CURIOSITY WORKS

A GUIDEBOOK for Moving Your School from Improvement to Innovation

Bryan **GOODWIN**

Kristin **ROULEAU**

Dale **LEWIS**

McREL INTERNATIONAL

About McREL

McREL International helps educators flourish by turning research into solutions that transform teaching, learning, and leading.

McREL is a nonprofit, nonpartisan education research and development organization that since 1966 has turned knowledge about what works in education into practical, effective guidance and training for teachers and education leaders across the U.S. and around the world.

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Introduction

What if all our students came to school eager to learn, self-motivated, and passionate about what they were learning? What if they were, in a word, *curious*?

Wouldn't everything be easier . . . and more joyful?

Student curiosity is a powerful driver of both student success and engagement. It also predicts better relationships, life fulfillment, and job performance (Kashdan & Roberts, 2004; Kashdan & Steger, 2007; Reio & Wiswell, 2000).

So, what would it take for us to create learning environments that unleash student curiosity?

We could begin by unleashing *educators'* professional curiosity, encouraging them to ask questions, build on best practices, and develop *next* practices that create more engaging learning experiences for students. We'd also tap into a yearning most of us feel as professionals: the need to not just survive, but *thrive* in what we do—continuously improving, learning and growing every day, and sharing those learning experiences with other educators in small, learning-focused groups.

That's the assumption at the heart of this guidebook: that the most powerful changes we can make in our schools must come from the *inside out,* from the natural curiosity and intrinsic motivation that everyone shares to experience the joy of learning, discovery, and improvement.

If you're seeking a simple fix for your school or a "silver bullet" to transform your school overnight, you won't find it here (or anywhere for that matter).

What you'll find here, instead, is a way to move *your* school forward, whether it's struggling, cruising, or excelling. Yes, this guidebook will help you find some "quick wins" for achieving short-term gains, but more important, it will help you chart a course to *innovation*: putting the right elements in place to design and build a school where teachers operate as true professionals, developing *precision without prescription*—improving practices not with scripted, one-size-fits-all programs, but rather by supporting teachers in becoming experts who can diagnose and solve student learning challenges and create personalized learning environments that challenge students and allow curiosity to flourish.

The Approach

Over the past 20 years, school improvement and reform efforts have increasingly been driven by top-down, high-stakes accountability systems that are designed to motivate performance by rewarding and penalizing schools based largely on students' performance on standardized achievement tests.

In places, this approach has lifted the overall achievement of students and narrowed the gaps in performance among various student sub-groups (Reardon, Robinson-Cimpian, & Weathers, 2014) and appears to have improved graduation rates (Kamenetz & Turner, 2016). Yet despite some positive outcomes, in state after state and district after district, top-down approaches to improving schools and districts have experienced a plateau effect, producing diminishing returns (Goodwin, Cameron, & Hein, 2015).

What is needed now, at least in schools experiencing these plateaus, is a paradigm shift in our thinking and approach to improvement, one that pivots toward expertise and innovation and emphasizes internally driven accountability and curiosity.

We've seen the power of taking inside-out approaches to improvement while working with schools and school systems from around the nation and the world—including small rural schools in South Dakota, mid-sized districts in Nebraska and Tennessee, rapidly improving systems in the Pacific, and a large urban system in Australia that faced similar challenges, societal changes, and student needs as those in the United States. In the large, diverse Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne, with 70,000-plus students, McREL's Curiosity Works™ approach to school improvement and innovation has been generating gains in student learning, engagement, and teacher practice by stimulating curiosity and supporting collaborative inquiry.

This guidebook describes how you, too, can promote curiosity and a culture of collaboration for teaching, learning, and leading to re-energize your school.

