

The 5Essentials Framework

The 5Essentials® Framework is based on over 20 years of research from The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. The framework outlines the 5Essential factors that research revealed are necessary for driving sustainable school improvement: Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Ambitious Instruction, Supportive Environment, and Involved Families.

RESEARCH SHOWS

Schools strong on at least three of the five essentials were 10 times more likely to show substantial gains in student learning over time than schools weak on three or more of the five essentials. A persistent weakness in even just one of the essential factors reduced the likelihood of improvement to less than 10%.

Further, 5Essentials Measures (see the next page to learn more about the Measures) are positively related to a variety of outcomes, including:



Attendance



Test score gains



Freshman on track



Graduation rates

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SCHOOL CONSIDERED STRONG IN THE 5ESSENTIALS



Effective Leaders

Principals and teachers work together to implement a shared vision for sustained improvement. Leaders practice shared leadership, set ambitious goals for quality instruction, maintain trusting and respectful relationships, and support professional advancement for faculty and staff.



Collaborative Teachers

All teachers collaborate to promote professional growth and are active partners in school improvement. Teachers are committed to the school and focused on professional development.

Ambitious Instruction

Classes are challenging and engaging. The instruction is clear, well-structured, aligned across grade levels, and encourages students to build and apply knowledge. When combined with a Supportive Environment, Ambitious Instruction has the most direct effect on student learning.



Supportive Environment

The school is safe, demanding, and supportive. Students feel safe in and around the school and they find teachers trustworthy and responsive to their academic needs. Students value hard work and teachers push all students toward high academic performance.



Involved Families

The entire school staff builds strong relationships with parents/guardians and are seen as partners in helping students learn. Parent/guardian input and participation is valued in advancing the school's mission.

The 5Essentials Core Measures

The 5Essentials Survey assesses student and teacher perceptions of a school's organizational conditions. It illustrates a school's strength in multiple Measures of each of the five essential factors for school improvement:



Ambitious Instruction

English Instruction:

Students interact with course material and one another to build and apply critical reading and writing skills.

Math Instruction:

Students interact with course material and one another to build and apply knowledge in their math classes.

Academic Press:

Teachers expect students to do their best and to meet academic demands.

Quality of Student Discussion:

Students participate in classroom discussions that build their critical thinking skills.



Effective Leaders

Teachers Influence:

Teachers have influence in a broad range of decisions regarding school policies and practices.

Program Coherence:

School programs are coordinated and consistent with goals for student learning.

Teacher-Principal Trust:

Teachers and principals share a high level of mutual trust and respect.

Instructional Leadership:

The school leadership team sets high standards for teaching and student learning.



Collaborative Teachers

Collaborative Practices:

Teachers observe each others' practice and work together to review assessment data and develop instructional strategies.

Collective Responsibility:

Teachers share a strong sense of responsibility for student development, school improvement, and professional growth.

School Commitment:

Teachers are deeply committed to the school.

Teacher-Teacher Trust:

Teachers are supportive and respectful of one another, personally and professionally.

Quality of Professional Development:

Professional development is rigorous and focused on student learning.



Supportive Environment

Peer Support for Academic Work (ES):

Students demonstrate behaviors that lead to academic achievement.

School-Wide Future Orientation (HS):

The school engages all students in planning for life after graduation.

Expectations for Post-Secondary Education (HS):

The school expects all students to attend college and promotes college readiness.

Academic Personalism (ES):

Teachers connect with students in the classroom and support them in achieving academic goals.

Student-Teacher Trust:

Students and teachers share a high level of mutual trust and respect.

Safety:

Students feel safe both in and around the school building, and while they travel to and from home.



Involved Families

Parent Influence on Decision-Making:

The school has created opportunities for parents to participate in developing academic programs and influencing school curricula.

Teacher-Parent Trust:

Teachers and parents are partners in improving student learning.

Parent Involvement in School:

Parents are active participants in their child's schooling.