







## Team Exercise 2.2: Take Stock: Your Seven Disciplines for Strengthening Instruction

### Overview

This diagnostic tool can help you assess your efforts to implement the Seven Disciplines. We suggest you fill out this diagnostic individually first and then compare results with your colleagues, holding discussion among yourselves until everyone has a chance to weigh in. The discussion that follows will clarify your understanding of the disciplines themselves and almost certainly identify the most promising areas for further work in your school or district. We also encourage you not to skip over the identification of evidence. These indicators can be the most powerful discussion prompts and build a shared idea of what is, and what needs to be.

This diagnostic can be used with different groups—principals, teachers, and central office administrators—to see to what degree views differ and can be usefully explored. The diagnostic can also be given periodically as an informal assessment of progress in these areas.

Diagnostic: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_

1. The district or school creates understanding and urgency around improving all students' learning for teachers and community, and it regularly reports on progress.
  - Data are disaggregated and transparent to everyone.
  - Qualitative (focus groups and interviews) as well as quantitative data are used to understand students' and recent graduates' experience of school.

Not yet started   1   2   3   4   Well established

Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. A widely shared vision of what is good teaching is focused on rigorous expectations, relevant curricula, and respectful relationships in the classroom.

Not yet started   1   2   3   4   Well established

Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*(Continued)*

3. All adult meetings are about instruction and are models of good teaching.

Not yet started 1 2 3 4 Well established

Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. There are well-defined standards and performance assessments for student work at all grade levels. Teachers and students understand what quality work looks like, and there is consistency in standards of assessment.

Not yet started 1 2 3 4 Well established

Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Supervision is frequent, rigorous, and entirely focused on the improvement of instruction. It is done by people who know what good teaching looks like.

Not yet started 1 2 3 4 Well established

Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Professional development is primarily on-site, intensive, collaborative, and job-embedded and is designed and led by educators who model best teaching and learning practices.

Not yet started 1 2 3 4 Well established

Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Data are used diagnostically at frequent intervals by teams of teachers to assess each student's learning and to identify the most effective teaching practices. Teams have time built into their schedules for this shared work.

Not yet started 1 2 3 4 Well established

Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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4. What areas of commonality can you build on?

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5. Where do you disagree?

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6. What questions do your disagreements raise?

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7. What else do you need to learn?

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Typically, these observations help educators become clearer about their individual definitions of key concepts such as “rigor.” What is much more powerful, we find, is for a team of educators to observe the same lessons and share their responses to these questions. You can imagine how a conversation that addresses the previous questions not only challenges individuals to clarify, rethink, and refine their own definitions but can also allow the whole team to come to powerful, shared understandings.



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## Team Exercise 4.1: Reaction Versus Purpose and Focus Diagnostic

You and your team can use this exercise to assess the way in which your district or school “does business” along this dimension.

### Step One

As a group, first decide whether you want to focus on the problem statement you generated in Chapter One and possibly rewrote in Chapter Two or on the district’s work more broadly.

### Step Two

Individually, rate your district or school on the continua relative to your problem statement (or more broadly). We have provided some examples of what a system might look like at either end of this spectrum. Enter your ratings under the arrows and use the space below to jot down specific examples or evidence of your rating.

*Purpose and focus* refers to whether you have a goal that is clearly focused and understood. Note that it is not about how well you are doing in relation to your goal.

General questions to consider include:

1. Is there a clear district or school focus?

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2. Is this focus widely known throughout the system?

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3. Are we able to resist certain pulls and tugs because they are peripheral to our purpose?

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Some indicators of what a system at either end of the spectrum might look like follow. Use these to rate your school or district on the continuum.

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## Team Exercise 4.2: Compliance Versus Engagement Diagnostic

You and your team can use this exercise to assess the way in which your district or school “does business” along this dimension.

### Step One

As a group, first decide whether you want to focus on the problem statement you generated in Chapter One and possibly rewrote in Chapter Two or on the district’s work more broadly.