The Knowledge Base

The Curiosity Works approach is built on a solid foundation of research and best practice, including McREL's research over the past two decades on effective school systems, schools, leadership, and instruction, as reported in such books as:

- *School Leadership That Works: From Research to Results* (2001)

- *District Leadership That Works: Striking the Right Balance* (2009)

- *Simply Better: Doing What Matters Most to Change the Odds for Student Success* (2011)

- *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*, 2nd ed. (2012)

- *The 12 Touchstones of Good Teaching: A Checklist for Staying Focused Every Day* (2013)

- *Balanced Leadership for Powerful Learning: Tools for Achieving Success in Your School* (2015)

On a more practical level, it's also built on what we have learned from our work nationally and internationally to engage school communities in a rigorous process of improvement and innovation at the classroom, leadership, and system levels. In Melbourne, for example, focusing on curiosity and inside-out approaches to change raised both the floor and the ceiling for students in a large system with a history of chronic low performance (Hopkins, 2011). And in the 35,000-student Clarksville-Montgomery County School System, the

"plain vanilla" reform of focusing on creating more consistency in teaching and student learning experiences resulted in the highest student growth rate of any district in Tennessee.

Students, as might be expected, were the first to notice changes in the practice of their teachers in Melbourne. Both during and following the initial four years of implementation of a Curiosity Works approach, annual student surveys regarding perceptions of teacher effectiveness showed that students in every grade level measured (grades 5–12) perceived their teachers' effectiveness to be increasing, rating their teachers at or better than the average for teachers across the state of Victoria.

At the heart of this book is what we believe to be a profound insight about school improvement and change gleaned from examining what happens when school systems worldwide transform, as well as how "high-reliability" organizations (HRO) in such fields as aviation and wildland fire-fighting strive to deliver perfect performance every day because lives depend on it. It's this: While local context often varies from school to school, the pathways to improvement—the things schools must do to move from low-performing to high-performing to innovative—look remarkably similar, following predictable stages of improvement that require different approaches to leadership and professional learning.

> **What's an *HRO*?**
>
> A high-reliability organization (HRO) has routine procedures in place that reduce the chances of catastrophes, even in complex, high-risk businesses where accidents can be expected. Some common HRO principles that schools can use include monitoring and assessing everyday processes and outcomes; anticipating and remediating potential complications before they happen; training staff often on routines and best practices; and encouraging a resilient mindset when facing obstacles and change.

Changing from the Inside Out

This guidebook is not a one-size-fits-all approach to improvement, but a practical, research-based road map to guide you on your journey. We have designed it to help school leadership teams make the pivot from top-down, *outside-in* improvement to school-owned (and even teacher-owned), *inside-out* innovation that's required as school teams move toward greater professional expertise and innovation.

We cannot make external accountability pressures go away—nor should we, as they often provide an initial spark to encourage better practice. But we can change how we *respond* to those pressures as school leaders and leadership teams. This guidebook is designed to help school leadership teams engage everyone in their schools in a different approach to improvement and innovation—one that taps into people's intrinsic motivation, including their natural curiosity to learn and innate desire to achieve what the 20th-century American psychologist Abraham Maslow (1943) described as *self-actualization*. In our own research and experience, we've found this to be a more powerful, productive, and joyful approach to change in schools—one that can address near-term improvement needs (i.e., "quick wins") while at the same time creating the structures, dispositions, and skills needed to engage in

game-changing, rapid-cycle innovation. The result? Schools where students are inspired by what may be the most powerful driver of learning: *curiosity*.

Briefly, an inside-out approach reflects these guiding principles:

1. **Create shared moral purpose.** Instead of using a "because-I-said-so" rationale, we start with a deep conversation and reflection among stakeholders in a school about *why*, getting everyone on the same page and committing to shared purpose for education.

2. **Start with motivation, engagement, and curiosity**. Rather than create a system that revolves around test scores and grades, we start with student *and teacher* motivation and engagement, tapping into the power of curiosity.

3. **Build on bright spots**. Because the best answers often lie within "positive deviants" or "bright spots" in our current practices, we seek out these bright spots in classrooms and find ways to leverage what's already working more broadly and consistently.

