



Embracing Rhythm of the Learner Year
*Systems Planning and the
Opening of School*

Toolkit

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Activity 1

As a group, discuss the 5 Legged Model of Performance:

- What are you already doing well?
- Where are your greatest areas of opportunity?
- Where there differences in the indicator self-ratings?
- Where there differences in the priorities of the indicators?

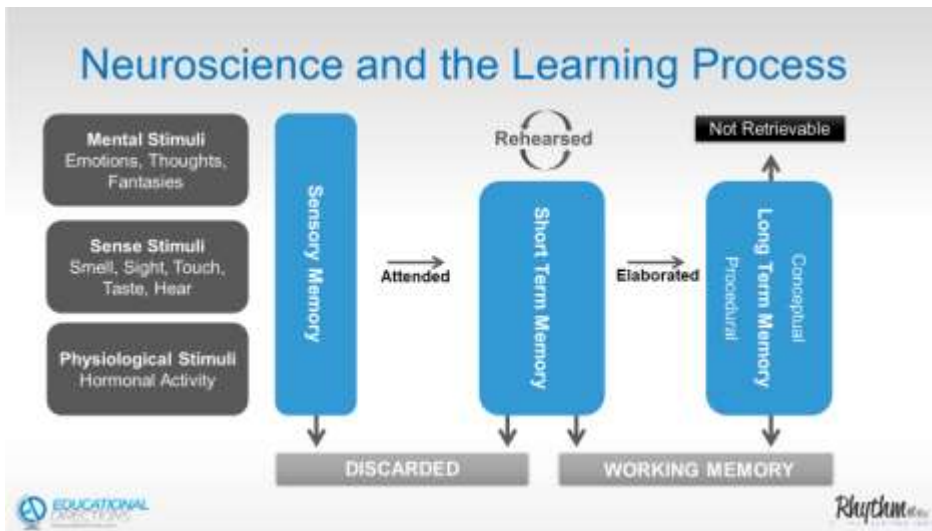
Culture Indicators	Self-Assessment (1–10)	Priority (1–5)
Our school culture was designed with “best practice” in mind.		
All teachers believe all students can achieve the goals set by the state standards.		
The opening and closing of school are designed to set the culture for one year and transition to the next.		
Rituals provide for all students to enter/leave on a positive note.		
Rituals are designed to be proactive, not reactive.		
Role group interactions are defined, modeled, and practiced.		
Inter and intra group interactions are monitored and shaped to exclude counterproductive interactions.		
The school is safe and welcoming. Students want to come to school.		
Diversity in style, rate, capacity, processing is accommodated.		
All students get a chance to “produce” in their preferred mode (and enjoy success).		
Parents are welcomed and are aware of access opportunities.		
Access issues have been analyzed and all students have an “access route.”		
Students have daily access to a teacher who can teach them.		
Classes are designed to build capacity in all students (to the standard).		
Classrooms are flexible and have resources for all students.		
Students have the opportunity for immersion, extension and hands-on experiences.		
Students have the opportunity to speak informally to Administration.		

Notes:

Activity 2

Answer group, discuss the neuroscience of learning model below:

- Is the teacher work engaging students at a sensory level and helping them process learning into short term memory?
- What things in your school or classroom prevent sensory memory from becoming short term memory?
- Is the work students are asked to do helping translate the learning and make meaning of the learning which accesses long term memory?
- What things in your school or classroom prevent short term memory from becoming longer term, retrievable memory?
- As a faculty, what professional development or modeling could help us better enable long term, retrievable memory (complete learning)?
- What is our greatest strength in the learning process below?
- What is our greatest opportunity in converting what is taught into what the students have learned?



Activity 3

As a group, discuss the 5 Legged Model of Performance:

- What are you already doing well?
- Where are your greatest areas of opportunity?
- Do you anticipate any push back in moving to an Output, Performance-based learning model?

The 5 Legged Model - Quick Reference

Knowledge: State assessments establish expectations for all students. Each student must own the learnings (concepts, tasks, thinking) required to meet these expectations. This critical vocabulary needs to be operational, not just known.

