



Silver Strong & Associates

Overview of The Thoughtful Classroom Principal Effectiveness Framework (TCPEF)

RESEARCH BASE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK

The TCPEF was developed from three distinct lines of research and evidence.

1. Effective School Leadership

To start, we surveyed current literature and research on effective school leadership, paying particularly close attention to Richard DuFour and Robert Marzano's (2011) *Leaders of Learning*; Stephen Fink and Anneke Markholt's (2011) *Leading for Instructional Leadership*; Robert Marzano, Timothy Waters, and Brian McNulty's (2005) *School Leadership That Works*; and Douglas Reeves' (2009) *Leading Change in Your School*. To further guide the development of the TCPEF dimensions and indicators, we analyzed the updated *Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008* (CCSSO, 2008). Using these standards, research studies, and various school leadership evaluation models, we identified a set of common characteristics that define "leaders of learning"—individuals who are able to consistently build the learning capacities of their students, teachers, and organizations.

These characteristics became the "Four Cornerstones," or the foundational dimensions of the TCPEF. These four cornerstones address a school leader's ability to organize and manage the building (Dimension One: Organization, Rules, and Procedures), nurture strong personal relationships (Dimension Two: Personal Relationships), inspire and motivate others (Dimension Three: Engagement and Enjoyment), and foster a culture of continuous learning (Dimension Four: A Culture of Thinking and Learning).

2. Organizational Improvement

We surveyed a wide body of research on organizational improvement and school management, including such works as *Reframing Organizations* (Bolman & Deal, 2008), *Leading in a Culture of Change* (Fullan, 2001), *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School* (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), and *Schools That Learn* (Senge, et al., 2012), as well as improvement plans used by various states and districts. This research helped us to define how effective leaders bring about meaningful change and create continuous improvement.

We synthesized this research and our findings into a cyclical school improvement process. This school improvement process makes up the core of the TCPEF, and moves through five phases:

- Establish Goals for Improvement (Dimension Five)
- Develop a Plan of Action (Dimension Six)
- Build Capacity and Professional Development (Dimension Seven)
- Implement Change Across the System (Dimension Eight)
- Refine Practice and Sustain Change (Dimension Nine)

3. *Wisdom and Experience of School Leaders, Teachers, and Educational Consultants*

Traditional research can only take us so far. At Silver Strong & Associates (SSA), we have been working with thousands of schools for nearly 40 years to enhance educator effectiveness and improve student learning. So, while the TCPEF is thoroughly research based, we also sought to make it practical. Throughout the development of the TCPEF, we collaborated with school leaders, teachers, and our network of educational consultants to review the dimensions and indicators and test their validity. These collaborative discussions helped us refine and streamline the TCPEF, ensuring that it would meet the needs of educators and school leaders.

ALIGNMENT TO NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Taken as an entire model, the TCPEF strongly supports the updated 2008 ISLLC Standards. What's more, because the TCPEF includes a five-phase school improvement process at its core, the TCPEF helps school leaders put the 2008 ISLLC Standards into practice. More specifically, each dimension within the TCPEF aligns to individual Functions of the updated 2008 ISLLC Standards, as outlined below:

TCPEF Dimension	Alignment to Specific Functions of the 2008 ISLLC Standards
1: Organization, Rules, and Procedures	2A, 2B, 2G, 2H, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, 5C, 5D
2: Positive Relationships	1A, 2A, 2C, 2F, 4B, 4C, 4D, 5C, 5E, 6A
3: Engagement and Enjoyment	1C, 1D, 2A, 2C, 2F, 3D, 4C, 4D
4: A Culture of Thinking and Learning	1B, 1D, 1E, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2G, 2H, 3B, 3E, 4A
5: Establishing Goals for Improvement	1A, 1B, 1D, 1E, 2G, 2E, 3A, 3E, 4A
6: Developing a Plan of Action	1B, 1C, 1D, 2D, 2E, 2H, 3B, 3E
7: Building Capacity and Professional Development	1C, 1D, 1E, 2D, 2G, 2F, 3D, 3E, 4A
8: Implementing Change Across the System	1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2I, 3A, 3E, 4A, 5A
9: Refining Practice and Sustaining Change	1A, 1B, 1D, 1E, 2A, 2D, 2E, 2F, 2I, 3A, 3E, 4A, 5A, 5B
10: Professional Practice	4A, 5B, 6C (Professional Growth) 4B, 4C, 4D, 6A, 6B (School Community) 5B, 5D, 5E (Professionalism)

MEASURING FOUR DISTINCT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

For each of the first nine dimensions of the TCPEF, observers use the General Rubric to assess a school leader's effectiveness within the dimension, according to four levels of performance.