4. **Lead with questions**. Real solutions come from better insights, which means school leaders and teachers must ask powerful questions about teaching and learning to help everyone engage in root cause analysis and reflective learning.

5. **Support change with peer coaching**. To truly change practice, we must engage in peer coaching. This means teachers working together in small teams to hone best practices identified from bright spots in the system. Or they may create their own bright spots through collaborative study and practice.

6. **Adopt and *adapt* in rapid cycles**. Because *threat* conditions are counterproductive, we instead need to create conditions that *challenge* and encourage people to "fail forward" in rapid improvement cycles that drive greater precision of teaching practice.

7. **Reframe the goal and fail forward**. What we measure is what gets done, so we must use more robust measures for student learning and success as we encourage people to "fail fast" and "fail forward"—using data to learn what's working and what's not to guide rapid-cycle improvement and innovation.

> ### What's a *rapid improvement cycle*?
>
> An organization using a rapid improvement cycle identifies, implements, and measures changes to a process or system over the course of just a few days, weeks, or months, rather than waiting for an entire semester or school year to pass. Often, rapid improvement cycle efforts follow a Plan-Do-Study-Act format.
>
> ### What's *failing forward*?
>
> Failing forward is a mindset of viewing struggles and failures not as summative events, but as an expected, natural part of the learning process. When students (and educators themselves) view failure as a formative moment, or an opportunity, they can then use the "failed" outcome to reflect on what happened, explore the lessons learned, and plan new pathways forward. A fail-forward attitude strengthens resiliency and perseverance when tackling challenges, and creates an environment in which students are comfortable taking academic risks and using feedback.

Creating a Research and Innovation Team (RIT)

We've written this guidebook for school leadership (or instructional leadership) teams—something we'll refer to throughout as a *Research and Innovation Team* (RIT). The RIT should play a central role in your school's inside-out improvement and innovation journey. It will serve as the "research and development" group responsible for monitoring and supporting the day-to-day improvement and innovation work in your school.

The RIT should be an instrumental force in guiding every aspect of your journey: determining readiness, assessing and facilitating the conditions for change, establishing a focus, engaging in collaborative inquiry, and monitoring and supporting the development of a culture of inquiry.

The Importance of Shared Leadership

A key assumption through this guidebook is that leadership is most effective when it's *shared*.

A growing body of research indicates that developing shared leadership leads to increased positive outcomes for individuals and teams. Although scholars first began writing about the concept of shared leadership in the 1950s, few empirical studies on the topic emerged in the literature until recently. These studies (Carson, Tesluck, & Marrone, 2007; Nicolaides et al., 2014; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Zhang, Waldman, & Wang, 2012) demonstrate positive relationships between shared leadership and increased team efficacy, effort, collaboration and coordination, innovative problem solving, satisfaction, citizenship behavior, and performance.