Attitude: Students must know the learning required. Additionally, they must be willing to perform the necessary tasks and invest a “best-effort” on every part of the assessment. Every answer or product should represent the student’s personal best effort.

Perception: Most state assessments embed perceptions generated by learning. There are two perceptions required for student performance that are not related to standards expectations:

- **Perception of Proficiency:** The student knows what constitutes good work and how to produce it.
- **Perception of Efficacy:** The student believes, “I can work successfully at the levels required.”

Thinking: Mature thinking patterns and critical reading and writing are required on every question of a state test.

Experience: Almost all students need two sets of experiences: they must have work experience that forms the five legs, and they must have experience working successfully at the level of the assessment. In other words, they must have both formative and calibrating experiences.



	Why It Is Important	Problem Causes
Leg 1: Knowledge	State assessments establish expectations for all students. To meet these expectations, each student must own the learnings (concepts, tasks, thinking) required. This vocabulary must not only be known but must be operational.	If critical learnings are not known or are not operational, students cannot perform the required tasks. This knowledge base must be congruent with the task for students to reach their potential. Alternative languages and level experiences can produce a gap between potential and performance.
Leg 2: Attitude	Students must know the learnings required and be willing to perform the necessary tasks, investing their best effort on every part of the assessment. The expectation is that every answer or product represents the student's personal best effort.	Poor attitude usually causes a student to learn and perform below potential. It leads to several problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low motivation. • Attention problems. • Inefficient use of time. • Behavior or socialization issues. • Loss of concentration. • Attendance problems or tardiness. • Intentionally not giving their best effort.
Leg 3: Perceptions	Most state assessments embed perceptions (time, space, distance, etc.). Two perceptions required but not related to standards expectations are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of proficiency: Knowing what constitutes good work and how to produce it. • Perception of efficacy: The belief, "I can work successfully at the level required." Students must know what good work is and believe they can produce it, or they will not demonstrate their full potential.	Students operate in a comfort zone built by experience as a learner. If a student believes shoddy work or inadequate effort is good enough, he or she will work at that level on any assessment. If the student believes she or he cannot do the work required, she or he will be correct. Lack of belief in self produces anxiety and can negatively impact attitude.
Leg 4: Thinking	Mature thinking patterns and critical reading, writing, and thinking are required on every question of a state test.	Immature thinkers, impulsive responders, and attention-deficit students regularly misread questions, leave tasks unfinished, and produce products that lack depth and integrity.
Leg 5: Experience	Almost all students need two sets of experiences. They must have work experience that forms the five supporting legs, and they must have experience working successfully at the level of the assessment. They must have formative and calibrating experiences, where differentiation and accommodation become critical.	If the student lacks the appropriate experience, she or he can know the content but be unprepared to work at the required levels.

Activity 4

Complete the readiness self-assessment individually and then discuss as a group.

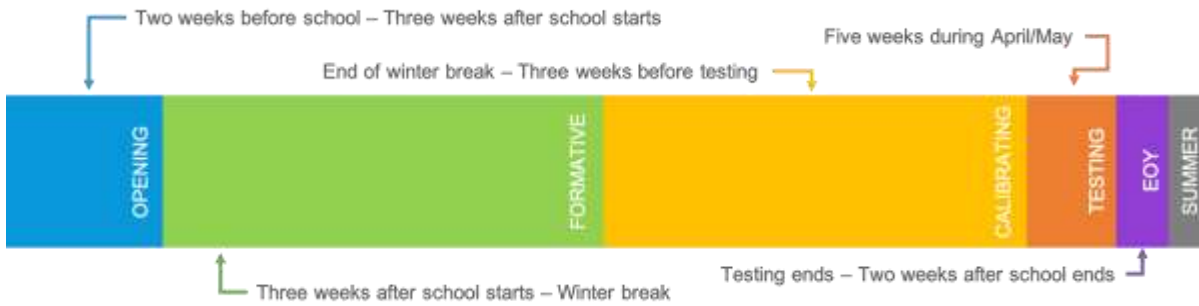
Opening Period Readiness Self-Assessment		
Best Practice Indicators	Yes/No	Priority
The building, grounds, facilities, and classrooms have been checked and are safe and in good working order?		
Staff has agreed to promote schoolwide climate and culture that is safe and welcoming for all students?		
All classrooms have been equipped with the texts, visuals, materials, and technologies needed for the teachers to engage all learners?		
Students have been distributed so that all students have been placed with teachers who are able and prepared to develop them as learners and performers?		
Teachers have received professional development and facilitated planning assistance that prepares them to address learner needs in each period of the Learner Year?		
Initial data profiles of been distributed to teachers and diagnostic tools and formative activities have been planned to enhance the learner profile?		
Students who have exhibited at risk characteristics have already been identified and support systems are in place?		
Parent information nights and effective parenting classes have been presented or are planned for the first weeks of school?		
Academic leaders have created observation checklists to be used in monitoring the implementation and impact of the preschool tactical plans?		

