Reframing Lesson Plans: The Foundation for Improving Instruction

Carletta M. Noland
National Louis University

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REFRAMING LESSON PLANS THE FOUNDATION FOR
IMPROVING INSTRUCTION:

A POLICY ADVOCACY DOCUMENT

Carletta Noland
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of Education
in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education
National Louis University
June, 2016
This document was created as one part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership Ed.D is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the Program Evaluation candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the Change Leadership Plan candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the Policy Advocacy Document candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

Works Cited


6.20.16
Abstract

This dissertation is a policy advocacy document that boldly states that it is our moral imperative to change the current educational landscape for the students attending Milwaukee Public Schools. In advocating for such a change, it is strongly suggested that the way to accomplish this challenging task is to mandate a stronger instructional foundation by leveraging the power of thoughtful lesson planning and design. Through its own merit, public and professional opinions and research findings, a viable argument is crafted to eliminate the current policy that marginalizes the planning process by suggesting through its current language, that the planning process is linear and serves nothing more than to meet compliance mandates. This advocated policy calls for improved educational outcomes for students by making a shift from transactional to transformational practices in what stands as the foundation and heart of teaching—lesson planning and design.
Preface: Leadership Lessons Learned

This dissertation is the third part of a three part dissertation completed in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Doctor of Education in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School. This culminating work completed between the years of 2013 and 2016 and serves to advocate for policy that will transform instructional practices resulting in improved educational outcomes for students.

In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (Covey, 1990) the author writes, “You can’t change the fruit without changing the root” (p.103). This wisdom as imparted to readers has been the impetus for the advocated policy. It has helped to shape my view of systemic change as I have come to the realization that macro change begins with micro behavior.

I must admit that prior to engaging in the writing of this piece, I truly thought that I had no power to inform policy. I believed that the way it is – is the way it is. I have since come to the understanding that I can influence what happens within my organization by advocating for policy that is just and good. I have an even greater responsibility to ensure that I am encouraging those around me to think beyond our current practices, to explore unchartered territory and to become relentlessly focused on improving educational outcomes for our students.

I must be a facilitator of eliminating the perpetual nature of insanity, doing what we have always done and getting the results we have always got.
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Vision Statement

Introduction of Policy

Education has been likened to the profession of medicine and the role of teacher has been compared to that of physician. Shulman (p.3) asserts, “…The only time a physician could possibly encounter a situation of comparable complexity would be in the emergency room of a hospital during or after a natural disaster” (p.3). Upon reflecting on this analogous comparison, I would definitely have to agree. Teaching does require both the agile skill and aptitude of an emergency room physician. The wrong diagnosis and prescription concerning the patients, or students, could prove to be detrimental.

Having been an educator for the past 25 years, it goes without saying that I am all too familiar with the role of classroom teacher. I began my career in education in 1991 and have been promoted through the ranks to now serve as a district level administrator. Prior to becoming a district level administrator, I served as an elementary school principal. In this role, one of my greatest responsibilities was to be an instructional leader. As such, I was responsible for helping teachers reflect on and refine their practice to bring about improved educational outcomes for students.

In one of my most challenging assignments as principal, I walked into a first grade classroom one afternoon. The students were running around and the teacher was sitting at her desk. After I instructed the students to get into their seats, I walked over to the teacher and asked, “What should the students be doing now?” She replied, “Math.” I asked her for her lesson plans and she began to shuffle through the piles of papers on her desk. I left her side and started to circulate around the room instructing the students to take out paper, pencils and their math books. In the midst of me helping a student rifle through the tangled confusion of crumpled
papers, pencil shavings and broken crayons inside of his desk, the teacher walked up behind me and said, “Here.” As I stood up, she handed me a paper napkin with the following words written on it, “Math page 147”. I asked, “What is this?” She replied, “My lesson plans.” I was shocked and appalled. I could not form words to reply. I simply took the napkin and walked out of the room infuriated.

As I reached my office, I picked up the phone and called Labor Relations. This is the district office that handles misconducts. I explained the situation to the person on the other line and was met with hesitation followed by a speech that sounded something like this, “Well... technically, she is allowed to have her plans written on whatever she wants. Lesson plans are for teacher use. We don’t have a requirement for lesson plans. They just have to have them.” I was in shock, not because I didn’t know that there was not a policy in our district relative to lesson plans, but that there was nothing I could do. I remember thinking that in all of my years of being in the profession, I had never seen such a gross injustice being done to students. I kept thinking, even student teachers have to write lesson plans. For instance, the University of Duluth has a statement on their website, “Given the importance of lesson planning, all student teachers must complete daily lesson plans for each lesson to be taught. These lesson plans will be shared with the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. They will be used as evidence of the student teachers thorough planning”. (School of Education, par. 2)

That day, I decided that if I ever got the chance, I would be an advocate for our district to adopt a stronger policy regarding lesson plans and their design.

**Recommended Policy and Envisioned Effect**

“Good planning is essential to student learning. Although experienced teachers can, perhaps, manage to “fly by the seat of their pants,” even they cannot do so for long” (Danielson,
2007, p. 57). Being in agreement with this statement is the reason that I want to propose a change to the policy regarding lesson plans. No matter what the work, many see policy as compliance. However, this policy is aimed at doing the “real work”, to change the narrative of the district, creating a shift in the culture, by breaking down barriers that hinder us from realizing that good instruction begins with a plan and seeks to transform the practice of teachers and the minds of students. While this policy proposal is by no means a detailed roadmap for the creation of a templated lesson plan, it sets out to shift us from compliance to commitment, encourages collaboration, promotes reciprocal accountability and sets the stage to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
Analysis of Need

In reflecting on the problem and context for the proposed policy, consideration has been given to five disciplinary areas in analyzing this need. The five areas include: political analysis, educational analysis, moral and ethical analysis, economic analysis and social analysis.

Political Analysis

**Wisconsin Act 166.** In 2011, the State Superintendent formed an Educator Effectiveness Design Team. This team developed a framework for educator effectiveness. This framework was developed for both teachers and administrators and would serve as the design for the performance-based state educator evaluation system. The effectiveness team would later make recommendations for changes to the Wisconsin elementary and secondary education laws. These changes came to be known as 2011 Wisconsin Act 166. The intent of the changes within Act 166 were meant to improve educator effectiveness and student performance. Section 19 of this Act describes the role and responsibilities of districts as related to the development of an educator effectiveness evaluation system. Section 19 115.415 (1) of the statutes specifically states:

> The department shall develop an educator effectiveness evaluation system and an equivalency process aligned with the department’s evaluation system for the evaluation of teachers and principals of public schools, including teachers and principals of a charter school established under s. 118.40 (2r), as provided in this section.