General Rubric for Assessing Dimensions 1-9

- (1) Novice:** The school leader shows minimal or no commitment to this dimension. Relevant leadership practices are not being applied or are not having their intended effect of improving learning across the organization.
- (2) Developing:** The school leader has made an initial commitment to this dimension but has not yet fostered a sense of shared commitment among the staff. The leader applies relevant leadership practices, but the practices need refinement. With refinement, the impact on learning across the organization can be increased.
- (3) Proficient:** The school leader is committed to this dimension and is building a shared commitment to this dimension among the staff. The school leader applies relevant leadership practices that have a positive impact on learning across the entire organization.
- (4) Expert:** The school leader is deeply committed to this dimension and has been successful in fostering a strong sense of shared commitment to this dimension among the staff. The school leader applies highly effective leadership practices and is able to adapt them to the needs and demands of students, the staff, and the organization as a whole. These practices have a consistently positive impact on learning across the entire organization.

In addition to the General Rubric used for Dimensions 1-9, Dimension 10: Professional Practice includes three additional specialized rubrics to assess a school leader's commitment to professional growth, the school community, and professionalism. Each of these rubrics includes four levels of performance: Novice, Developing, Proficient, Expert.

Rubrics for Assessing Dimension 10: Professional Practice

10A: Commitment to Professional Growth

- (1) Novice:** The school leader shows minimal or no commitment to professional growth. Professional development efforts are either lacking or superficial in nature.
- (2) Developing:** The school leader has made an initial commitment to the professional growth process. A professional development plan is in place, but the school leader has not assumed full responsibility for the process: professional growth goals and professional development opportunities are based mostly on supervisory suggestions and/or district requirements.
- (3) Proficient:** The school leader is committed to the professional growth process. The school leader's professional growth plan moves beyond the suggestions of supervisors and is informed by data and self-assessment. The school leader seeks out relevant professional development opportunities and reflects periodically on progress toward goals.
- (4) Expert:** The school leader has made a strong commitment to the professional growth process that shows a deep awareness of how improvements in leadership affect the entire school community. The school leader takes full responsibility for the professional growth process:

using feedback, data analysis, and self-assessment to establish meaningful goals; actively seeking out professional development opportunities that support these goals; reflecting regularly on progress; and refining goals and plans in light of new learning.

10B: Commitment to the School Community

- (1) **Novice:** The school leader shows little interest in contributing to the school community beyond professional requirements.
- (2) **Developing:** The school leader contributes to the school community beyond professional requirements when prompted by supervisors or circumstances.
- (3) **Proficient:** The school leader is an active contributor to the school community. The school leader promotes initiatives that support a positive relationship between the school and the community it serves.
- (4) **Expert:** The school willingly assumes a leadership role in working to enhance the school community. The school leader develops and promotes initiatives that support a positive relationship between school and community, and serves as an advocate for the community's needs and values.

10C: Commitment to Professionalism

- (1) **Novice:** The school leader needs to be reminded of the standards of professional integrity.
- (2) **Developing:** The school leader demonstrates an understanding of professional standards and usually follows them.
- (3) **Proficient:** The school leader demonstrates a thorough understanding of professional standards and serves as a model of professionalism for the school community.
- (4) **Expert:** The school leader is seen by students, staff, and the community as an exemplar of professionalism and integrity. The school leader exhibits and models high professional standards at all times and inspires others to meet similarly high standards.

COLLECTING MEANINGFUL EVIDENCE IN MULTIPLE WAYS

As part of our decades of experience working with schools and their leaders to improve organizational effectiveness, we've developed four criteria for assessing the effectiveness of organizational leadership practices. The criteria, along with relevant essential questions school leaders can continuously ask themselves, focus on

- **Knowledge:** Does the staff have a collective knowledge of research-based practices? Is there a common language for talking about teaching and learning?
- **Practice:** Do teachers have opportunities to observe, talk about, and help refine each other's practice?
- **Achievement:** Is the work having a positive impact on teacher performance and student learning?

- **Culture:** Does the culture support teachers through the learning process? Are there forums for teachers to have meaningful conversations about teaching and learning?

Using these criteria, along with dimensions of the TCPEF, we work directly with leaders at both the building and district level to develop a meaningful evidence-collection system. The system is built for each district's individual goals and values, but should include

- **Observations.** Supervisors and district leaders use the TCPEF and criteria outlined above to collect evidence of school effectiveness during on-site observations using data-gathering tools such as Learning Walks. For schools and districts interested in developing this capacity, we provide customized on-site training and coaching for school leaders.
- **Demonstrations.** School leaders complete Professional Growth Plans to demonstrate individual and organizational growth and progress, and develop portfolios of evidence (student achievement data, artifacts of student and teacher work, etc.) to highlight the effects their leadership practices are having on their school.
- **Reflection and input from stakeholders.** A complete picture of effectiveness requires multiple perspectives, from reflections on one's own practice to collecting feedback and insight from other members of the school community. To help school and district leaders develop a full and comprehensive assessment of organizational and leadership effectiveness, the TCPEF includes a
 - School Leader Self-Assessment Guide.
 - Teacher Feedback Form.
 - Parent Perception Survey (customized for individual schools and districts).