Notes:

Rhythm of The Learner Year

We use **the Rhythm of The Learner Year** for:

- Building independent, proficient performers.
- Building a comfort zone around best effort.
- Establishing an accurate perception of “proficient” learning and performing.
- Effective engagement in critical reading, writing, and thinking strategies in content work and assessment.
- Building compensating and accommodating strategies where performing competencies are lacking.
- Providing only effective learning and performing work in all classes.

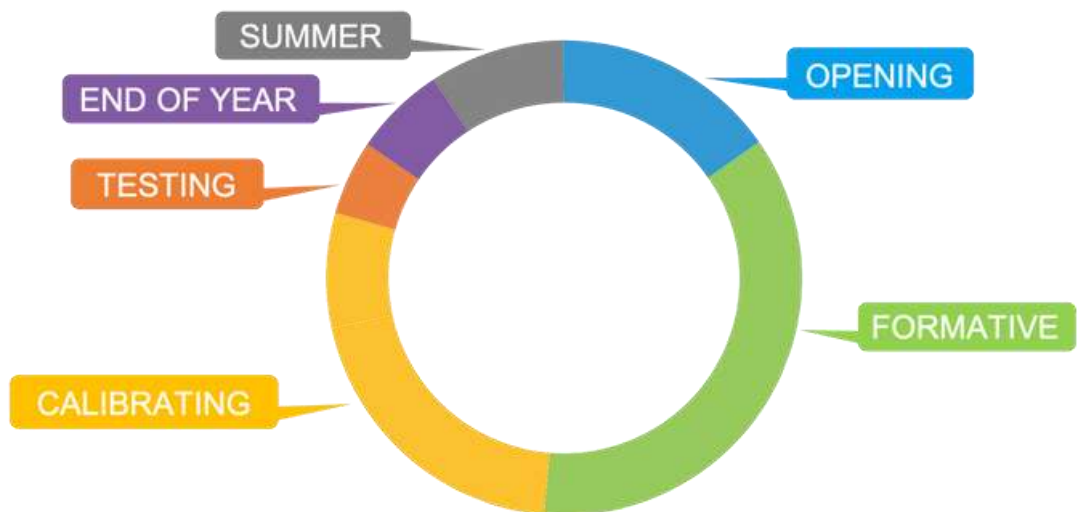


Steps for Redesigning Learners

- Establishing learning and performance goals.
- Planning for optimal learning.
- Differentiating for learning and performance.
- Implementing best practice(s).
- Monitoring and adjusting the plan.
- Providing multiple learning opportunities.
- Providing targeted interventions.

The Rhythm of the Learner Year Periods

- Opening of School Period
- Formative Period
- Calibrating Period
- Testing Period
- End-of-Year Period
- Summer Period



