposes teachers and staff to cutting-edge ideas about how to be effective Systematically engages teachers and staff in discussions about current research and theory Continually involves teachers and staff in reading articles and books about effective practices

Responsibilities	Avg. <i>r</i>	Practices Associated with Responsibilities
Knowledge of curriculum, instruction assessment	.24	Is knowledgeable about the curriculum and instructional practices Is knowledgeable about assessment practices Provides conceptual guidance for teachers regarding effective classroom practice
Monitors/evaluates	.28	Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the curriculum Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of instruction Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of assessment
Optimizer	.20	Inspires teachers and staff to accomplish things that might seem beyond their grasp Portrays a positive attitude about the ability of teachers and staff to accomplish substantial things Is a driving force behind major initiatives
Order	.26	Provides and enforces clear structures, rules, and procedures for teachers, staff, and students Establishes routines regarding the running of the school that teachers and staff understand and follow
Outreach	.28	Ensures that the school is in compliance with district and state mandates Advocates on behalf of the school in the community Interacts with parents in ways that enhance their support for the school Ensures that the central office is aware of the school's accomplishments
Relationship	.19	Remains aware of personal needs of teachers and staff Maintains personal relationships with teachers and staff Is informed about significant personal issues in the lives of teachers and staff Acknowledges significant events in the lives of teachers and staff
Resources	.26	Ensures that teachers and staff have necessary materials and equipment Ensures that teachers have necessary professional development opportunities that directly enhance their teaching
Situational awareness	.33	Is aware of informal groups and relationships among teachers and staff Is aware of issues in the school that have not surfaced but could create discord Can predict what could go wrong from day to day
Visibility	.16	Makes systematic and frequent visits to classrooms Is highly visible around the school Has frequent contact with students

Note: The *r* correlations reported in this table were derived from McREL's leadership meta-analysis. For more information, see *Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells Us About the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement*, 2003, by T. Waters, R. J. Marzano, and B. McNulty. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

COMPONENTS OF THE BALANCED LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK™ FOR SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Although principals can have a positive impact on student achievement, McREL's leadership study also established a third significant finding: leaders also can have a marginal or, worse, a negative impact on achievement, which we call the "differential impact" of leadership. Other works by McREL (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; McNulty & Bailey, 2004) attribute this differential impact to misunderstanding the magnitude of change associated with an initiative to improve student achievement or choosing the wrong focus for an improvement initiative. These two aspects of change — focus and magnitude — coupled with the importance of establishing a

purposeful community, reflect those areas that we believe, if led correctly, can help ensure that school improvement is sustained.

For sustainable school improvement, understanding how each of these components of our leadership model interacts to help raise levels of student achievement is critical. Since the findings of the meta-analysis suggest a correlation or an indirect effect between principals and student achievement, our framework suggests that the impact of school leadership is mediated through a school's community. We believe that the environment, conditions, and capacity of a school to engage in necessary changes can be influenced by leadership. McREL's framework also suggests that the impact of school leadership can be mediated by those school or classroom practices that are chosen as the focus for a school's improvement efforts and how well leaders anticipate and deal with the change process and implications for stakeholders.

Why link leadership responsibilities and practices to these other components of the model? We recognized early in our research that understanding how to use the research-based leadership practices would necessitate contextual knowledge associated with change. McREL's finding about the differential impact of leadership suggests that understanding the complexity of change could be one of those indirect means by which a school leader influences school performance. In McREL's framework, change broadly encapsulates not only the choice of improvement efforts but also phases of change necessary for improving schools and the capacity of a school community to take on change. We recognized that each of these areas is inherent in the school improvement process; we also recognized that *how* these areas are led is a key factor in the success of a school improvement effort. By organizing our framework around those areas that can and do influence change related to sustainable school improvement, we can better help leaders know when to use specific research-based practices.