Section 19 also states that the performance of teachers shall be evaluated in the following domains:

1. Planning and preparation.
2. The classroom environment.
3. Instruction.
4. Professional responsibilities and development.” (Section 19, (3) (a))

Having included the planning and preparation domain in the educator effectiveness framework, one could arguably state that the design team would agree with the sentiment as written on the website of the University of Minnesota Duluth that states,

Planning takes many shapes in the work of different teachers, but one thing is consistent: planning provides a sense of direction. Planning gives teachers a sense of where they are going, so as they can adjust and respond to student interest and needs, they are able to move the students forward in their learning (School of Education, par. 2).

Wisconsin Act 55. The Wisconsin State Biennial Budget was adopted in July of 2015 enacted as 2015 Act 55.

Within its contents, lies the creation of the Opportunity Schools and Partnership Program (OSPP) within Milwaukee Public Schools. Its origins, penned as a collaborative effort on the part of a Senator Roberta Darling and Representative Dale Kooyenga, the OSSP would serve to provide a new governance structure for the identified failing schools of the district beginning with no more than three of the 55 schools named in 2015-16 school year. With each passing year of the biennium budget, the number of schools that may be selected could reach 11 by 2017-2018 and increasing by no more than five for each subsequent year. Once selected, these schools could be converted into charter schools, thus, essentially removing them from the Milwaukee Public Schools portfolio of schools. (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2016) It has been suggested that the impetus for the creation of the Opportunity Schools and Partnership Program was due to the decades of inadequate educational outcomes for students and the erosion of the economic and social health of the city as a whole. With this enactment and
assertions, there must be a shift in the practices employed by teachers and administration as it relates to improving the academic outcomes for the students of Milwaukee Public Schools.

Inclusive to this arduous task has to be a shared vision for providing quality instruction that is aligned to a common curriculum; eliminating the roulette of ineffective instructional practices. Essential to quality instruction is planning.

**Educational Analysis**

*Common core state standards.* Several critical factors come in to play when identifying issues for the need to address the lesson plan policy problem. One of these factors took shape in 2010. In June of 2010, State Superintendent of Schools, Tony Evers adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Mathematics and English Language Arts. These standards serve to guide teachers in developing lessons that capture the essence of what students need to know at each grade level. These standards would serve as the impetus for rigorous instruction, improved student outcomes in order for students to graduate college and career ready.

Standards serve as a guide for what students need to know, they are an essential element of instruction and are the foundation of all lessons. Thus, it is important to understand what the standards are requiring students to know and do in order to develop appropriate instructional outcomes and to align assessments to the intended outcomes. This is done through thoughtful planning.

*Concept based curriculum and instruction.* In the fall of the 2015-2016 academic school year, the Milwaukee Public Schools began to utilize the framework for Concept Based Curriculum and Instruction. This framework basically aligns curriculum, instruction and assessment while emphasizing and identifying what students should know, do and understand. It should be further
noted that this framework sets out to unite the big ideas of units and lessons in order to engage students in a deeper understanding in concepts in curriculum rather than just facts. It is duly noted by Erickson and Lanning (2014), authors of Transitioning to Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction that, “There is much to consider when planning a concept-based lesson. A lesson template helps structure the components and make planning more manageable.” (p. 57)

The framework for teaching. An integral part of the Wisconsin Evaluation System incorporates Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching. Danielson created the Framework for Teaching that encompasses four domains. These domains are further divided into 22 components and 76 elements. Danielson (2007) describes this framework as a “Comprehensive framework reflecting the many different aspects of teaching”. (p.2) As this framework is the nucleus of the Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness Evaluation process, it bears noting that 13 or 50% of the components have lesson plans listed as either required or optional forms of evidence to support teacher practice. This being said, one could argue that planning is essential to the teaching process. Danielson (2007) asserts, “A teacher's planning and preparation affect instruction, and all these are affected by the reflection on practice that accompanies a unit or lesson”. (p. 2). Thus, the elements as described above contribute to the argument for a change in the lesson plan policy within Milwaukee Public Schools. These factors will help shape teacher practices and ultimately inform better outcomes for students.

District academic achievement. While striving to be the first district families choose in Milwaukee is at the forefront of the vision of Milwaukee Public Schools, the district is not without struggles as it relates to student achievement. Failing to meet the annual measurable objectives for academic achievement in both reading and mathematics at the elementary, middle, and high school grade spans, the district received an overall accountability rating for academic
achievement of “Fails to Meet Expectations.” The district scored 37.1 of 100 possible points. As a result, mandated state supported reforms had to be implemented. Of the state supported reforms cited, collaborative planning time and strengthening of core and intervention instruction, (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2016) are two that have direct implications for a revised lesson plan policy.

Moral and Ethical Analysis

While the aforementioned issues are directly related to the educational landscape of Wisconsin, there is evidence to support a stronger lesson plan policy as described on a broader scale. Those in the field of education would have a hard time arguing with the notion that teachers have primary responsibilities that include all of the following: managing a classroom environment and planning for, delivering, and assessing student instruction over time. I would add though, that at the heart of these fundamentals lies lesson planning.

In How To Be An Effective Teacher The First Days of School (Wong & Wong, 2005), the authors express that successful teachers know and practice three characteristics. They state, “The effective teacher exhibits positive expectations for all students, establishes good classroom management techniques and designs lessons for students mastery”. (Wong & Wong, 2005, p. 12) further describe the four kinds of time at school: “Allocated time, instructional time, engaged time and academic learning time.” (p.201). Of these four kinds of time, (Wong & Wong, 2005) assert that, “Only academic learning time has a direct correlation with achievement” (p. 201). This time is described as the time when the teacher can prove that students have actually learned the intended content.

On the website for the Association of American Educators, it is written on the code of ethics for educators’ page that; “The professional educator assumes responsibility and
accountability for his or her performance and continually strives to demonstrate competence” (Association of American Educators, 2016). I contend that planning is at the crux of this ethical responsibility and that it lends itself to defend the argument that teachers are morally responsible to provide instruction that will yield high levels of student academic achievement. Without proper planning, student outcomes will be absent or unclear and achievement will be stifled at best.

**Economic Analysis**

State funding supports over 2,200 schools. The variety of school types includes traditional public, private voucher, Charter, 2R Charter and virtual charter schools (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2016). These statistics coupled with the newly developed Opportunity Schools and Partnership Program is stiff competition for Milwaukee Public Schools in terms of future enrollment. With this collection of schools, parents have more choice. Despite the fact that, “When the Wisconsin test scores were released in 2011, students in the Milwaukee Public Schools had higher scores than those in voucher schools; the scores in the two income sectors were similar” (Ravitch, 2011, p. 268). Parents in the city of Milwaukee continue to make voucher and 2R charter schools their first choice as evidenced by the trend enrollment data for Milwaukee Public Schools that indicates that the current enrollment is 77,391 compared to 80,098 during the 2011-2012 school year.