### Step Two

Individually, rate your district or school on the continua relative to your problem statement (or more broadly). We have provided some examples of what a system might look like at either end of this spectrum. Enter your ratings under the arrows and use the space below each to jot down specific examples or evidence of your rating.

As you assess the level of *engagement* in your school or district, here are some general questions to get you started:

1. How much ownership is there among all adults in the system and how do you know?

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2. Is there ownership just at the top, or do people throughout the system feel genuinely committed to the instructional improvement goals?

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3. How much does it seem people are working to meet someone else’s goal versus meeting their own, or a goal they co-own?

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4. Are people participating productively during meetings?

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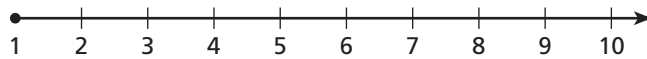
Here are some specific indicators of both ends of the continuum.

**Compliance**

- Teachers and principals are expected to “go along” with mandates; no procedures exist for generating conversation and collaborative decision making.
- Communication tends to be one-way.
- Culture tends to be rule and procedure driven.
- Teachers and principals do not take risks and do not investigate successes and failures.

**Engagement**

- Productive dialogue and debate regarding organizational strategies and goals are nurtured.
- Communication is multidirectional.
- Culture is characterized by strong sense of personal and shared responsibility for the strategies and goals of the district.
- Professional discourse is focused on learning from professional challenges.



**Step Three**

Take turns sharing individual ratings for this scale. Enter these ratings in the following graph. Explain why you gave the rating you did. Provide specific examples if you can.

<i>Engagement</i>										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Totals</b>										

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### Team Exercise 4.3: Isolation Versus Collaboration Diagnostic

You and your team can use this exercise to assess the way in which your district or school “does business” along this dimension.

#### Step One

As a group, first decide whether you want to focus on the problem statement you generated in Chapter One and possibly rewrote in Chapter Two or on the district’s work more broadly.

#### Step Two

Individually, rate your district or school on the continua relative to your problem statement (or more broadly). We have provided some examples of what a system might look like at either end of this spectrum. Enter your ratings under the arrows and use the space below each to jot down specific examples or evidence of your rating. Here are some questions to consider:

1. Are meetings focused on learning, teaching, and leading?

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2. Do organizational members possess and use the skills of dialogue and inquiry?

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3. Do people share problems of practice at meetings?

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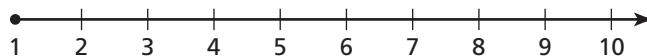
Some indicators of what a system at either end of the spectrum might look like follow:

#### ***Isolation***

- Teachers and administrators work in *isolation*.
- There is no opportunity or urgency for collective problem solving.
- Good leading and teaching exist as random acts of excellence in the system; there is little dissemination of best practice.
- There are few expectations for collaborative work among adults.

#### ***Collaboration***

- The work of teachers and administrators is a public enterprise within the school.
- Educators collectively solve problems that inhibit effective teaching and learning.
- Standards of practice for teaching and leading exist, and are shared and specific.
- There are clear and shared expectations around the nature and ends of *collaboration*.



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## Team Exercise 6.1: 4 C's Diagnostic Tool—As Is

### Step One

Using a blank version of the 4 C's chart provided, put the problem you defined in Chapter Two in the center of the overlapping circles.