To help practitioners understand the relationship between the leadership responsibilities and practices, we first distilled from the literature those characteristics or actions associated with the three components of our framework: purposeful community, focus of change, and magnitude of change. We then used a domain analysis technique (Spradley, 1980) in which individuals with school leadership experience assigned responsibilities and practices to each component and then validated their assignment through rigorous discourse about the responsibility and practice, related research theories, and collective professional wisdom.

Each component of the Balanced Leadership Framework™ is discussed in more depth in the following sections. Each section reviews the relevant research literature, describes the characteristics or actions associated with the component, and reviews the associated leadership responsibilities and practices that, if fulfilled, help to develop the characteristics or actions related to the component.

COMPONENT 1: PURPOSEFUL COMMUNITY

Schools traditionally have been structured as hierarchical systems that support efficiency and order. According to Elmore (2000), the legacy left by this system is the perception that teaching requires no expertise. In addition, in schools that are run solely as bureaucracies there is a disconnect between classroom instruction and leadership. Teacher isolation is pervasive and instruction is a teacher's private practice, not an organizational concern. Importantly, the

hierarchical system of schools supports work and change that is technical, meaning that only minor modifications to the way things are currently done are made. Today's schools, however, must adapt to changes required in a postmodern society marked by increased accountability and rapid change. To respond to these new demands, schools must be organized differently. Specifically, schools must develop a purposeful community.

Purposeful Community is one of the three components associated with McREL's Balanced Leadership Framework™ and, as Exhibit 1 provides the context in which change occurs, acting as the primary mediator for change. A purposeful community goes beyond traditional modes of thinking about school improvement; its inclusion in McREL's framework suggests that understanding the role of community and common purpose is critical for sustainable school improvement. In McREL's framework, Purposeful Community is defined as *a community with the collective efficacy and capability to develop and use assets to accomplish purposes and produce outcomes that matter to all community members — and to accomplish these through agreed-upon processes*. School leaders must reorganize the system around agreed-upon processes and outcomes that focus improvement efforts and inform ongoing improvement. In contrast, given the frequency of changes, schools have had very little success with sustained improvement efforts. Though schools do engage in change, they typically do not enjoy long-term success. Much of this change-without-improvement paradigm can be attributed to a lack of capacity to first create and then work within a purposeful community to accomplish agreed-upon outcomes.

A number of education researchers have examined concepts that are consistent with this component. For example, the phrase *professional learning communities* is frequently used in the literature. Professional learning communities are thought to have shared values (Hord, 1997; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; DuFour & Eaker, 1998) shared vision (Hord, 1997; DuFour & Eaker, 1998), and shared leadership (Hord, 1997). Professional learning communities are characterized as collaborative (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Bryk, Camburn, & Seashore-Louis, 1999; Louis et al., 1996) with an emphasis on deprivatizing practice (Hord, 1997; Louis et al., 1996; Bryk et al., 1999; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Further, the concept of professional learning communities espouses learning for both students and adults (Hord, 1997; Louis et al., 1996; Bryk et al., 1999) because learning for everyone is necessary for continuous improvement.

When schools are structured to facilitate teacher collaboration and expanded leadership roles, teachers' efficacy and ability to meet students' needs increases (Rosenholtz, 1989). Shared decision making is a key factor in reforming curricula and transforming the work of teachers, according to Darling-Hammond (1996) who calls for structured collaborative time during which teachers focus on teaching and learning issues. In a review of the research on professional learning communities, Hord (1997) summarizes the benefits for staff and students of establishing such a community. Among other benefits, teacher isolation is replaced with shared responsibility for student success. This collective responsibility can enhance the teaching and learning process and, ultimately, lead to improved student achievement.

The research on the characteristics of professional communities helps educators understand the need to work collaboratively. However, Little (1990) reminds us that collegiality alone is not sufficient to ensure increased student achievement. Supovitz (2002) agrees. He found that although organizational reforms such as establishing professional learning communities can have

a positive effect on school culture, such communities by definition are not sufficient for improving instruction and student learning. That is, educators can work together in ways that do not make a significant difference in student learning. McREL believes that the elements often missing from professional learning communities include *purpose, connections, and distributed leadership*.