While at first glance the difference between the enrollment numbers does not seem significant, but, when you multiply the difference by the per pupil allocation from the State, (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2016) the difference equates to $26,276,849. This is a bill that MPS cannot afford to pay. Fewer students equate to fewer dollars, fewer dollars
equate to fewer resources both human and capital. At the risk of sounding redundant, student achievement has to improve or it could cost the life of the district.

**Social Analysis**

The act of planning involves purpose, organization, foresight, preparation, and deliberate decision making. Most importantly, educators must keep in mind the children for whom their plans are being developed; the children’s needs, interests, and strengths. Effective instructional planners also take into account the materials at their disposal, the physical space in which the plan will be carried out, and the context of classroom, family, and community. Planning further involves taking into account individuals and groups of children. It involves addressing immediate objectives and long-term goals as well as the current and future happenings of the classroom. As such, lesson plans must have an intentional focus that will, “enable students to make personal connections to their learning, and affirm the value of their lived experiences” (Jackson, 2011, p. 13).

In meeting the charge to improve teacher practice and learning for all students, it is important to note that the social benefits of planning are not exclusive to students. While there are several grade bands within a school, and although those working in like grades are often referred to as grade level teams, the practices associated with planning are often done individually. Thus this could serve as a platform for the argument that there is a need to shift from an individual approach to planning to one more collaborative. In the article *Collaborative Lesson Planning* (Newell, 2012), the author suggests that collaborative planning has strong beneficial factors that ensure sustainable improvement that include:

- Deliver cross-curricular learning beyond departmental boundaries.
• Provide a way for teachers to engage in professional dialogue which fosters co-operation and trust.

• Help teachers focus on practical teaching problems through evidence of student learning inside and outside the classroom.

• Support curriculum development where new ideas and methods can be put to trial. (par. 1)

The implications for developing lesson plans are far reaching and multi-faceted. Lesson planning is vital to the success or failure of an instructor’s delivery of content, formative assessment practices, relationships with their peers and the daily interaction to the students being served.
Advocated Policy Statement

In outlining the policy statement, three considerations are being explored and discussed:

- The goals and objectives of the plan
- Needs, values, and preferences of stakeholders
- Validation of the goals and objectives

In discussing these three considerations, it is intended to shed light on how the proposed policy is valid and just in promoting coherent learning experiences, encouraging teaching that evokes and develops student interest and learning that results in the potential for significantly increased levels of student achievement.

Goals and Objectives

The goals of the advocated lesson plan policy would be to improve teacher instructional practices and educational outcomes for students. While the aforementioned is no easy task, it is necessary that this must be our moral imperative for we know, “The research on teacher quality as the primary correlate for student achievement is unequivocal - teaching matters above all else...” Fink and Markholt, (2011, p. xix).

The current policy regarding lesson plans in Milwaukee Public Schools is included in each school’s staff manual. These manuals are provided to members of every school staff at the beginning of each school year and serve as the foundation for the local governing structure for each school. The current policy reads as follows:

All teachers are expected to maintain a lesson plan book that will be kept readily available in the classroom during instructional times. Weekly plans are to be completed and updated during the week as needed. Lesson plans will contain specific objectives,
activities and specific references to instructional materials. Daily objectives must be posted, reviewed and visible for students and guests to see. Periodically, the administrators will request to see lesson plan books. (Milwaukee Public Schools, 2013, p. 31)

While it is understood that policy has a heavy emphasis on compliance, I must argue that in this case, the proposed policy has to stimulate a culture shift from compliance to commitment. Therefore, the objective of the proposed policy would be to extinguish the focus on activities and place the focus more on student learning. The objective of this policy is to also add dimension to the current policy by detailing a set of non-negotiable elements that are essential to designing coherent instruction that take into account the whole child and embraces teacher collaboration. In addition, the objective of this policy would be to ensure equality in accountability, and draw attention to reflective feedback as a part of the planning process.

**Needs, Values and Preferences**

Traditionally, in Milwaukee Public Schools, lesson plans have served as scripted aides for teachers to gauge how the lesson of the day should progress, to identify materials needed for the lesson, and as reminders of the page numbers that the content for the day could be found. This belief has helped to marginalize the critical role that lesson planning plays in the overall relationship of teaching and learning. This belief has further helped to perpetuate the notion that planning is linear and does not allow for much thought to be given to the many elements that should be on the conscious forefront when planning. In as much, my argument supports the notion shared by Jensen (2001), that effective planning “benefits many stakeholders: teachers, administrators, observers, substitutes and of course, students” (p. 403).
When a teacher is absent from class, a lesson plan is a necessity for the substitute teacher. The substitute teacher has the great responsibility to provide a quality learning experience for the students while in charge of the classroom no matter how brief their stay. The absence of well-designed lesson plans in situations such as this places undue stress on students, administration, and of course the substitute teacher. Depending on the situation, it could also have a negative effect on students and teachers in classrooms in the near vicinity.

I would argue that the greatest loss would be suffered by students when well designed planning is absent from teacher practice. Just as teachers expect students to come to class prepared, students have the same expectations of their teachers. Lesson plans are part of this preparedness. “Well-designed, lesson plans tell teachers and administrators how to generate, support, and assess students’ learning. Any lesson plan that does not focus on student learning is incomplete” (Reaves, 2011, p. 13).

Validations of Goals and Objectives

On January 23, 2016, when asked to comment on both the recent state exam scores released on January 13, 2016, and the continuous low test scores of Milwaukee, former U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan was quoted as having said that they are "a national disgrace," (Borsuk, 2016). In addition, there was other sobering data and unflattering comments printed in the article. In his commentary, Borsuk offers suggestions for improving the educational landscape of Milwaukee and mentions, “higher expectations of classroom success” (Borsuk, 2016). I believe that with the proposed policy in place, there would be higher classroom success.

In The Moral Imperative of School Leadership (Fullan M., 2003), the author describes what he considers to be the moral purpose of school leadership. His description lends itself to
validate the argument for the proposed policy in that there has to be an intentional shift to make a commitment to create lesson plans that emphasize learning and that these intentional acts must become institutionalized in order to make a difference in student outcomes.

The criteria of moral purpose are the following: that all students and teachers benefit in terms of identified desirable goals, that the gap between high and low performers becomes less as the bar for all is raised, that ever-deeper educational goals are pursued, and that the culture of the school becomes so transformed that continuous improvement relative to the previous three components becomes built in (p.31).