Rhythm of the Learner At-a-glance

<p>Opening of School Period</p> <p><i>Timeframe: 2 weeks before school opens to 3 weeks after school opens</i></p> <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enculturing • Preparing all students for success in class • Mastering management and academic rituals and routines • Building adult access to students • Establishing work and performance expectations • Jump starting critical reading, thinking and writing 	<p>Formative Period</p> <p><i>Timeframe: From week 3 to the beginning of winter break</i></p> <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building an independent learner and increasing potential as performer • Building operational language • Using critical reading, writing, and thinking strategies • Building basic reading and performing competencies • Building a best effort comfort zone 	<p>Calibrating Period</p> <p><i>Timeframe: From the end of winter break to three weeks before the state test</i></p> <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building proficient performance • Mastering uses of content • Successful equivalent performance • Operational language fluency
<p>Testing Period</p> <p><i>Timeframe: Up to two weeks before the test, the testing cycle, the week after the test</i></p> <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable long term memory • Ensure best effort • Transition to the End of Year work 	<p>End of Year Period</p> <p><i>Timeframe: The week after the test through the end of the school year</i></p> <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing student ownership of learning and performing • Enabling successful transitions • Establish summer expectations 	<p>Summer Period</p> <p><i>Timeframe: From the end of school to 2 weeks before the start of the next year</i></p> <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce performance loss • Encourage interests and talents • Build access • Review of data • Planning, planning, planning

The Opening of School Period

Description: The Opening of School Period (or, more simply, the Opening Period) focuses on getting the students ready for success in school. It emphasizes the need for student work experiences that prepare the student for the learning and performing work that will enable their growth as learner and performer.

Timeframe: The Opening Period begins two weeks before the opening day and lasts through the third week of school. If necessary, it can be extended to make sure the classrooms open successfully.

Goals: The goals for a successful Opening Period focus on establishing expectations, orienting and enculturating students and building a core of academic and management rituals and routines that will enable all students to be successful.

Priorities for Academic Leaders:

- Make sure that all systems are working as designed.
- Develop observation tools.
- Visibly support teachers and students from arrival to exit and monitor any individual teachers or students that are struggling or obviously not in-tune with the vision.
- Visit all classrooms during instruction time, looking for management and academic rituals and routines, teacher/student rapport, student engagement, etc.
- If problems are identified, meet daily with leadership team to form plans B and C.

Priorities for Teachers:

- Establish a growth oriented, student-friendly culture and climate for the classroom – establish rapport with students.
- Introduce and practice daily all schoolwide and classroom academic and management rituals and routines.
- Collect initial data points on students as learners and performers.
- Identify all students who have “at risk” characteristics and begin addressing support needs of those students.
- Practice the learning work that will be a foundation for working in the Formative Period and critical to the beginning of the “deep” learning process.
- Introduce the first content for the year and monitor student attention, acquisition, and level of engagement.

Priorities for Students:

- Attend school daily.
- Practice and master all rituals and routines.
- Identify school programs that match interests and talents.
- Participate in curricular and extracurricular activities that are available at the beginning of school.

Opening Period Readiness Self-Assessment		
Best Practice Indicators	Yes/No	Priority
The building, grounds, facilities, and classrooms have been checked and are safe and in good working order?		
Staff has agreed to promote schoolwide climate and culture that is safe and welcoming for all students?		
All classrooms have been equipped with the texts, visuals, materials, and technologies needed for the teachers to engage all learners?		
Students have been distributed so that all students have been placed with teachers who are able and prepared to develop them as learners and performers?		
Teachers have received professional development and facilitated planning assistance that prepares them to address learner needs in each period of the Learner Year?		
Initial data profiles of been distributed to teachers and diagnostic tools and formative activities have been planned to enhance the learner profile?		
Students who have exhibited at risk characteristics have already been identified and support systems are in place?		
Parent information nights and effective parenting classes have been presented or are planned for the first weeks of school?		
Academic leaders have created observation checklists to be used in monitoring the implementation and impact of the preschool tactical plans?		

The Formative Period

Description: The Formative Period is a time when the focus is on building proficient learners. Content is covered and students begin learning to use what they learn, but there is a strong "building an efficient learner" strand in the curriculum. With a strong Formative Period, it is possible to improve a student's potential as learner and performer for a full year.



Timeframe: The Formative Period usually begins after the third week of school, but that can be delayed if opening activities have not been successful. Maximizing growth and potential requires the development of an effective core set of competencies in all students so it may be necessary to delay the beginning of the formative work. The Formative Period lasts until mid-December or early January.

Goals: The goals for the Formative Period focus on making all students effective learners. Emphasis is on the development of formative work habits, high levels of engagement, formative assessments, and independent use of learning. In an effective Formative Period, students become independent learners and independent performers.