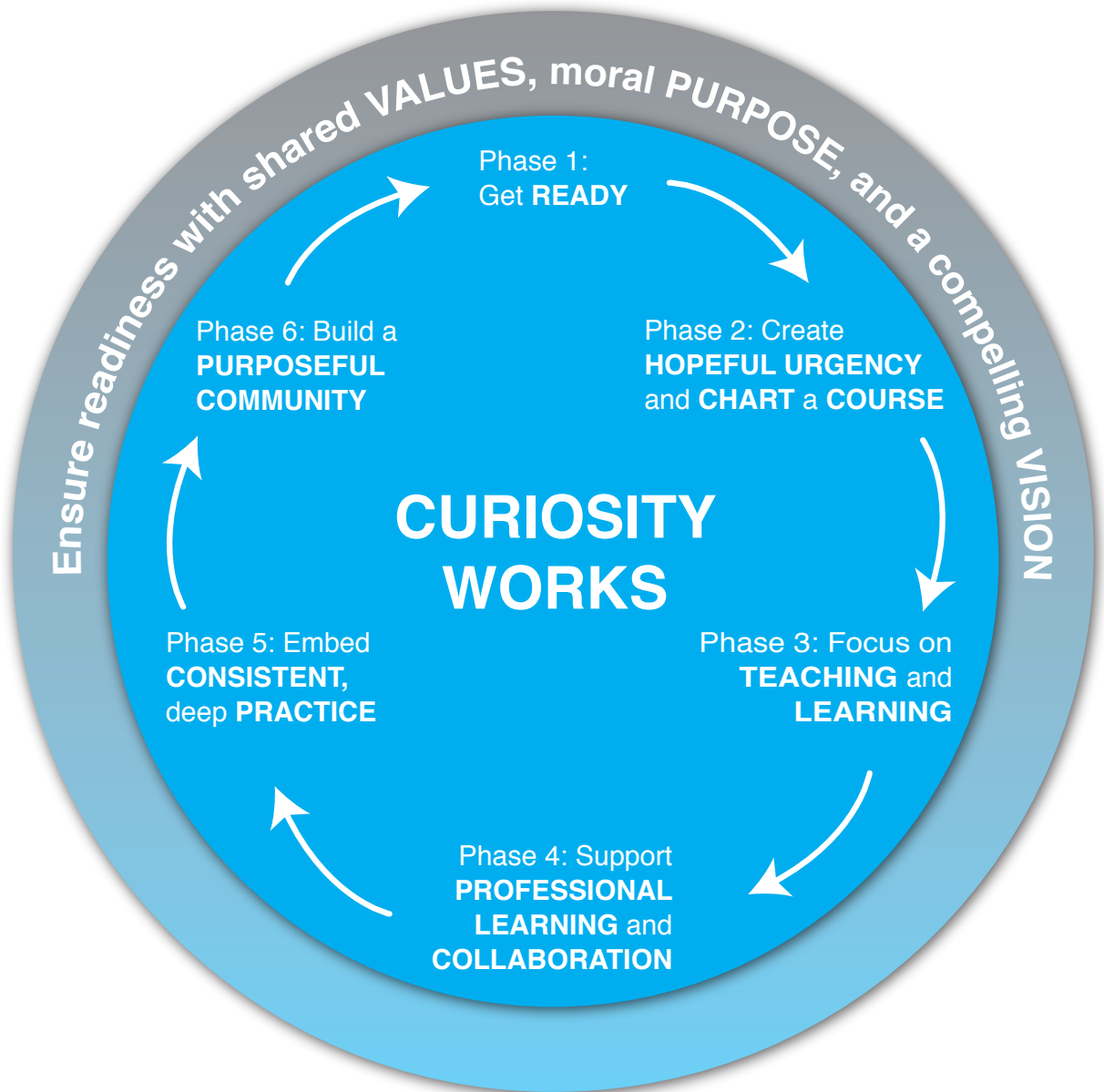### Considerations for the Research and Innovation Team

When building a school's RIT, it's important to bring together individuals who are willing to invest time and energy in improving the school—whether it's already a high-performing organization, or one in need of some significant changes. RITs often meet monthly at a minimum (we know of schools where they meet weekly) with a focus on examining data, current practices, and research about best practices, and planning for implementation and monitoring of strategies to support teaching and learning. Because school improvement is a continuous process, it's a good idea to have members serve for more than a year, and for membership to rotate so there are always experienced voices and new voices at the table.

In bringing the team together, it's also important to consider the staff perspectives represented. Select membership across grade levels, subjects, specialty areas, teacher experience, tenure in your school, etc. In addition, it's important to be sure your team brings an assets-oriented approach; the work of school improvement requires a belief that the students in your school can and will learn at high levels. This is important because ultimately, your RIT will be the "keepers of the flame" of your school's moral purpose, helping everyone connect what you're doing back to a deeper sense of purpose.

Four Key Reflection Questions for RIT Members:

- As RIT members, how do you maintain focus on your school as a whole, taking a systems perspective rather than focusing solely on your area of daily responsibility?