Perhaps the most compelling, good and just reason for this policy is that our students are counting on us to provide them with an education that maximizes their human potential by addressing both their cognitive and social development. This is extremely important in the Milwaukee Public School District, as over 80% of students in the district are below the poverty threshold. “Growing up in poverty is one of the greatest threats to healthy child development. Poverty and financial stress can impede children’s cognitive development and their ability to learn. It can contribute to behavioral, social and emotional problems and poor health” (Kids Count Data Center, 2016). Within the city of Milwaukee, it is reported that there are 64,000 children under the age of 18 living in poverty and another 26,000 living in extreme poverty. This significant fact alone is all the reason to ensure that there are strong instructional practices in each classroom of each school within Milwaukee Public Schools.
Policy Argument

In advocating for the proposed policy, conversation must take shape around relevant factors such as merit, public and professional opinions and research findings. It would be baffling to think that one could construct a viable argument against improving student achievement. However, that which follows gives attention to some of the potential arguments for and against the advocated policy.

Pros

Succeeding in the 21st Century. Milwaukee Public Schools declares in its mission statement that it “…prepares students for success in higher education, post-educational opportunities, work and citizenship”. (Milwaukee Public Schools, 2014). In order to realize this mission, students must be provided authentic learning opportunities to develop the skills, dispositions and competencies necessary to do so. In his book, The Gobal Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need-and What We Can Do About It (Wagner, 2008), the author uncovered in his research what he identifies as the seven survival skills that children will need in order to succeed in the 21st century. These skills include: critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration across networks and leading by influence, agility and ability, initiative and entrepreneurialism, effective oral and written communication, assessing and analysing information, and curiosity and imagination. He contends:

Young people who want to earn more than minimum wage and who go out into the world without the new survival skills I’ve uncovered in my research are crippled for life; they are similarly unprepared to be active and informed citizens or to be adults who will continue to be stimulated by new information and ideas. (p. 14).
In order to meet this charge, we must work to improve the educational outcomes for students by strengthening and clarifying our current practices around lesson planning and design.

**Workforce development.** Within the past few years, there has been widespread recognition that there is a threat to the economic growth of Milwaukee. The threat has presented itself as there is a workforce shortage and a skills mismatch of employees capable of performing the duties associated with current and future jobs. This has placed a huge responsibility on schools to produce employable candidates with the talent and skills aligned to the needs of a changing workforce.

In a partnership with Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), students graduating in June from a Milwaukee Public School have the opportunity to attend college at no cost to the student. This comes by way of the MATC Promise. The MATC Promise was announced in September of 2015. The promise is guaranteed to those students who meet the 10 program eligibility requirements. Two of the requirements are that students must be “on-time graduates” of the class of 2016 and they must graduate with a minimum GPA of 2.0. As stated on their website, “By the year 2020, more than 50% of jobs in Wisconsin will be "middle skill". (Milwaukee Area Technical College, 2016).

The development of the MATC Promise implies that there is recognition that our community needs a qualified work force. This is verified as the website also makes mention of the training that they offer and that a qualified workforce is “essential for the region's economic prosperity and vitality” (Milwaukee Area Technical College, 2016).
Quality of life. In arguing for this policy advocacy proposal, one can not discount the importance that our students are counting on us to provide them with an education that maximizes their human potential by addressing both their cognitive and social development. This is extremely important in the Milwaukee Public School District, as over 80% of students in the district are below the poverty threshold. “Growing up in poverty is one of the greatest threats to healthy child development. Poverty and financial stress can impede children’s cognitive development and their ability to learn. It can contribute to behavioral, social and emotional problems and poor health” (Kids Count Data Center, 2016). Within the city of Milwaukee, it is reported that there are 64,000 children under the age of 18 living in poverty and another 26,000 living in extreme poverty. This significant fact alone is all the reason to ensure that there are strong instructional practices in each classroom of every school within Milwaukee Public Schools.

Cons

The reasons against the advocated lesson plan and design policy is embedded in the deep seated need to maintain status quo. Moving beyond the status quo would require one to confront behaviors associated with their hidden assumptions and competing commitments; both being byproducts of their immunity to change. “The busy place in our lives, the pressures of immediate deadlines, and the force of our own immune system can easily get in the way of good intentions and plans” (Wagner, et al., 2006).

Time to plan. It is without doubt that in order to meet the standards of planning as described in the proposed policy, teachers would need to devote time to prepare lessons. It is my contention that planning up front is beneficial and could actually save time. By creating lessons that are focused on student outcomes, teachers save time as it reduces the chance of getting off
task, not covering all of the content as needed and connections can be easily made to previous and future lessons. By devoting time to thorough planning, teachers maximize the instructional time; they are able to make connections to the lives of the students, promote high levels of student inquiry and engagement.

Not only is student learning time lost, but a failure to plan also wastes money. An example of this is illustrated as it relates to an elementary school spanning from kindergarten to grade 6. Milwaukee Public Schools spends on average, $9,000 per student each year. There are 1,050 instructional hours within a school year for elementary schools. The average class size has a student to teacher ratio of 29:1. Each hour of instructional time costs $8.57 per child. For a class of 29, the cost of instruction per hour equals $248.53. It is conceivable that on average it takes six hours per week to plan. One could also argue that failure to plan results in at least half of that time lost to gathering materials, settling down the class, making copies and so on. Over the course of the year, this would cost the district a whopping $26,841.24 per classroom; students would lose 6480 minutes of learning time. To this end, I say we cannot afford not to invest in spending the time up front to plan.

Another argument against the advocated policy would be echoed by those who perhaps have more teaching experience. Their argument could take shape as they may believe that because they are not novice teachers that they do not need to prepare lesson plans. They may believe that they have mastered the content and can rely on plans they have previously created. This may be true if the act of planning was technical. The type of planning proposed in the advocated policy would require teachers to become adaptive in their practices. It requires a deeper commitment to embrace the idea of planning with students’ long-term knowledge in mind and thus requires them to take into account their current student body rather than the students of
classes gone by. In addition, all plans since the start of the 2011 school year should be aligned to the Common Core State Standards which require a shift in instructional practices.

**Adding more to the plate.** The argument against the advocated policy is not one exclusive to teachers. I believe that school leaders will also share in this argument. The proposed policy would include requirements for school leaders to share in the planning process. It would be required of them to develop a process to actively engage with teachers as they work and learn together about lesson design and to regularly review teachers’ lesson plans in order to provide timely and useful feedback relative to the quality and execution of their plans and the impact of those plans on student achievement.

School leaders may argue that they do not have time for more monitoring and compliance checks; they are already stretched too thin. Conversely, I would argue that this is not a managerial task. In fact this requirement would further the district’s educational agenda. Participating in the learning alongside teachers about effective instructional strategies, and providing feedback about the instruction is perhaps one of the most meaningful instructional leadership tasks they can perform.