Priorities for Academic Leaders:

- Monitor all systems and revise as needed.
- Develop or adapt observation tools for the Formative Period.
- Visibly support teachers and students in classrooms and extracurricular activities.
- Visit all classrooms during instruction time, looking for management and academic rituals and routines, evidence of standards focus, teacher planning for learner work, and student engagement.
- If problems are identified, meet daily with leadership team to form plans B and C.
- Participate in PLC discussions and provide leadership in identifying priority needs and building targeted support plans.
- Evaluate teacher/student compatibility and move students if needed to ensure student success.
- Provide assistance (e.g. a part-time, retired teacher) to assist teachers in developing and of Formative Period student profiles.
- Collect and analyze data on systems and teacher performance and meet regularly with academic leaders to refine systems and evaluate/support teachers.
- Meet with leadership team and PLC groups to create a vision of the Calibrating and Assessment Periods and begin developing strategic and plans for calibration and testing.

Priorities for Teachers:

- Fine-tune academic and behavioral rituals and routines.
- Monitor attendance and tardiness and intervene as needed.
- Expand the classroom culture to embrace the use of discipline-specific and formal language in all classroom communications.
- Introduce directed learning and thinking work and build student competence in attending, acquiring, organizing, and creating meaning.
- Embed critical reading, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and critical writing competencies.
- Provide teacher and peer support to ensure student success, but gradually build student independence as learner, thinker, and performer.
- Develop strategies for purposeful (e.g. reading to learn), critical, and analytical reading.
- Monitor student learning work and update student profiles.
- Provide targeted support for all students not mastering learning competencies.

Priorities for Students:

- Attend school daily.
- Use all rituals and routines proficiently.
- Actively listen and critically read as required in lessons.
- Highly engage in and complete all learning and work.
- Give best effort and complete all assessments.
- Participate in pair, group, and class activities.
- Accept suggestions for work improvement and revise work to proficiency.
- Accept support when provided and actively engage in support activities.

Formative Period Self-Assessment		
Best Practice Indicators	Yes/No	Priority
The academic leaders school evaluation indicates that all classrooms have adequate culture and climate so that all students feel safe and welcomed?		
Teacher attendance is maintaining at over 95 percent and the school has developed a substitute plan to make sure the students and subs can maintain learning momentum?		
Schoolwide and individual class academic and behavioral rituals and routines have been introduced, practiced, and mastered by all students?		
All teachers have been implementing the district and/or school discipline policies and are promoting optimum behaviors instead of reactionary punishments?		
Observations of classrooms and conversations with students indicate that students feel they can be successful and few if any students feel that they are doomed to failure?		
All teachers are planning around student work and are differentiating for differences and experience base, learning style, learning rate, etc.?		
All students have mastered attending and acquiring work strategies and have been introduced to organizing and meaningful work?		
School counselors and support staff monitored student performance as learner during the opening weeks and suggested changes in student distribution and/ or support systems provided?		
The academic leadership team developed observation tools for the formative period and scheduled regular monitoring of classroom and non-classroom activity?		
All teachers who are struggling have been identified, conferenced, and if necessary, placed on an improvement plan? Academic leaders have scheduled follow-ups to measure the implementation and impact of the improvement plan?		
Students who have exhibited chronic absenteeism or tardiness have been identified and their attendance has been monitored? Plans are in place to prevent relapse into ineffective attendance patterns?		
Teachers have been trained and effective PLC strategies? Academic leaders have scheduled weekly PLC sessions to monitor student work and growth as learner?		
School data room contains visual reminders of school, grade level, and content area goals and the school's current status in terms of those goals?		
School data room contains samples of student learning work and student performance on assessments that can drive PLC discussions of student growth and special support needed?		

The Calibrating Period

Description: The Calibrating Period is divided into two sub-periods. The first focuses on supporting student development as a performer – especially as a test taker. The second focuses on building independent performance, endurance, and the format facility needed to build fluency and alleviate test anxiety.

Timeframe: The Calibrating Period begins immediately after winter break and lasts until two or three weeks before the Test Period opens.