- When competing demands emerge, and energy for improvement and innovation subsides, how do you help staff stay focused on improving?

- What systems does the RIT have in place for reviewing progress toward goals?

- What information does the RIT collect about how individuals and teams are experiencing and managing change? How is this information collected?

Figure 1. Implementation phases for an inquiry-driven culture of continuous improvement

Using this Guidebook

This guidebook translates the principles of inside-out change—as well as our extensive research on leadership development and school improvement—into a straightforward, six-phase process you can follow to support ongoing, inside-out innovation and an inquiry-driven culture in your school (see Figure 1 on page 6).

We'll also help you build readiness by creating a purposeful community in your school, one guided by shared moral purpose and values.

We've arranged this guidebook to help you and your RIT guide your school through each phase of this journey, providing you with insights and tools to support you in this work.

To illustrate the phases of this journey, we've aggregated the experiences of real schools we've worked with into a semi-fictional narrative of one school's journey to innovation.

For the sake of simplicity, we've arranged the phases of development as a sequence, but you'll likely find that, in practice, the process of innovation is "messier" and less linear than a step-by-step process; you may find the need to revisit earlier stages or jump ahead to subsequent phases. That's OK. Indeed, innovative schools consistently report that while they often "beg, borrow, and steal" from others, in the end, they make the process their own, adapting what others have done to their own needs (Goodwin, 2017).

Fair warning: While targeting key leverage points will help you achieve "quick wins," the journey we outline in this guidebook is not a quick *fix*. We do not offer simple, one-size-fits-all tips and tricks for "fixing" your school in a matter of weeks, but rather, a more comprehensive, thoughtful approach to helping you create a long-term, inspiring vision for your school and chart a course for moving closer to that vision every day.

Don't expect that you and your school team will be able to progress through all six phases and 17 tools in a matter of days or a few weeks. It could take several months or more to work your way through the phases of development, and even then you won't be "done." You'll probably revisit sections of this guidebook from time to time during a continuous cycle of improvement and innovation. But we promise: The outcomes of the journey will be worth the investment. Your students will benefit from deeper, more engaging learning and your teachers will soon experience the rewards of working together to create more powerful and joyful learning in their classrooms.

So, are you ready to begin? Or maybe a little concerned about how this is going to work?

Don't worry, we're here to guide you along the way. Let's ease into our effort with the first installment in the story of the journey of our school, Stillbrook K–8 School.

Phase 1: Get Ready

What's our guiding purpose and how do we work together?

Stuck in a Rut

It was late May, and the leadership team at Stillbrook K–8 School felt exhausted and defeated. For three years, their achievement data had flatlined and even declined in some areas—a frustrating outcome after three prior years of sustained progress during which the school had been lauded by state and district officials, and by glowing headlines in the local newspaper.

Now things felt bleak, even though everyone was working harder than before, especially members of the school's leadership team, who jocularly tried to shoo one another out of the building long after the school doors had closed. Recently, Oscar Blanco, the assistant principal, found the name badge of his principal, Janice Brown, in the mail room while working late one night and went to put it in her office. He startled a bit when he found her sitting at her desk. As he handed the name badge to her, he joked, "You might need to start wearing this at home if you don't start spending less time here and more time there."

"You, too," she replied. "And you've got young kids at home. You should go home to them."

At their next leadership meeting—the last one of the year, in early June—Janice looked at the faces of her leadership team as they chatted quietly before the meeting. They all looked tired. Student test results weren't back yet—it would be a few more months before they saw them—but judging by the district interim assessments, it was likely they'd see similarly flat results, if not a bit worse, despite a year-long focus on close reading and argumentation in mathematics.

"So, I have a question for everyone. Why are you doing this?" she asked, immediately getting the team's attention. "*Education*, I mean. Why did you get into this profession?"