In short, the arguments surrounding both time and adding more to the plate are easily dispelled as shown in (Appendix A). This figure displays expectations for the monitoring and planning of instruction as included in the Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness Framework for both principals and teachers. The advocated policy is aligned with the current expectations and will require both principals and teachers to consider management of time, but not the expectation for practice.
Barriers

Milwaukee teacher’s education association. The Milwaukee Teacher’s Education Association, a certified bargaining representative through the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission has yet to realize its reduction in power that came with Act 10 Wisconsin. Act 10 Wisconsin, is in part, legislation that ended collective bargaining for public employees in the state of Wisconsin. As a result of this legislation, unions were left with the power to bargain base wages only. However, MPS still recognizes their former role and meets and confers with them over all other topics as previously included in their bargaining authority.

It is of popular opinion that the MTEA is now by-passing administration with the matters they used to negotiate and are going straight to the Milwaukee Board of School Directors. It is believed that the MTEA uses the art of persuasion to have individual Board members initiate Board Resolutions on matters they want implemented. As this policy would require a shift in planning and instructional practices that would change the status quo and working conditions, this could cause the MTEA and its members to mobilize and pose a threat for adoption of the proposed policy.

Too little too late. As the Greeks used the Trojan horse to infiltrate the city of Troy, so too have the charter school operators used the undeniable appeal of choice to infiltrate Milwaukee. It would seem that with each passing year, the number of charter schools continue to grow. Slow, incremental change is characteristic of Milwaukee Public Schools. This slow rate of change may not be fast enough to keep up with the growing number of charter schools who bring with them the kinds of innovative practices envisioned as a result of the adoption of the proposed policy. In addition, legislation has and will more than likely continue to be crafted that will further support the charter school movement. Such legislation coupled with the slow
incremental improvements could result in the discussion of lesson plans being a pointless shadow discussion blowing in the wind.
Policy Implementation Plan

The main objectives of this proposed policy is to shift the focus from activities to student outcomes, ensure coherently designed instruction, promote teacher collaboration, draw attention to reflective feedback and ensure reciprocal accountability. With this proposed policy, comes a responsibility to ensure that the needs of those implementing the plan are being met. In meeting these needs, consideration must be given to creating a shared vision for lesson planning and design, professional development, systems that support planning, collaboration, accountability and plans for communication.

In order to realize this goal, consideration has been given to the systemic change paradigm as described in Surviving Change: A Survey of Educational Change Models (Ellsworth, 2000), the author offers key underpinnings necessary of systemic reform:

- Ensure stakeholder involvement
- Designing for the ideal
- Understanding interrelationships
- (Re-) Creating a viable system

In addition to these underpinnings as described by Ellsworth, emphasis will also be placed on the implementation drivers as described in the Handbook of Implementation Science for Psychology in Education (Kelly & Perkins, 2012). The overarching goal of implementation of any educational initiative is to improve outcomes for children and families. The three drivers as illustrated in Figure 2, competency, organization and leadership should be included in implementation planning. This figure also illustrates the point that implementation is not a linear process thus agility is required.
Figure 1: Implementation Drivers. Adapted from Handbook of Implementation Science for Psychology in Education (p. 16), by B. Kelly and D. Perkins, 2012, New York, New York: Cambridge University Press. Copyright 2012 by the Cambridge University Press. Adapted with permission.

Competency Drivers

Selection. The advocated policy will pose adaptive challenges as it results in second order change. Second order change is that which requires change in behavior, challenges belief systems and undoubtedly stands to transform relationships and culture. As such, value must be placed on the human aspect of the advocated policy. The process must ensure that everyone affected has input and can participate. In addition, there must be a unified effort to realize the best possible outcome. This is accomplished by ensuring that all efforts are coordinated pulling in the same direction avoiding “us vs. them” mentality. In The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009), the authors asserts:

The failure to take into account the diagnosis of the human aspects of adaptive challenges, and the tendency to treat the diagnostic task like any other analytical, expert
task that can be separated from the cultural and political human dimensions of the situation is a primary cause of low implementation rates (pp. 69-70)

Therefore, a policy implementation team must be created in order to craft and carry out the proposed policy. This implementation team should be comprised of key stakeholder including teachers, district level personnel, principals, the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association (MTEA) and the Office of Board Governance. Building a shared vision for the proposed policy begins by acknowledging that each group represented on the implementation team will bring their own perspective to the conversation. In addition careful consideration must be given to their values, loyalties, hidden alliances, power, influence and losses at risk (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

It goes without saying that values, beliefs and norms stand in the gap between the mission, vision, goals and desired outcomes. It will be important for those on the implementation team to possess the dispositions needed to promote a win-win situation for all. They must be willing to confront their assumptions, fears and be ready to take a stand in the name of the students being served. This team must work to make sure they are not viewed as top down authority but instead as representative of the system and that their work is legitimate and must remain focused on the betterment of academic achievement for all students. In essence, the implementation team would be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the implementation drivers are reflective in their work.

Milwaukee Public Schools has been identified as a district in need of improvement by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). As such, sanctions have been placed on the district to achieve more coherence and improve educational outcomes for all students. To this end, the district has partnered with the DPI and WestEd, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research,
development service agency that works to promote excellence and equity in education (West Ed, 2015), to implement systems that promote coherence in district improvement. To assist with this process, the district uses the ImpleMap Process Chart of Action Planning Implementation to assist in guiding the implementation process (See Appendix B). The implementation team will use the same tool to guide them in the process of implementing the changes to the lesson plan policy. An explanation of each section of the tool follows.

**Training.** In designing for the ideal policy, consideration must be given to professional development, and coaching. “Lacking the skills and confidence to implement new ways, they resist or even sabotage, awaiting the return of good old days” (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 323). When planning for professional development, thought must be given to the andragogical principles to be applied during professional development in order to maximize adult learning. In *The Adult Lerner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development* (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012), the authors suggest that the following elements be included in the process of involving adult learners:

- Preparing the learner
- Establishing a climate conducive to learning
- Creating a mechanism for mutual planning
- Diagnosing the needs for learning
- Formulating program objective
- Designing a pattern of learning experiences
- Conducting these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials
- Evaluation the learning outcome and re-diagnosing learning needs
The professional development system for Milwaukee Public Schools will be used as the framework to support learning for all (see Appendix C). The current system reinforces the notion that all stakeholders need to be involved in the learning process. District level personnel, principals and instructional coaches will receive professional development on the same learning that the teachers will receive. This training will occur well before the start of professional development for teachers. They will also receive pertinent information and training relative to the role they will play in supporting and facilitating the learning of teachers as they implement the proposed policy. A school-based professional learning roadmap will be developed that outlines the scope and sequence of the professional development activities. Opportunities to practice and receive feedback on the implementation of work around the proposed policy will be provided on a regular basis.