Associated Leadership Responsibilities and Practices

To develop a purposeful community requires certain conditions or characteristics. When these conditions or characteristics have been developed in a school community, school leaders are better able to focus change efforts and lead change processes necessary to produce the outcomes that matter to the community. A number of the leadership responsibilities and practices identified in McREL’s meta-analytic study of principal leadership are associated with establishing a purposeful community. As shown in Exhibit 3, these responsibilities include Culture, Ideals and Beliefs, Communication, Visibility, Input, Relationships, Situational Awareness, and Affirmation. To successfully develop a Purposeful Community, schools must create these necessary conditions and leaders must fulfill these responsibilities and engage in the practices associated with them.

Exhibit 3. Leadership Practices/Responsibilities Associated with Characteristics of a Purposeful Community

Leadership Responsibilities Used to Develop these Characteristics	Characteristics of a Purposeful Community
<p>Culture – the extent to which the principal fosters beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation</p> <p>Ideals and Beliefs – the extent to which the principal communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling</p>	<p>There is consensus on reasons for working together.</p>
<p>Communication – the extent to which the principal establishes strong lines of communication with teachers, staff and among students</p> <p>Visibility – the extent to which the principal has quality contact and interactions with teachers, staff and students</p>	<p>There are critical connections among key members of the community.</p>
<p>Input – the extent to which the principal involves teachers and staff in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies</p>	<p>Leadership is a shared responsibility and is widely distributed throughout the community.</p>
<p>Relationships – the extent to which the principal demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff</p> <p>Situational Awareness – the extent to which the principal is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address problems</p>	<p>There is consensus on ways of working together.</p>
<p>Affirmation – the extent to which the principal recognizes and celebrates school accomplishments and acknowledges failures</p>	<p>Attention is given to building on strengths in addition to addressing weaknesses.</p>

COMPONENT 2: FOCUS ON RESEARCH-BASED PRACTICES

As previously discussed, the findings from McREL’s meta-analysis on leadership suggest that there is a differential impact of leadership; in some schools, leaders were rated as strong by teachers but student achievement was below average or decreasing. Focusing on research-based practices for school improvement is a component in the Balanced Leadership Framework™ that helps explain this “differential impact” of leadership. A previous meta-analysis conducted by McREL (Marzano, 2000) identified a number of school practices, teacher practices, and student characteristics that influence student achievement. We assert that these research-based factors should be a primary focus of improvement efforts.

In a traditional approach to school improvement, often the process of choosing the right focus for change and supporting implementation is not thoughtful enough to address root issues, instructional philosophy, or the availability of resources. Even when the right practices are selected, implementation is often flawed and idiosyncratic because school leaders do not understand which responsibilities and practices are necessary to support implementation. Thus, part of the process of focusing on research-based practices should include interacting with the purposeful community and setting the expectation that implementation of the selected practices will be a coherent and school-wide effort.

Focusing on research-based practices, one of three components critical for sustained school improvement, is described as *the intentional, disciplined, and skillful use of the research-based practices most likely to improve organizational and individual performance*. Leaders who focus on research-based practices will be more successful in identifying root causes of achievement challenges, focusing the school on those school and classroom practices correlated with student achievement, and aligning necessary resources with school improvement efforts and goals.

Associated Leadership Responsibilities and Practices

As identified in McREL’s leadership meta-analysis, seven of the responsibilities linked to student achievement are associated with schools in which there is a focus on research-based improvement practices: Resources, Involvement with Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Focus, Outreach, Order, Discipline, and Contingent Rewards. Exhibit 4 shows the relationship between these responsibilities and the characteristics of a school using research-based practices to improve student achievement.