After a few moments, Tom Green, the outgoing and outdoorsy science teacher who also served as the middle school's instructional coach, answered first. "I guess I'm kind of a nerd who comes from a long line of educators. I love seeing light bulbs go on for kids when they finally grasp a concept. You know, that *aha moment*. It's priceless. I think that's what keeps me coming back year after year."

Belinda Gold, a veteran 4th-grade teacher and part-time coach for the elementary grade teachers, was known for being a "kooky serious" teacher, doing things like taking her students out to the school yard for a ritual burial of over-used words. "The fat paycheck, of course," she said to chuckles from the group. "Seriously, though, it's along the lines of what Tom said: I love young minds and the questions they ask. There's never a dull moment in teaching—if you do it right."

As usual, Oscar, quiet and introspective, went last. "I grew up a poor kid, so my parents ingrained in me the value of education as a ticket to a better life. That's why I got into education—to improve kids' life chances."

"Wow, can I have Oscar's answer?" Belinda said with a smile. "So, how about you, Janice?

Why are you doing this—killing yourself to be a principal?"

Janice Brown was serious to the core; there was nothing kooky about her. When she arrived at the school seven years earlier, she had established order and routines, like regular visits to classrooms and data team meetings. She carved funds out of the school budget to let Tom and Belinda serve as part-time instructional coaches. And she made teaching and learning THE discussion topic during staff meetings, while quietly counseling a few teachers out of the school and replacing them with better ones. For a few years, those changes worked. Teaching practices improved and test scores climbed. She was credited for turning around the school and seen as a rising star in the district. Then, inexplicably, Stillbrook K–8 School hit a plateau. Test scores went flat. Janice kept pressing harder, but to no avail.

In response to Belinda's question, she took off her glasses and rubbed her eyes. "To tell you the truth, I didn't like school much when I was a kid. We were a military family and moved around a lot, usually living off-base. So, I was in and out of a lot of schools. Kids can be cruel, especially to the new kid. And I was *always* the new kid. My self-esteem was pretty much in the toilet."

Everyone in the room was surprised, given the air of self-confidence Janice projected.

"In 10th grade, I had an amazing English teacher who took a shine to me. One day when I was walking out of class, she stopped me and said, 'You're going to be a leader someday.' I was floored. I'd never thought of myself that way. But it stuck with me. I studied business in college, thinking maybe I'd lead a company. But I kept coming back to how that one teacher had changed my life. I really don't remember what she taught me, but I remember how she made me *feel*. So, as a senior in college, I changed majors to education, hoping to change kids' lives the same way."

"Thanks for sharing that," Belinda said. "I never knew that about you. So, what made you ask about us?"

Janice looked around the room. "To confirm what I suspected: that we're all *driven* to do this work and deeply passionate about what we're doing. Which is why I don't understand something."

"What's that?" Belinda asked.

"Why are we all feeling this way . . . so *miserable?*"

The others were taken aback by the word *miserable* and protested a bit. Janice asked them how many times per week they experienced joy while at work. The room fell silent.

"That's what I thought. Look, maybe I've done that. I know I can be tough on you at times. But can you do me a favor? First, please come back here in August. Second, let's spend the summer catching up on our professional reading and imagining what kind of school we want to be and how to get there. What would it take to create a place that teachers and students love coming to? To be honest, I know we need to do *something* differently; we still have too many kids who aren't doing well. But frankly, and it's hard to admit this, I'm out of ideas for what to do. I need your help."

As everyone filed out of the room, Oscar turned to Janice. "You're a good leader, Dr. Brown. The best I've ever had. Take a look at what you just did there: You connected us all back to what's important to us. That's *leadership*. So, don't worry. We'll figure this out together."

"Thanks, Oscar," Janice replied. "And maybe this summer, you can do me a favor."

"What's that?"

"When you have a spare moment, maybe you can think about what *that*"—she pointed at the school's mission statement poster on the wall—"should say."