Goals: The goals for the Calibrating Period focus on building the independence, confidence, and competence needed for all students to demonstrate their potential on a rigorous, complex test.

Priorities for Academic Leaders:

- Monitor all systems and continue to revise as needed.
- Develop or adapt observation tools for the Calibrating Period.
- Visibly support teachers and students in learning and assessment activities.
- Visit all classrooms during instruction time, looking for high-level engagement in effective work, ineffective teacher or student work, escalating rigor in learning work, activities that build fluency, and assessment formats and venues.
- If problems are identified, meet daily with leadership team to form plans B and C.
- Participate in PLC discussions and begin discussions of optimum test environments.
- Meet with student cohorts to begin encouraging and motivating best effort.
- Monitor classrooms and encourage “bell to bell” engagement in learning work.

Priorities for Teachers:

- Begin directing performance work.
- Assess student status – 5 Legged Model status – and supports students with areas of weakness.
- Link old and new learnings to assessment formats and venues.
- Increase the rigor and complexity of learning work and performing work.
- Link learnings and assessments to real-world examples.
- Embed critical reading, critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making and critical writing competencies.
- Continue building student independence.
- Gradually increase the level of rigor for each student’s comfort zone until it reaches the level expected on the state assessment.
- Provide feedback for student work with revision to proficiency.
- Begin preparing students for state assessments – format, venue, and endurance.
- Provide targeted support for all students not mastering performance/assessment competencies.



Priorities for Students:

- Attend school daily.
- Work independently as learner and performer.
- Actively listen and critically read as required in lessons.
- Highly engage in and complete all learning and assessment work.
- Revise all work to proficiency.
- Self-assess test readiness and seek assistance if needed.
- Take advantage of all school test prep and content support programs.
- Accept support when provided and actively engage in support activities.

Calibrating Period Self-Assessment		
Best Practice Indicators	Yes/No	Priority
All teachers reviewed the end of Formative Period profiles and identified priority student needs?		
All students have mastered all of the standard formats of assessment found on the state assessment?		
Students can stay engaged in complex, rigorous activities until the activities are completed?		
All teachers have a plan for increasing the rigor of student learning work and student performances?		
Administrators and academic leaders have revised their observation tools for the Calibrating Period in class and out of class observations of students and teachers?		
Teachers of plan transitions for students so the students can move smoothly into the calibrating focus on building performance as well as learning?		
Student attendance has reached the goal of 95 percent as attendance and tardiness improvement plans impact attendance?		
Teacher attendance has reached the goal of 98 percent and when a teacher absence is unavoidable, the school has a substitute prep plan to ensure that learning momentum is not lost?		
Teachers have plans for supporting students who have not yet mastered the learning work required for effective calibrating work?		
Cohorts of students (e.g. behavior issues, volatile reactions, insecure, or teacher dependent, etc.) have been created and linked to an adult who can work with the students and serve as a “lightning rod” for the students in the cohort.		

The Testing Period Overview



Description: The Testing Period is not just the time when the test is administered to all students. It is the time when we build an optimum assessment environment, prepare the students for that environment, administer the test, and assess the success of our environment, enabling students to perform their potential.

Timeframe: The Testing Period begins two to three weeks before the test starts and lasts through the week following the test administration.

Goal: The goal of the Testing Period is to create an optimum assessment environment in which all students can and will demonstrate their potential as learner and performer.

Priorities for Academic Leaders:

- Market a vision for optimum test environment to staff and students and provide opportunities for practice and scrimmage experiences.
- Practice revised test day schedules, rituals and routines, and student placements.
- Eliminate all extraneous distractions.
- Develop and market plans for predictable disruptions and for unexpected distractions and disruptions – plans B and C.
- Visibly support teachers and students in test prep and testing best effort activities.
- Visit all classrooms to support teachers and students and to identify teachers and students who are out of sync with the testing plan.
- If problems are identified, meet daily with leadership team to form more plans B and C.
- With leadership team, develop an end of year (EOY) plan.
- Interact with students individually to assess commitment and motivation and celebrate their effort and successes.
- Check all teachers plans for debriefing and transition to EOY.
- Complete evaluations of the Opening Period, Formative Period, and Calibrating Period.