Exhibit 4. Leadership Practices/Responsibilities Associated with a Purposeful Community Focused on Research-based Practices

Leadership Responsibilities Used to Develop These Characteristics	Characteristics of a Purposeful Community Focused on Research-Based Practices
Resources – the extent to which the principal provides teachers with the materials and professional development necessary for successful execution of their jobs	Teachers use research-based instructional strategies.
Involvement with Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment – the extent to which the principal is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction and assessment	There is agreement on a guaranteed and viable curriculum and what should be included in the curriculum
Focus – the extent to which the principal establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school’s attention	Challenging goals are set for the school as a whole as well for individual teachers and students
Outreach – the extent to which the principal is an advocate and spokesperson for the school with all stakeholders	Parents and community are involved in the school.
Order – the extent to which the principal establishes a set of operating procedures and routines Discipline – the extent to which the principal protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus	There is a safe and orderly environment.
Contingent Rewards – the extent to which the principal recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments	There is a high level of collegiality and professionalism.

COMPONENT 3: MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE

A second explanation for the finding that leaders can positively or negatively impact student achievement is related to the *magnitude of change*, which includes understanding the implications of change for all stakeholders, and understanding the importance of leadership during change. McREL differentiates change as having either first-order or second-order implications for stakeholders. Changes with second-order implications are those changes for individuals, groups, or organizations that are inconsistent with current paradigms, values, and norms. Thus, these changes often require an extensive amount of relearning. In addition, there is usually not agreement about the problems and solutions associated with changes that have second-order implications. School leaders who fail to understand the different implications of change or how to manage the impact of change on individuals and the school as a whole can negatively influence student achievement.

To meet the demands of higher accountability and increased student achievement, many of the changes that low-performing schools will undertake will likely have second-order implications for most stakeholders. Understanding the potential magnitude of change for various stakeholders

and effectively leading change are essential components of the Balanced Leadership Framework™ because of the critical role change will play in leaving no children behind. In the Balanced Leadership Framework™, magnitude of change is defined as *planning and implementing change initiatives while attending to the different ways in which change impacts individuals, groups, and the organization*. Unlike the other components of the framework, Magnitude of Change is more focused on the stages of the change process, especially those with second-order implications. These stages include creating a demand for change, managing personal transitions, and monitoring and evaluating implementation. Each of these stages is briefly explored below.

Creating Demand for Change

To create demand for change, leaders must help others realize that changes of a technical nature may not be sufficient to bring more students to higher levels of learning, nor will the current ways that schools engage in change lead to continuous or significant improvement. In essence, leaders must help others realize (1) when a need or challenge requiring adaptive changes with second-order implications exists, (2) the reasons for urgently addressing this need or adaptive challenge, and (3) that addressing this need or adaptive challenge *will* almost certainly create disequilibrium.

The notion that addressing challenges with second-order implications will create disequilibrium is where this stage of change becomes uncomfortable for many leaders. Pascale, Millemann, and Gioja (2000) note the importance of disequilibrium in promoting fundamental changes in social systems, and in *Intentional Revolutions*, Nevis, Lancourt, and Vassalo (1996) make the point that living in disequilibrium is difficult for many people, but that meaningful change depends upon this state of sustained tension:

Most change grows out of a general dissatisfaction with the current state of being, and because of the pervasive desire to reduce ambiguity, there is usually significant pressure to develop a clear plan for what all the changes need to be. However, the initial goal in transformational change is to raise the awareness of others so they reach the same level of dissatisfaction with the status quo felt by the leadership. The message, then, must paint a powerful picture of what is happening rather than spell out fully developed, clear plans for action. (p. 84)

In addition, Clarke (1998) offers that our commonsense point of view is that harmony and consensus are needed for successful change, but for deep and fundamental change to occur, leaders, at times, have to appropriately create disequilibrium.