Professional development would be a collaborative experience. Teachers would be provided with time to learn in a collaborative setting during and after the school day. Teachers will also be afforded the opportunity to work outside of their school communities through virtual work groups. These workgroups would be facilitated by school based academic coaches and teacher leaders. These work sessions would be structured to allow for teacher work groups to learn together about pedagogy and to design and discuss lessons or units that will allow them to focus more on pedagogical strategies. These professional development work groups would also promote the self-monitoring of their own learning, while serving as resources to one another.
Coaching. In order to effectively implement the plan, there would be a need to provide coaching to assist in reinforcing key concepts of learning, embedding learning into practice and to guide practitioners through the process of self-reflection and continuous professional growth. As expressed in *Leading for Instructional Improvement: How Successful Leaders Develop Teaching and Learning Expertise* (Fink & Markholt, 2011), “Our experience tells us that coaching changes teacher practice and amplifies student learning” (p.191). Each school in the district currently has an instructional coach who would serve in this capacity. As with classroom teachers, it is reasonable to ensure that each of the coaches receive professional development to ensure that they are able to provide the support and intervention necessary to realize the goals of the proposed policy. (See Appendix D)

Organization Drivers

Support data systems. In keeping the goals of the advocated policy in mind, outcome data would need to identified and collected regularly. By employing the cycle of continuous improvement the implementation team would engage in regular analysis and debrief conversations as a means to evaluate their efforts in order improve implementation strategies and outcomes. The school leaders and instructional coaches would play an integral role in collecting and reporting this data to the implementation team.

Systems intervention. Much like the other two aspects of organizational drivers, systems intervention works to ensure that formative data is being used to make timely adjustments to implementation. It takes into account the need to ensure that external factors do not impede implementation. This may include ensuring that collaborative planning time is considered as sacred and is available to all teachers within the school day or that individuals are celebrated and that budget implications do not impinge on implementation.
**Facilitative administration.** Facilitative administration is what I believe to be one of the most critical pieces to implementation. With facilitative administration comes the requirement to make sure that the end result works as a coherent whole. It involves removing barriers that may inhibit continuous adaptation to the changes in the culture and behaviors necessary in realizing improved educational outcomes for students. When thinking in terms of the facilitative administration, a key question to ask is what structures need to be in place to support the new set of processes?

**Leadership Drivers**

While the advocated policy calls for second order change, both technical and adaptive leadership will be needed in order to affect such change thus, “Leadership begins with the diagnostic work of separating a problem’s technical elements from its adaptive elements” (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009, p. 70). For instance, technical leadership would come into play when deciding on what the lesson plan template should look like and if there will be a digital space for teachers to complete their plans. However, the introduction of the new policy and its requirement to shift practice from activity based planning to student outcome based planning would be an example of when adaptive leadership practices would come into play.
Policy Assessment Plan

In order to monitor the results of the advocated policy, an assessment plan will be put into place. Designed as a system of continuous improvement, this plan will support, measure and inform teaching and learning, professional development and outcomes of the advocated policy. Embedded in this plan will be a system of accountability for all individuals responsible for policy implementation. This accountability structure will include central office personnel, principals, teachers, instructional coaches and the implementation team. This is aligned with the statement as expressed in *Turning High-Poverty Schools into High-Performing Schools* (Parrett & Budge, 2012), “Without transformation of the relationship between leaders throughout the system, the success achieved in individual schools will prove difficult to sustain” (Parrett & Budge, 2012, p. 184).

The goal of the proposed policy is to create conditions for improved teaching and learning by strengthening the foundation of instruction through quality lesson planning and design. The success of this plan will hinge on the degree to which the lessons as designed are poised to yield high levels of rigor, student engagement and academic achievement. Therefore, each school will be required to create a theory of action as it relates to improving the learning experiences for students. Developing theories of action is a critical step in realizing the goal of the proposed policy. In *Educational Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning* (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009), a theory of action can be thought of as:

- The story line that makes a vision and a strategy concrete
- A line of narrative for the leader that leads people through the daily complexity and distractions that compete with the main work of the instructional core
- Providing the map the carries the vision through the organization
- A way of testing assumptions and suppositions of the vision against the unfolding realities of the work in an actual organization with actual people (p.40)

From this theory of action, schools will develop an action plan supported by high yield strategies aligned to the theory of action. An action plan will be created for both reading and mathematics. The theory of action, action plan and its strategies will be included in Teaching and Learning section of each school’s School Improvement Plan (SIP). Each school’s SIP will be reviewed by the Regional Core Team. This team will be comprised of the Regional Superintendent, the Regional Director of School Support, the Regional Manager of Specialized Services, the School Performance Coordinator, the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Coordinator and a district level Instructional Coach. Members of the Implementation Team will be invited to participate in any or all of the High Quality Instruction (HQI) visits. Upon review of the plan, the regional team will begin to assist schools in testing their theories of action. In doing so, they will engage school personnel, and the implementation team in collaborative processes that includes three interdependent components. The three proposed interdependent components of this system are:

- High Quality Instruction (HQI) school site visits
- School leader data reviews
- Continuous improvement cycle reviews

An outline of the three components and their functions follows.

**HQI School Site Visits**

The purpose of the HQI site visit is to gather data about implementation and fidelity. It is a means to promote continuous improvement and reciprocal accountability. There are three
distinct stages of the HQI site visits - planning, classroom visits and feedback. The Regional Core Team and school-based team will be provided with training to support their efforts around conducting HQI site visits. School-based teams may conduct classroom visits at any time. The process as written herein, is the process that will be used by the Regional Core Team.

**Planning.** Prior to the site visit, the Regional Core Team will review each schools SIP using the Regional School Improvement Quality Assurance Flowchart (See Appendix E). Members of the Implementation team will be invited to take part of this process but will not be mandated to do so. The flowchart will serve as a means to ensure the integrity of the process is maintained throughout the district. In reviewing the SIP, team members will be looking for alignment between the theory of action and the strategies as outlined in the action plan.

Upon reviewing the plan, two members of the team will then meet with the school leader and engage in reflective conversation about the plan. They will discuss any revisions that need to be made and determine dates for resubmission. If it is determined that the school based team will need technical assistance in completing the plan, a core team member will be assigned to provide such assistance or connect the school based team with the appropriate resource. If the team and the principal decide that the plan is aligned to expectations, the conversation will then proceed to include scheduling of the site visit. Discussion will be centered on, date of visit, school scheduling, building layout, and delivery of feedback.
Classroom visits. During the classroom visits, members of the Regional Core Team will be joined by the principal or a member of the Learning Team. Implementation Team members will be invited to take part in this process but will not be mandated to do so. The classroom visits will be conducted in order to collect evidence and artifacts relative to policy implementation. This is the stage that the proposed policy comes to life. This is where we should see the fruits of the work that has been done in order to implement the policy; in essence, this is when theory is transferred into practice.