Priorities for Teachers:

- Plan test-taking rituals, routines, and schedules to ensure student mastery before the actual testing begins.
- Eliminate all extraneous distractions.
- Review effective test-taking strategies.
- Assess student mastery of test format and provide last-minute assistance.
- Maintain a focus on formative activities after the daily test is completed.
- Provide work to activate long-term memory.
- Plan to maintain learning momentum in the weeks before and after the test.
- Maintain an optimum classroom environment before, during, and after the test.

Priorities for Students:

- Attend school daily.
- Practice optimum preparation and test taking rituals, routines, and schedules.
- Review and practice effective test-taking strategies.
- Highly engage in all test practice work and revise to proficiency.
- Self-assess test readiness and seek assistance if needed.
- Meet with adult mentor to discuss motivation and effort.
- Accept support when provided and actively engage in support activities.

Testing Period Self-Assessment – Overall School Readiness		
Best Practice Indicators	Yes/No	Priority
Teachers and coaches have a plan for developing optimum testing environments in all classes?		
Academic leaders and coaches have developed backup plans for unforeseen disruption of the testing cycle (e.g. behavior, illness, emotional stress, etc.)?		
Academic leaders, coaches, and instructional staff established plans for controlling all controllable disruptions (e.g. announcements, drills, maintenance, etc.)?		
Student teacher testing groups have been designed to match students with teachers who can solicit best-effort and high-level engagement for the course of the test?		
Administrators have planned for increased visibility before, during, and after testing and altered their observation checklists to meet the demands of the testing period?		
The school day during testing has been altered to ensure that all students can get to school, have breakfast, and go through pre-testing rituals?		
All teachers have been trained to engage students in pre-test-focusing activities and post-test decompression activities?		
All teachers have plans to maintain the teaching/learning environment after the testing is completed for the day?		
All adult mentors and “lightning rods” have plans to meet daily with their target students to make sure that emotionally they are ready for best-effort work on the test?		

The End of Year Period

Description: The End of Year (EOY) Period moves the students from the state test window through the last day of school. In best practice, it is a time to achieve closure and to begin transition and best practice work for all stakeholders. We sometimes think of this as the beginning of the next school year.

Timeframe: The EOY begins with the close of the Testing Period and lasts until the last day of school.

Goals: The goals for the EOY include:

- Bringing the current year’s learning to a close.
- Doing work that helps organize all of this year's learnings in long-term memory.
- Transition activities to help the students move into an effective summer experience and make a successful transition to the next level.
- Aggregating current year’s data for summer planning.

Priorities for Academic Leaders:

- Market a vision for optimum test environment to staff and students and provide opportunities for practice and scrimmage experiences.
- Practice revised test day schedules, rituals and routines, and student placements.
- Eliminate all extraneous distractions.
- Develop and market plans for predictable disruptions and for unexpected distractions and disruptions – plans B and C.
- Visibly support teachers and students in test prep and testing best-effort activities.
- Visit all classrooms to support teachers and students and to identify teachers and students who are out of sync with the testing plan.
- If problems are identified, meet daily with leadership team to form contingency plans.
- Develop an EOY plan with the leadership team.
- Interact with students individually to assess commitment and motivation and celebrate their effort and successes.
- Check all teachers’ plans for debriefing and transition to EOY.
- Complete an evaluation of the Opening Period, Formative Period, and Calibrating Period.

Priorities for Teachers:

- Maintain learning momentum through the last day of school.
- Bring closure to teaching and learning for the year.
- Enable a successful transition to the next grade level or the next stage.
- Celebrate the learning, hard work, and successes of the year.
- With students, plan summer activities that maintain performance, build language, and extend experience.
- Collect final data points and final student profiles.

Priorities for Students:

- Attend school daily.
- Stay engaged until the last day of school.
- Continue meeting with adult mentors to plan summer activities.