Managing Personal Transitions

Because so much of the relevant literature suggests that change is about how individuals make sense of and react to the perceived implications of change, managing personal transitions becomes a critical stage of change that school leaders must understand. As Nevis et al. (1996) state, effective organizations and their leaders do not experience fewer problems with change, they just deal with them differently. This stage of change includes (1) understanding the meaning and implications of the change for all involved, (2) understanding various forms of transitions

people experience, and (3) aligning ongoing learning and support to help people continually make sense of the change. Leaders must become comfortable with managing multiple beliefs, norms, expectations, and assumptions surrounding the change (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

In times of stability, there is less need to be concerned about transitions; but when organizations are asked to transform themselves, leaders must understand the nature of change and its dynamic complexity. Fullan (1993), for instance, alludes to the unknowable aspects of change and the fallacy of trying to design tight controls on the change process. Instead, he suggests that leaders learn to think of ways to deal with an inherently unpredictable process. He also advocates against formal strategic planning at the onset of complex change processes; he views strategic planning as a flexible tool throughout a change process. Fullan also discusses the idea that groups need to understand change as having dynamic complexity, “when cause and effect are not close in time and space and obvious interventions do not produce expected outcomes because other unplanned factors dynamically interfere” (p. 365). Similarly, Heifetz (1994) discusses the inevitability of conflict in change given the competition over values associated with adaptive change.

School leaders also need to understand the importance of helping others manage the uncertainty and sense of instability that can arise during change with second-order implications. Because change with second-order implications frequently challenges long-held values and beliefs, many authors have examined the critical strategy of managing personal transitions.

This suggests that leaders need to help people understand the transitions they may be experiencing and help them improve their performance around the involved change. For instance, in a study of “stuck” versus “moving” schools, Rosenholtz (1989) found that principals’ collegiality with staff affected school performance when it was connected to activities focused on the school’s purposes. Rosenholtz also found that the ongoing and continual learning of teachers from one another helped them through multiple transitions. Fullan (2001), too, alludes to the influence of change on people’s values and beliefs and suggests that effective leadership means surfacing and reconciling the discord. Silins, Mulford, and Zarins (2002) also found that one factor that influenced a school’s success was the extent to which principals continually encouraged staff to reflect on efforts to change practice and analyze areas of need for students. Similarly, Frykholm (2004) developed a typology of discomforts teachers experience when implementing new math reforms; he suggests that how these discomforts are managed by leaders can help or hinder teachers’ sense of efficacy around reforms.

Monitoring and Evaluating Implementation

Monitoring and evaluating implementation is the final stage of the change process. This stage deals with the real-time access to and use of all relevant data on the needs and performance of individuals, groups, and the organization. Specifically, this stage of change focuses on (1) affirming the successful work and improvement efforts of the school by clarifying *leading and lagging indicators*, (2) using incentives to reinforce the priorities and preferred outcomes of the school, and (3) connecting the organization internally and externally so that data and information can be collected and used for continuous improvement.

Schools as organizations of the 21st century have become much more focused on the use of data to pinpoint areas of need and to gauge the success of their students. Much like businesses in the

1980s that learned the powerful ways in which data and information can guide decision making, schools have learned to use assessment data to gauge the progress of their students, reduce achievement gaps, and track annual yearly progress. While data of all types are valuable, most of the work on data-driven decision making has been focused on the use of student assessment data. Lack of understanding of other forms of data and information may prevent the development of appropriate just-in-time responses to student, staff, school, or community needs. In addition, schools often fail to adequately use that information to acknowledge people, reinforce new behaviors, and provide feedback to the system as a whole.

The need for leaders to understand why and how to lead during this evaluation stage is supported by numerous authors including Leithwood and Aitken (1995) who discuss the need for a variety of educational indicators to determine the performance or health of a school. In contrast, monitoring systems are a framework within which to select or define, interpret, and use a wide variety of indicators. “The central distinction between a system of indicators and a monitoring system,” Leithwood and Aitken assert, “is the latter’s requirement that regularly collected information be translated into courses of action” (p. 7).