Oscar shot a glance at the poster with the current mission statement:

Stillbrook K–8 School seeks to create a challenging learning environment with high expectations for all students that fosters academic excellence through developmentally appropriate instruction that allows for individual differences and learning styles. Stillbrook promotes a safe, orderly, caring, and supportive environment that fosters each student's self-esteem through positive relationships with students and staff. We strive to actively engage our parents, teachers, and community members in our students' learning.

"I've read that mission statement a hundred times or more, but as I look at it again, I'm not sure what it really says—and I was on the committee that wrote it," she confessed. "There's nothing particularly *wrong* with it, but there's nothing particularly *inspiring* about it either."

"Oh, is that what it's supposed to do? Inspire us?" Oscar asked with a smile.

"Ideally, yes," she replied. "But for now, it would be *ideal* if you'd go home to your family." ∎

Committing to Shared Values

In our research on high-performing schools, McREL has found that school organizational culture is the "secret sauce" of school performance—it's what makes change possible for some schools and impossible for others (Goodwin, 2011). Basically, every organization has a set of rules—often unspoken—by which it operates.

High-performing schools, for example, embrace collegiality, open dialogue, and honest, reflective examination of their data. In this spirit of "kaizen," the Japanese business philosophy of continuous improvement, every system defect that is identified is viewed as a treasure pointing toward opportunities to improve practice.

Dysfunctional, low-performing schools, on the other hand, tend to view data more as a *window* (showing them what others are doing wrong or must do) than as a *mirror* (showing what they must do *themselves* to get better).

We'll return to this idea about data, but our point here is that all schools have written and unwritten rules that guide their behaviors. Like mission statements, values can be bland pronouncements that fail to specify what truly distinguishes a school's culture. They can be wishful thinking included in a wall poster that doesn't reflect how people *really* behave. Moreover, a school's *real* values may remain tacit or unspoken, yet plainly evident in the choices people make in a school—for example, when more desirable teaching assignments, like honors classes or teacher leadership positions, are doled out on the basis of seniority instead of merit. Such behaviors suggest that the school leaders place adults' desires above students' needs—hardly a value any school would state explicitly in a poster hanging on the wall.

As your school engages in the work of improvement and innovation, it's important to clarify the core values that drive your work. Patrick Lencioni (2002), a CEO, author, and consultant in leadership and management, offers a helpful way to think about four types of values:

- *Core* values—two or three traits that truly define an organization.

  We hold ourselves and each other to high standards for teaching and learning.

  We believe all of our students can go to college.

- *Aspirational* values—traits that don't yet define the organization but everyone agrees are necessary, such as innovation or collegiality.

  We adopt and adapt in rapid cycles in order to provide students with the instruction they need, when they need it.

  We are innovative in our curriculum development and delivery.

- *Accidental* values—unwritten (and often counterproductive) rules that reflect how people act or treat one another.

  We believe more experienced teachers have the best ideas (a counterproductive accidental value).

  We actively work to make sure everyone has a voice in decision making (a productive accidental value).

- *Permission-to-play* values—behaviors that are important but don't necessarily define an organization, such as treating others with dignity and respect.

  We only hire teachers who believe ALL kids can learn. There is no place in our school for a teacher who thinks some kids can't learn.

  We view differences as opportunities for everyone to learn, not as something that needs to be changed.

An organization's list of values ought to answer these critical questions:

- How do we behave, especially when no one is looking?

- What behaviors have we cultivated over time that distinguish us from other schools?

- What do we value so much we're willing to make sacrifices for it?

This last question is an important one, because ultimately, your organizational values should attract the right people and repel the wrong ones. For example, if you include "collegiality" and "lifelong learning" in your list of values, you should be willing to tell people who don't reflect those values they don't fit with your culture and need to change their behavior or seek a position elsewhere.