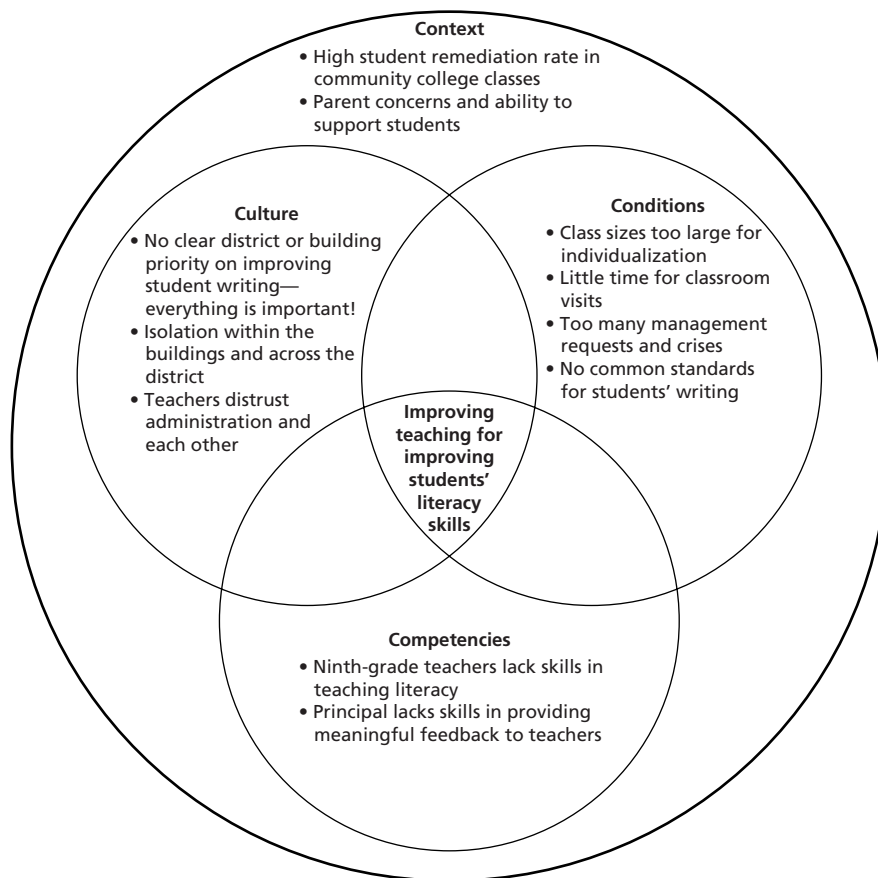
### Step Two

Now take some time to reflect on the contributors to your current system as they relate to the problem you've identified. The following questions can get you started.

#### Competencies

*How well do we:*

- Think strategically?
- Identify student learning needs?
- Gather and interpret data?
- Collaborate?
- Give and receive critiques?
- Productively disagree?
- Reflect and make midcourse corrections?



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## Team Exercise 8.1–8.3: Change Phase Diagnostic

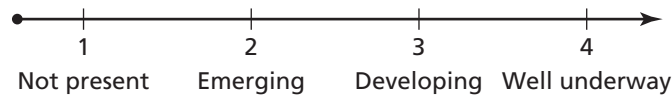
This survey is designed to help identify where your school or district is within the phases of change.

### Step One

Please respond to each statement individually. Indicate where you believe your school or district falls in respect to the change levers in each of the phases. You can use the indicators below each continuum to help in your assessment. The indicators are illustrative, not complete.

#### Preparing Phase

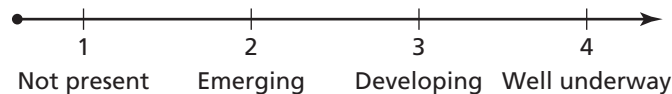
##### DATA FOR LEADERSHIP UNDERSTANDING AND URGENCY



#### Indicators of Data in Preparing Phase:

- Leadership has created compelling data sets that have the potential to create urgency (they can mobilize the intellect and passion of people to alter the status quo and their individual behavior).
- Current qualitative and quantitative data have been gathered and then formatted in a way to generate urgency to change or address a specific problem or challenge.
- Leadership has developed an understanding of the gap between the current reality of the schools and the demands the twenty-first century puts on high school graduates.
- Leadership has developed a clear plan for how to educate the community about the specific challenge(s) using compelling data sets.
- Leadership oversees a general inventory of data systems to understand how useable and useful the current data are to the necessary consumers of it [for example, How accessible is data throughout the system? What form(s) is collected and disseminated? Do the people who need to use the data have the necessary skills to use it effectively?]

##### ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SOLVING A COMMON PROBLEM



#### Indicators of Accountability in Preparing Phase:

- The current state of schooling is openly examined in the context of a dramatically changing economy and society, reducing any sense of blame or victimization among educators throughout schools and districts.
- Educators throughout the system begin to understand that the challenge of educating students for the twenty-first century is everyone's responsibility, one where administrators and teachers share accountability for the problem and the solution.
- A leadership team is created or rechartered for the purpose of overseeing, guiding, and nurturing the overall reinvention process.

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- Leadership understands the need for and agrees to next steps for engaging a critical mass of shareholders (inside the schools and among community members) in understanding the problem.
- Leadership gains a shared understanding of what graduating students need to know and be able to do, and this understanding begins to inform next steps.

**BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES AND COMMUNITY**

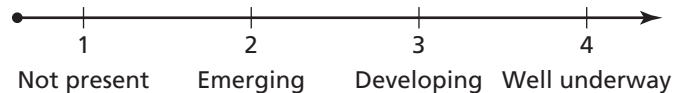


**Indicators of Relationships in Preparing Phase:**

- Leadership team has a shared understanding of the cultural dimensions of a successful change process (that is, collaboration, commitment, and proactivity/redesign as cornerstones of an effective culture, and that norms of no shame, no blame, and no excuses enable these cornerstones to take hold).
- Leadership applies these values to how they work together as a team.
- Leadership works to surface and address dysfunctional relationships throughout the system so as to enable new forms of collaboration.
- Leadership creates new constructive relationships with and cosponsorship of the change efforts with necessary leaders among shareholders (for example, teachers associations, parent groups, community members, businesses).

**Envisioning Phase**

**DATA FOR COMMUNITY-WIDE UNDERSTANDING AND URGENCY**



**Indicators of Data in Envisioning Phase:**

- Qualitative and quantitative data sets concerning the functioning of the school system (for example, indicators of student achievement and student engagement) are widely and transparently shared with the greater community.
- A large number of shareholders understand the gap between where the district needs to be and the current reality.
- An open and honest assessment of how professionals within the district work together and how the district functions as a system is the focus of district dialogue and action.
- Data are gathered (for example, by conducting learning walks) around current teaching practices.

**LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR RECIPROCAL, RELATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY**



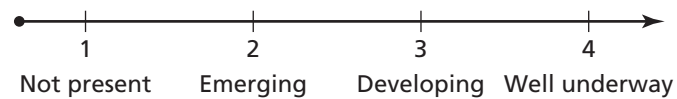
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### Indicators of Accountability in Envisioning Phase:

A few clear districtwide goals and strategies, focusing on improving teaching and learning, are established.

- The community develops a deep understanding of the current gap between what graduates presently know and are able to do and what they need to know and be able to do to thrive in twenty-first century.
- Community shareholders have been brought together to help develop goals and foci for the change work.
- Community shareholders develop a sense of what they are accountable for in relation to helping all students develop the necessary new skills.
- Greater clarity is reached concerning what district leadership is accountable for to the community shareholders.
- Teachers and administrators have an emerging understanding of the need for everyone in the system to improve professional practice.

### DEVELOPING MORE TRUSTING, RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

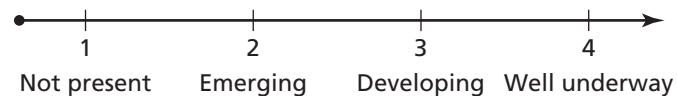


### Indicators of Relationships in Envisioning Phase:

- Patterns of forthright communication and positive collaboration between (and among) the district and its constituent groups have been developed.
- School-level collaboration among teachers has increased.
- The quality of discourse in working meetings throughout the district has increased, creating the opportunity for all educators to engage in collaborative and productive ways.
- Educators understand the need to work more collaboratively on instructional practice and have begun grade-level and cross-school discussions.
- School-level meetings are more directly focused on the issues of teaching and learning and the meetings tend to model powerful instructional practice.