Team members will spend between seven to fifteen minutes in each classroom. No more than three team members will enter a classroom at a time. While in the classroom, team members will make careful note of any observable actions employed by students and teachers that indicate implementation of strategies as outlined in the action plans. They should be looking for what I call instructional congruence. Instructional congruence is the sum of the parts that make up the student learning experience. These elements could include, teacher lesson plans, teacher and student talk—students and teachers engaged in meaningful conversation or tasks that promote various kinds of understanding is the understanding saturated in problem-solving, reasoning and inquiry, the use of rubrics, as well as student work samples which could be in real time or previously completed.

After the classroom visits, all observers will return as a whole group and engage in a debriefing conversation with members of the learning team. The premise behind this part of the visit is really to help shape a space where the truth is heard. In Good to Great (Collins, 2001), the author states that in creating a climate where the truth is heard involves four basic practices:

1. Lead with questions, not answers

2. Engage in dialogue and debate, not coercion
3. Conduct autopsies, without blame

4. Build red flag mechanisms that turn information into information that cannot be ignored (p.88).

The debriefing conversations will be about data collected during the classroom visits as well as data that may be important to the conversation not evident during the classroom visits. Such evidence could include attendance, suspension and perception data. The information discussed during the debriefing session will be used to craft feedback for the learning team to reflect and take action on.

**Feedback.** In an effort to increase the amount of purposeful interactions and continuous improvement between and among staff, this essential competent is included in the process. In *Visible Learning a Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement* (Hattie, 2009), the author declares, “The most powerful single influence enhancing achievement is feedback.” Feedback will be provided to the Learning Team within 48 hours of the school visit. Teams will be provided with explicit, descriptive feedback that encourages them to use their strengths as leverage to achieve greater levels of implementation.

**School Leader Data Reviews**

Principals will engage in collaborative inquiry and action planning data reviews three times a year during the regularly scheduled regional operational meetings. Principals will be organized into groups composed of a facilitator, a summarizer, and three to four peers. In *School Reform from the Inside out: Policy, Practice, and Performance* (Elmore, 2004), the author maintains that “Leaders must create environments in which individuals expect to have their personal ideas and practices subjected to scrutiny of their colleagues. Privacy of practice produces isolation; isolation is the enemy of improvement” (p.67). The Tuning Protocol
described below, will be utilized during each presentation as principals present their efforts around implementing the action steps relative to their theory of action. The Regional Core team members will serve as “facilitators”, and extended team members will be invited to serve as “summarizers”.

As previously mentioned, the Tuning Protocol includes the following steps. Prior to the session, each principal will work collaboratively with the school community to craft a focus question they would welcome feedback to as it relates to implementation of the proposed policy. This focus question would be based on the data their school has collected, including formative assessment data, demographic data, perception data and the feedback that was generated following the HQI site visits. Each principal will present all pertinent evidence and seek feedback from their peers. Principals will be expected to take suggestions from these sessions back to their school communities to assist in revising current action plans.

**Continuous Improvement Cycle Reviews**

In order to maintain the goals set forth by the implementation team, there will be a comprehensive approach to analyzing all of the data points in order to make adjustments, and maintain focus on the implementation plan. In the third part to the policy assessment plan, each Regional Core Team will make a presentation to the Implementation Team. The presentation will serve as a means to focus on celebrations, reveal truths about current state, share interventions needed, and to discuss expectations for future progress. The Continuous Improvement Review Planning Organizer will be used to guide the presentation. (See Appendix F).
**Student Achievement**

While we are aware that there are many factors that come into play when describing the critical attributes of student academic achievement, it cannot be ignored that frequent monitoring of and responding to student assessment data has a leading role. In addition to the measures in place to assess the effectiveness of the plan, frequent monitoring of student achievement and perception data will take place.

A combination of universal screener data and student perception data will serve as two initial data points to determine the effectiveness of the proposed policy. Baseline data will be gathered prior to implementation of the proposed policy and will be used as a point of reference with each administration of the assessment.

The perception data is gathered from five indicators that help to predict important outcomes that will promote high levels of student achievement. Attention will be given to the student section of this survey, with special attention to those questions designed to evoke student opinions about engagement and instructional rigor.

While it is understood that there may be many contributing factors to the results of the data it is believed that with close analysis of the student achievement and perception data coupled with the observational data, one will be able to make assumptions about the intended effects of the proposed policy.
Summary Impact Statement

This impact statement stands to offer reflections of the advocated policy and describes the envisioned consequences as a result of implementing the advocated policy in the context as intended. There is constant conversation around improving classroom instruction in order to lose the achievement gap. In these conversations we hear educated professionals spew their educational jargon yet, for all of the expertise, the great achievement gap has not closed. It is my contention that in order to close the achievement gap for students attending Milwaukee Public Schools, we must limit our rhetoric and adopt and implement the advocated lesson plan and design policy.

Appropriate and Best Policy

At first glance, the future seems quite bleak for Milwaukee Public Schools—the district is poised for a takeover, the former Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan called the district a disgrace, families are choosing other schooling options for the children and the list goes on. But despite these challenges, there is hope. The advocated policy has merit and promise to change the culture of the entire district, empower our teachers and leaders, improve the quality of life for our students and transform our community at large. The advocated policy would stand to mean that we as a district support the notion that every classroom should have a highly qualified teacher who provides quality instruction that is well planned and takes into account by design, the student learning outcomes as impetus for planning.

Some consider the practice of lesson planning as antiquated. I refute that statement and am of the belief that as a result of this policy, every classroom teacher in our district will effectively facilitate the dynamics of a quality learning environment where books and mind numbing worksheets are abandoned and in turn, students are engaged in lessons that require
them to lead, question, collaborate, and think critically. Whereas this kind of instruction is incredible it is not possible without proper, intentional planning.

Values, Needs and Vision

Each day that we open the doors of a school we are publicly declaring that we have equipped each classroom with a culturally competent teacher who is prepared to provide instruction that is provocative and intellectually engaging. We are declaring that we will safeguard spaces for collaboration, inquiry and professional development. We are declaring that we value the teaching profession and will ensure that each teacher has been given the tools, resources, training and support needed in order to carry out this noble and rewarding task.

When we open the doors of our schools, we are exclaiming to each student that they are our number one priority. We are letting them know that they are worthy of a quality education and that we will take the necessary steps to prove it. We are exclaiming that each lesson is intentionally designed with their unique talents, abilities, strengths, and cultures in mind. We are exclaiming that we believe that they have promising futures and will ensure that they are provided with the skills necessary to reach their highest human potential.