The tool on the following page will help you review your current values and/or identify new ones.
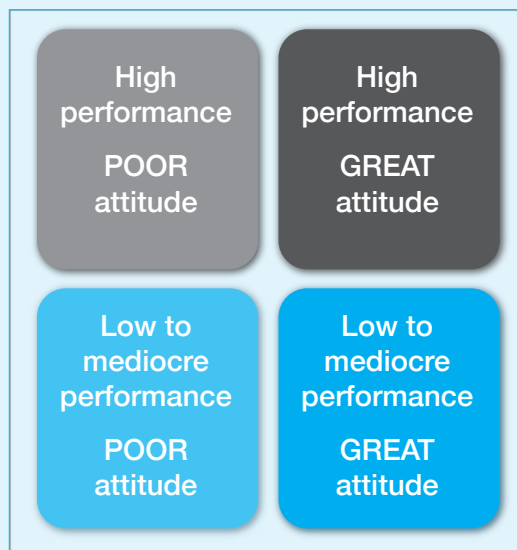
Tool #1: Identifying shared values

This tool will help you articulate your school's core values by focusing on the traits you recognize in teachers and school staff you consider to be exceptional—those people who consistently perform at a high level and maintain a positive attitude, both when things are going smoothly *and* when there are bumps in the road.

Ask each member of your team to complete steps 1 and 2 individually.

1. Using the shared values diagram in Figure 2, identify your school's "stars" in terms of attitude and performance (the upper-right box).

Figure 2. Shared values diagram

High performance POOR attitude	High performance GREAT attitude
Low to mediocre performance POOR attitude	Low to mediocre performance GREAT attitude

2. List the behaviors and dispositions that make these people special.

3. Now, as a group, each person shares one example of someone who exemplifies "high performance, great attitude," including the behaviors and dispositions they identified as describing their "star." Make a list of these behaviors and attitudes on a chart or board where everyone can see it. When all the stars and attributes have been shared, move on to the discussion in the following steps.

4. What do these behaviors and dispositions say about what these "stars" value? For example, a teacher characterized as "always goes above and beyond for students" may exemplify the core value, "We believe every student can learn more and our job is to be creative in helping them learn as much as possible."

5. Review your list to see if any can be consolidated into a single value.

6. Identify which behaviors/dispositions are *core* vs. *aspirational* vs. *accidental* vs. *permission-to-play* values (refer to the definitions on page 11).

7. Next, we're going to focus on just the core and aspirational values. Ask team members to reflect on the discussion and select 3–7 core and/or aspirational values. Have each person place a dot or a checkmark next to their selected values on the list.

8. Reflect on the selections made by team members. Circle any values that have consensus for being on the final list. Allow each team member the opportunity to make a case for including additional values, and work to agree on your list of 3–7 core and/or aspirational values.

9. Review your list with these questions in mind:

   • *Are we more committed to these values than most other schools?*

   • *Which of these values feel most natural to us and can be done without reminders?*

   • *Are we willing to make sacrifices for these values, such as engaging in difficult personnel conversations, saying no to parents, turning down funding that comes with strings attached, and holding one another accountable for our actions?*

   • *How different would our school look if our behaviors always reflected these values?*

10. Once you've arrived at your final list, use a memorable or meaningful word or phrase to describe each. Avoid tired phrases or expressions. "Commit to excellence" might instead be "Going to 11." You may wish to break into pairs or triads to brainstorm some possible ideas for this step, assigning each small group one or more values to work on.

11. After a few minutes of small group work, bring the group back together to share the creative ideas that were generated. Agree on the final phrases you'll add to your list.

On pages 98–117, you'll find a document we're calling a ToolTracker. We encourage you to use it as you work through the various tools you'll encounter in this guidebook. The ToolTracker is a single place where you can collect the big ideas from the tools, resulting in a comprehensive collection of artifacts you can use as you plan for improvement. As you work through this guidebook, turn to the ToolTracker each time you see the paper-pencil icon, to record data from the tools you've recently worked through.

Turn to page 98 and record your school's aspirational or core values in the ToolTracker, including the memorable words or phrases you generated.