### Enacting Phase

#### DATA FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING



### Indicators of Data in Enacting Phase:

- Systems of data collection and analysis are constructed to monitor the implementation and impact of improvement strategies.
- Data are being used at the district level to identify pockets of success from which to identify best practice.
- Data concerning the quality of instruction are continuously gathered and analyzed by administrators and teachers.
- In each school, data are used diagnostically at frequent intervals by teams of teachers to refine school assessments and goals, monitor student progress, and continually improve instruction.
- Assessments of school quality and effectiveness rely on multiple and varied sources of data concerning student achievement and engagement (test scores, promotion rates, dropout rates, and the like).

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## SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNING AND TEACHING



### Indicators of Accountability in Enacting Phase:

- District leadership has developed and has implemented a structure for providing frequent, rigorous, and focused supervision of school principals' instructional leadership.
- School leadership has developed and implemented a structure for providing frequent, rigorous, and focused supervision of classroom instruction.
- The structure and content of teacher supervision at the school level are aligned with the focus of district improvement efforts.
- Schools have begun to create vivid and clear standards of professional practice based on research-tested and practice-based understandings of how students learn. In other words, teachers and administrators share collective definitions of what constitutes effective instructional practice.
- Expectations and responsibility for student outcomes are clarified for and aligned through grade and school division (elementary, middle, high) levels.
- All educators have a greater sense of what they are being held accountable for, and these more collectively held expectations form the basis of more horizontal accountability.
- All professionals at the district and school levels understand the relation between their work and role and the improvement of instruction.

## TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS FOR WORKING IN NEW WAYS



### Indicators of Relationships in Enacting Phase:

- Schools have been reorganized to provide the conditions necessary to facilitate collaborative teamwork among adults and to foster personalized learning communities for students.
- Professional relationships become increasingly effective as trust throughout the system increases and deepens.
- Professionals begin to open up their practice among colleagues, working to improve their respective competencies while simultaneously developing consistent and increasingly effective standards of practice.
- Parents and community members are welcomed into schools and are more actively involved in the collective enterprise of improving student learning (for example, community members are involved as mentors, or parents are providing students a time and place for studying at home).

### Step Two

Share your individual assessments with your group, using the indicators to help explain your thinking. Be prepared to offer examples as evidence to help develop a shared understanding of what is meant by each phase and where your school or district really is in the change process.

*(Continued)*





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## Team Exercise 10: A Groupwide Approach to Diagnosing the Immunity to Change

### Overview

The purpose of this exercise is to provide a safe forum for a group to discover and act on the variety of threats, barriers, or impediments that get in the way of successful functioning and the shared beliefs or assumptions that hold them in place. After you read through the steps and discussion that follow—and before you decide to use this tool—we suggest that you consider your comfort level with the intense discussion the exercise can generate. You may decide that you would prefer to have someone from outside your group or team to facilitate this process. Whoever runs the process—be it someone from within or outside your school or district—should be personally familiar with the immunity concept and his or her own individual immunity.

If you are an individual reading this, you may be a member of an intact group or team that might value engaging in this exercise. If so, we suggest you introduce them to the idea of immunities to change, and then see if they are interested in first taking themselves through the individual immunities work (in the same way you have throughout this guidebook).

All participants should have had the experience of developing their own four-column immunity maps *at the individual level* so that they understand the “immunity to change” concept.

This exercise will take from one to three hours, depending on which format is being used:

**Format #1—Solo Group:** A single group (for example, a leadership team) generating results for its own internal reflection. This is generally accomplished in one hour.

**Format #2—Multigroup:** Several subgroups taking part together (for example, a district’s high school principals and vice principals, middle school principals and vice principals, elementary principals, and district office), each doing its own work and then sharing their separate work with each other to examine trends across the organization (and contextual influences). Allow up to three hours.

