



Voices from the States

Setting Priorities and Determining Improvement Strategies Tool

The starting point of this tool is a set of Quality Assessment Statements developed by the Reform Support Network to define more clearly the seven policy and practice levers considered most powerful in building leadership for rigorous instruction:

- Instructional Leadership Competencies
- Preparation
- Licensure
- Performance Management
 - Evaluation
 - Professional Development
 - Career Pathways
 - Systems and Structures

A few States reviewed and edited these statements as they began using the tool. Regarding Preparation, States wanted to make clear that a system to provide sufficient numbers of leaders should be in place. States differed on whether an emphasis should be made on struggling schools, which some argued have the greatest need for and

hardest task in attracting well prepared leaders. Regarding Licensure, States argued that quality required avenues for non-administrator leaders such as instructional coaches to be licensed and that licensure standards needed to reflect competencies shifting over time in a leader's development. Regarding Professional Development, States wanted to make clear that professional development should be both research based and job embedded. Regarding Career Pathways, States noted that quality included compensation for additional responsibilities. Regarding Systems and Structures, States indicated that stakeholder engagement and capacity building are important aims that extend beyond support and monitoring of instruction.

The first goal of this tool is to help States determine their priorities in using the policy and practice levers set out. In using the tool, Race to the Top States exhibited clear trends in the levers they sought to pull based on their assessments of current status, urgency and impact of each lever. Evaluation and Professional Development, which need close alignment to have greatest impact, ranked first on most States' lists and appeared among the three priorities for most when they were not the top choice. Preparation and Instructional Leadership Definition were the top priorities identified by the other States.

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The Reform Support Network, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, supports the Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other, and build their capacity to sustain these reforms, while sharing these promising practices and lessons learned with other States attempting to implement similarly bold education reform initiatives.