Similarly, a study of successful schools and districts found that effective monitoring largely depends on principals’ ability to analyze instruction and give appropriate feedback by engaging the whole school in understanding quality teaching and learning (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). This study also found that successful districts had developed systematic processes for giving and receiving feedback on district and school indicators to influence teacher practice and student achievement. Similarly, in an analysis of districts that had made significant gains in student achievement, Togneri (2003) found that these districts had (1) developed indicator systems focused on more than a single test score, (2) provided training for principals in how to use the data afforded by the indicator system, (3) provided training on how to monitor and observe instructional practice, and (4) provided training on ways principals could use this information to provide instructional feedback to the school as a whole.

Associated Leadership Responsibilities and Practices

As noted earlier, McREL’s leadership meta-analysis identified leadership responsibilities and practices that are correlated with increased student achievement. Through a follow-up survey and factor analysis, an empirical basis exists for identifying which responsibilities support the process of initiating, implementing, and sustaining changes with second-order implications. In McREL’s factor analysis, all 21 responsibilities loaded onto first-order change indicators; this suggests that a principal should attend to all 21 responsibilities while leading changes that are technical in nature. However, seven responsibilities were found to be associated with second-order change indicators: Ideals and Beliefs, Optimizer, Flexibility, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Intellectual Stimulation, Change Agent, and Monitor and Evaluate. Note that Ideals and Beliefs are also associated with the Purposeful Community component because this responsibility greatly influences the purpose of a community.

Exhibit 5 shows the relationship between the other six leadership responsibilities and the stages of the process necessary to initiate, implement, and sustain change with second-order implications. In order to initiate and sustain change with second-order implications, we assert that school leaders need to fulfill particular responsibilities especially well. For example, in order

to effectively manage the personal transitions that can occur for teachers and staff during second-order change, school leaders need to be comfortable with dissenting opinions and skilled in adapting their behavior to the needs of the current situation.

Exhibit 5. Leadership Practices and Responsibilities Associated with Stages of the Change Process

Leadership Responsibilities and Practices	Stages of the Change Process
<p>Intellectual stimulation – extent to which the principal ensures teachers and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school’s culture</p> <p>Change agent – extent to which the principal is willing to and actively challenges the status quo</p> <p>Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment- extent to which the principal is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction and assessment</p>	<p>Creating demand for change</p>
<p>Flexibility – extent to which the principal adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent</p> <p>Optimizer – extent to which the principal inspires and leads new and challenging innovations</p>	<p>Managing personal transitions</p>
<p>Monitor and evaluate – extent to which the principal monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning</p>	<p>Monitoring and evaluating implementation</p>

CONCLUSION

McREL’s meta-analytic study on leadership uncovered three significant findings about principal leadership: (1) Principal leadership matters; (2) a total of 21 leadership responsibilities and 66 associated practices are correlated with student achievement; and (3) strong leaders do not always have a positive influence on schools or on student achievement. McREL’s explanation for this observation is that leaders can negatively influence student achievement when they identify and focus on the wrong school and/or classroom practices, or when they miscalculate the magnitude of the change they are attempting to implement. We assert that understanding the relationships among the research-based leadership responsibilities and practices, and components of the Balanced Leadership Framework™ is necessary for sustainable school improvement. A subsequent survey and factor analysis of results gave the framework another empirical basis for advising principals on those responsibilities that should be attended to during changes with second-order implications.

The components of the Balanced Leadership Framework™ ground the leadership responsibilities and practices in school improvement. By attending to these responsibilities, leaders help to create

the characteristics of a purposeful community, ensure that there is a focus on research-based improvement practices, clarify the implications of change for all stakeholders, and understand the importance of leadership during change. In the coming year, McREL will continue to add depth and clarity to the Balanced Leadership Framework™ through the design of specific strategies and tools that will help school leaders better understand the application of the leadership responsibilities and components of this framework. We believe that sustainable school improvement is possible, and that this framework provides the necessary integration of leadership, community, research-based practices, and change management to help this happen.

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