**Materials:** Each participant will need a worksheet (provided), and you should have a common worksheet to keep track of the group’s collective product. When a group works alone, the “common worksheet” is best drawn on newsprint on a wall, so that everyone can see it. If you are working with several groups at once, we find it best to use a transparency version of the common worksheet so that it can be projected for all groups to see when they share their work.

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<b>1 Collective Commitment</b>	<b>2 Fearless Organizational Inventory (Doing/Not Doing vs. First Column)</b>	<b>3 Collective Competing Commitment</b>	<b>4 Collective Big Assumption</b>

*(Continued)*

## Step One

Together decide the focus of your exploration. This should be a collective goal that the group agrees is important and insufficiently accomplished (the group agrees it would like to be doing much better with this goal). Once the focus is determined, each person should enter it in column 1 of his or her worksheet, the “collective commitment.”

## Step Two

Working silently and independently for the next ten minutes or so, each person considers the following question:

*What do we as a group (not “I as an individual,” not “some members of our group”) do and fail to do that works against our collective commitment in column 1?*

Enter these answers (still working individually) into column 2.

## Step Three

Still working individually, make a list of what you believe the group’s biggest fears would be if it were to do the opposite of column 2. From this, craft the collective commitment you believe these fears represent. This should be very familiar to you from your individual work on the four-column immunity map.

## Step Four

Now it’s time to reengage with your group and see what others have come up with. Your task here is to create a common picture of a possible groupwide contradiction or “immunity to change” by sharing your individual perspectives of columns 2 and 3. Let us remind you that powerful third-column entries:

- Are inevitably commitments to groupwide self-protection
- Show why the second-column behaviors make “perfect sense” just as they are
- Are almost never the sort of thing the group would be comfortable announcing to the press (unlike first-column commitments, which are)

## Step Five

Having created a picture of a contradiction you deem both powerful and plausible, you should turn to the fourth column and ask yourselves:

*What assumption must we be holding that makes the third-column commitment inevitable?*

## Step Six

Finally, as a group, consider “where do we go from here?” with the new ideas and insights this exercise has generated. *Have we uncovered a Big Assumption that needs to be tested to determine its validity? What experiments might we devise and run that will move us, as a group, through the phases of overturning an immunity to change (as identified in Chapter 9)?*

Examples of this process for another district are shown in the following tables.

*(Continued)*

Here is an example of one district leadership team's work:

1 Collective Commitment	2 Fearless Organizational Inventory	3 Collective Competing Commitment	4 Collective Big Assumption
<p>We are committed to creating a plan based on research and using data that addresses the needs of our English Language Learners (ELLs).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We make plans but don't follow through on our commitments.</li> <li>• We have district materials but people use them or not as they choose.</li> <li>• There is no ongoing training for teachers.</li> <li>• We don't consistently reinforce teacher skills and strategies/techniques.</li> <li>• We don't have the expectation that we put in practice what we train staff to do.</li> <li>• We don't continuously support programs with district resources.</li> <li>• We don't have consistent district goals that money follows.</li> <li>• We don't systematically monitor best practices.</li> <li>• We don't make clear to all what programs and expectations all sites must support.</li> <li>• We don't demonstrate our commitment to uninterrupted time for critical instruction.</li> <li>• We (district) are not clear in direction to sites on what is negotiable or not.</li> <li>• We don't analyze program success.</li> <li>• We don't involve teachers and principals in change reform by connecting current practice and sharing data as evidence for a need to change.</li> <li>• We want districtwide programs if we like them for our own school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are committed to the status quo, to not trying to change.</li> <li>• We are committed to not discovering (if all the programs, materials, training, and such, are in order) that the problem is just us—that we are ineffective, don't really have what it takes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We assume if we do try to do it we will fail.</li> <li>• We assume if we do discover the problem is us it shows we are frauds, should not be in charge, may lose our jobs.</li> </ul>

(Continued)