MULTI-PHASE EVALUATION CYCLE

We strongly recommend and we work with school leaders and their district-level supervisors to develop a multi-phase evaluation cycle. A typical evaluation cycle moves through the following phases, and can be modified as needed in light of district goals and resources:

- **Initial Meeting** – School and district leaders, along with an SSA coach (if requested), work together to review and align school and district goals, establish professional growth goals for school leader(s), and identify key sources of evidence that will be collected to demonstrate progress.
- **Formative Assessments (Quarter and Mid-Year)** – We recommend that supervisors conduct at least two on-site observations throughout the year. To facilitate this process, we've developed and train school leaders in a series of protocols to make these on-site observations more powerful and yield better data. These tools include Learning Walks, Team Progress Meetings, Pre- and Post-Observation Conferences, and the Four Ps to Better Feedback (Provide Evidence, Praise, Pose, Propose).
- **Summative Assessment (Year End)** – The evaluation cycle culminates with a summative assessment at the end of the school year. The supervisor reviews multiple sources of data collected over the year (e.g., data on student learning and achievement, Professional Growth

Plan, Teacher Feedback Form, Parent Perception Survey, Quarter and Mid-Year Assessments, etc.). The supervisor uses the four-level summative evaluation rubrics to evaluate overall effectiveness. As part of SSA's training and coaching services, we offer assistance to supervisors in how to develop meaningful evidence-based final evaluations and write powerful summative evaluations that target areas for future growth.

PLAN FOR GROWTH

The TCPEF includes a Professional Growth Plan for school leaders, an integral part of the assessment process. School leaders use the Professional Growth Plan to identify professional and organizational goals, evaluate how their plans to achieve these goals are affecting the organization, and monitor progress and collect evidence along the way. These goals should align closely to the school's and/or district's overall performance goals, and should be reviewed and refined prior to the start of the evaluation cycle.

MEASURING PROGRESS FROM MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

Feedback from multiple perspectives is essential to building a comprehensive picture of organizational and leadership effectiveness. To help school and district leaders incorporate multiple sources of feedback into a comprehensive assessment, the TCPEF includes a

- School Leader Self-Assessment Guide.
- Teacher Feedback Form.
- Parent Perception Survey.

To ensure the feedback process is meaningful and promotes positive change, we work with schools and districts to customize these components as needed to better address school and/or district goals and needs.

ASSESSING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

for Developing Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction

The TCPEF includes specific indicators (e.g., 1.1, 4.1, 4.3) to assess the school leader's capacity for developing rigorous standards-based curriculum and instruction. But more than just indicators, the TCPEF includes at its core, a research-based, five-phase process for school improvement. In implementing this process, the school leader works with the entire staff to

- Ensure that curriculum, instruction, and assessment are sufficiently rigorous.
- Align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to state standards and the Common Core State Standards.
- Implement a meaningful plan of action for achieving goals based on standards.

- Engage in a continuous cycle of reviewing and refining curriculum, instruction, and assessment so they enhance student learning.
- Sustain positive changes in curriculum, instruction, and assessment so they hold over time.

In addition, a recent development in our work with schools has focused on helping school leaders develop local assessments that address Common Core State Standards.

for Developing High-Quality Instruction

The TCPEF includes specific indicators to assess a school leader's capacity for developing high-quality instruction (e.g., 2.6, 4.6, 6.5, 7.1, 7.4, 7.6, 8.5, 9.3). But as many states now recognize, instructional leadership requires a research-based framework for observing, discussing, and evaluating classroom instruction. To help principals develop their capacity for instructional leadership, we also developed The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework. This framework shares the same design as the TCPEF, so that use of both frameworks in schools is seamless.

for Evaluating Teachers

The TCPEF includes specific indicators to assess a school leader's capacity for evaluating teachers (e.g., 4.6, 8.5, 9.5). To help school leaders respond to the challenge of evaluating teachers, we've developed a comprehensive summative evaluation process, including a section on composing meaningful and actionable written evaluations. (Note that this process comes from The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework.)

for Supporting All Teachers' Professional Growth

The TCPEF includes specific indicators to assess a school leader's capacity for supporting all teachers' professional growth (e.g., 3.6, 4.6, 7.6). To further help school leaders respond to the challenge of supporting teachers' professional growth, we've developed a Professional Growth Plan and process for teachers. (Note that this process comes from The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework.)