When we open the doors of our schools, we are assuring our communities that they are making high yield tax investments with great returns. We are assuring that we will produce positive, contributing members of the community. We are assuring that we will thrive economically, as we will produce educated, resourceful and employable candidates who possess the skills, disposition and knowledge that are matched to meet the needs of the changing workforce.
Because we recognize that lesson planning is the linchpin to quality instruction, and as such have implemented a policy that has promise to improve teaching and learning. The next time we open the doors of our schools, we can stand confident in knowing that the declarations and assurances we are publicly making are not just rhetoric but are in fact reality.
References


Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (2014, February 18). *Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction*. Retrieved from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: http://fns.dpi.wi.gov/fns.progstat


### Appendix A

#### Expectations for Monitoring of and Planning Classroom Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal (Monitoring)</th>
<th>Teacher (Planning)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Regularly gives staff timely, clear, and actionable feedback based on observations,</td>
<td>● Lesson and unit plans reflect important concepts in the discipline and knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other evidence sources, and evaluation criteria</td>
<td>of academic standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Appropriately documents and addresses weak performance, including intervention plans</td>
<td>● Lesson and unit plans reflect tasks authentic to the content area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when needed, leading to improved performance or other appropriate outcomes</td>
<td>● Lesson and unit plans accommodate prerequisite relationships among concepts and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Leads and regularly monitors a coherent standards-based curricular and instructional</td>
<td>skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>program to deliver rigorous academic content to all students</td>
<td>● Lesson and unit plans reflect knowledge of academic standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Establishes and supports ongoing development of collaborative work groups</td>
<td>● Formal and informal information about students gathered by the teacher for use in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Assesses collaboration to keep focus on instruction as well as teacher and student</td>
<td>planning instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning</td>
<td>● Student interests and needs learned by the teacher for use in planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Provides consistent, common planning periods</td>
<td>● Targets reflect clear expectations that are aligned to grade level standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Periodically participates with collaborative teams to identify solutions to difficult</td>
<td>● Statements of student learning, not student activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>problems</td>
<td>● Lesson plans indicating correspondence between assessments and instructional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Evidence of collaboration with colleagues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Resources are culturally responsive</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Variety of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Variety of instructional strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Same learning target, differentiated pathways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Lessons that support instructional outcomes and reflect important concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Instructional maps that indicate relationships to prior learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Activities that represent high-level thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Opportunities for student choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Use of varied resources - Thoughtfully planned learning groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Structured lesson plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Creation/curation/selection of materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

**Implement Process Chart for Action Planning Implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Competency Drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will you select the Implementation Team?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you select the trainers? (Are they internal or external staff?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What training is required?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When will the various trainings occur?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the proper sequence for the trainings given other trainings for</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>staff throughout the year with other initiatives?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What pedagogical principles are expected for all trainers in order to</td>
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<tr>
<td>maximize adult learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will the training be structured to ensure ample safe practice is</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>available for staff before live application?</td>
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<tr>
<td>For mid-year additions of staff and staff who miss trainings, what is</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the process for catching them up adequately?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will training evolve as the stages of implementation are achieved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will new selections be made as turnover occurs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coaching</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the coaching philosophy expected for all coaches (and when did</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they get training on it, as well as coaching on their coaching?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will the implementation team ensure there is coaching directly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>following all training to ensure implementation bumps/gaps are short?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will coaching evolve as the stages of implementation are achieved?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Assessment</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What data can be collected on the quality of implementing the core</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>components of the program/practice/plan?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Who will collect data on the quality of implementation?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How will the implementation team ensure there is inter-rater reliability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on performance assessment measures?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How often will data be collected to make decisions, intervene and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>celebrate?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will the type of data collected change as the stages of implementation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are achieved?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Supporting Data System</th>
<th>Organizational Drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will formative implementation data be collected, stored, analyzed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and represented in a manner that ensures it is useful for the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation team to drive decisions, interventions and celebrations?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitative Administration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When will the implementation team meet?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who makes the agenda, takes notes and sends communications?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How will meetings be structured such that they are used to review</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>performance data, make decisions, intervene and plan celebrations?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will the team ensure it is following its charter of removing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>barriers to implementation and maintaining staff buy-in (as opposed to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being perceived as group practicing top down accountability)?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention and Celebration</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will the implementation team ensure the formative data is used to</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>make immediate decisions resulting in rapid action?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How will the team ensure they can influence training and coaching to</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>catch and shorten implementation bumps/gaps rapidly?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What mechanisms will be in place to celebrate progress in a way that</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>keeps stakeholders bought-in and feeling successful?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Leadership</th>
<th>Adaptive Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will leadership team members build expertise on the core</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>components of the program as well as on the expectations as a team on</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>implementation responsibilities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>When do leadership team members get coaching on the technical aspects</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>of the program/practice/plan?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will leaders sustain the program over time as the</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>implementation stages are achieved?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What flexibility is there in place to allow the leadership team to be</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>adaptive (as opposed to rigid) while ensuring the core components are</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>fully implemented?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will leaders get support as being adaptive leaders (as opposed to</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>unresponsive)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will leaders adapt to the need change over time as the</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>implementation stages are achieved?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Adapted by Ian Guidera, WestEd from Fixsen and Blase, 2008
Appendix C

Professional Development System

Systems of Learning

Learning Communities
- District Leadership
- Regional Teams
- School-based Professional Learning—All Teachers

Institutes
- Leadership-Principals
- Assistant Principals
- School Support Teachers
- New Educators
- Parent Coordinators
- Facilitators Academy

Select Groups—Required Training/Professional Development
- Assessment
- Special Education
- Infinite Campus
- Other

Self-Selected Professional Development
- Professional Development Sessions offered by Departments

Adapted from Milwaukee Public Schools Office of Curriculum and Instruction, 2016
Regional School Improvement Plan
Quality Assurance Flowchart

An incomplete SIP results in a Plan for Rapid Compliance (PRC).

A complete SIP results in a SIP Review by Core/Extended Team Members.

Reflective conversations with principal about SIP and determine next steps.

IF SIP elements are NOT aligned, THEN......

Technical assistance provided to analyze data (needs assessment), conduct a root cause analysis (5 Whys), develop a theory of action (use criteria), and align action plans/steps to Theory of Action.

IF SIP elements ARE aligned, THEN....

Internal Quality Assurance: real-time evidence of SIP action plan implementation (HQI walkthroughs and school visits)
- Teacher action step(s)
- Student action step(s)
- Professional Development action step(s)

Feedback to learning team.

SIP Review by Core/Extended Team Members – process begins again.
## Continuous Improvement Review Planning Organizer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Meeting Location</th>
<th>Date of School Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPS Team Members Present</td>
<td>SIP Action Steps and Tasks Completed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SIP Action Steps and Tasks Overdue as School Review</td>
<td>Plan for Remedy of Overdue Tasks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Progress to Celebrate for This Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intervention Needs for This Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact/Implications of Interventions on Others</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreshadowing of Important Upcoming Events Related to This Strategy</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Milwaukee Public Schools Office of Curriculum and Instruction, 2016