End of Year Period Self-Assessment		
Best Practice Indicators	Yes/No	Priority
Academic leaders, teachers, and students celebrated the hard work and effort that went into the testing and jointly planned the EOY transition?		
Teachers worked with academic leaders and coaches to develop effective EOY experiences that would help students maintain learning over the summer and make a successful transition to the next year?		
Staff has started updating student profiles so that an EOY profile can be completed and passed on to next year’s teachers?		
Academic leaders and coaches have worked with PLC groups to assess each period of the Learner Year and started redesigning next year’s program?		
Teachers have reflected on their performance over the Learner Year and have identified professional development experiences that they feel will make them more confident and competent as leaders of learners?		
Academic leaders and coaches have identified professional development experiences that will increase their confidence and competence is academic leaders?		
The school has a plan for the EOY to make sure that teaching and learning continue until the end, that students are engaged in quality work, that dismissal can be conducted safely and orderly, and have a positive attitude about the summer and next year?		
Teachers and students have been assessed to identify interests, talents, and needs that can be addressed in summer programs and a menu of adult and student activities has been created?		
Academic leaders, coaches, and teachers have planned an EOY activity to celebrate success and begin planning for next year?		
Academic leaders have created observation checklists to be used in monitoring the implementation and impact of the EOY tactical plans?		

The Summer Period



Description: The Summer Period is a time for evaluation, planning, and preparing. If treated as a part of the Learner Year, it can be a time of growth and expansion for students and teachers. There are experiences that are beneficial to both groups that are best engaged in the summer. For the administrators, summer is a time to determine what went right last year and what we need to do better during the upcoming year to improve our students as learners and performers. In the second half of the summer, school academic leaders need to be engaged in strategic planning and preparation of facilities, programs, materials, and staff to be prepared for the students that the school will have in the building when the year starts in August.

Timeframe: The Summer Period is divided into two sub periods. The first sub period (first half of summer) is devoted to an analysis of what did and didn't work in the previous year. This period begins with the end of the student year and lasts three to four weeks into the summer.

The second sub period (the second half of summer) focuses on preparing the school and staff for the students who are going to show up on the first day of school. This period begins when the evaluation of the previous year is completed and lasts until the opening window begins – about three weeks before the students arrive.

Goals: In the first summer prior to implementing the Rhythm of the Learner Year, the focus is on establishing a knowledge base and building a vision for academic leaders. Our coaches facilitate the development of the vision and in developing a plan for marketing that vision to staff and enabling the vision with systems and procedures. It is probably not possible to provide quality programs for teachers and students during the first summer since access to teachers and students will not have been planned and may not be available. For the first year, the goals for the summer tend to be focused on the academic leaders.

These goals include:

- Develop a vision and strategic plan that can be turned into tactical plans by all staff.
- Sort and place students to create effective teaching and learning teams.
- Get the facilities, materials, and technologies in efficient working order.
- Evaluate and upgrade management and academic systems.
- Provide the ad hoc PD needed to prepare staff to lead learners and learning teams.

Priorities for Academic Leaders:

- Complete a self-assessment of the previous year successes and failures.
- Establish an academic leadership team.
- With the team develop a vision of a successful, student focused school.
- Develop a marketing plan for marketing the vision to staff and eventually students and their parents.
- Assess school systems – management and academic – to ensure that they are consistent with and will support the new vision.
- Assess staff preparation and identify ad hoc professional development that will be needed for teachers and support staff to implement division.
- Assess curriculum and materials to make sure that they are consistent with the vision.
- Develop a strategic plan (SIP) for rolling out the new direction – hopefully the rhythm of the learner year – and monitoring its implementation and impact on students.
- Developing a preliminary student profile set to identify students who will start the year “at risk” or who need special assistance to start this year successfully.

Are We Ready for the Summer Period?		
Best Practice Indicators	Yes/No	Priority
Have we evaluated our performance during each period of the Learner Year and developed plans for the next school year?		
Did we develop EOY profiles on all of our students with recommendations for placement and support next year?		
Have we identified areas within our academic and management systems that need to be evaluated and updated?		
Have we evaluated the staff that will be returning to the school next year, targeted some for leadership development and others for summer assistance, and facilitated planning?		
Do we have a plan for academic leaders, teachers, support staff, and students that will prepare them for greater success next year?		
Have we begun the development of an SIP and secured the human and financial resources, the materials, and the time that we will need to turn the SIP into tactical plans, monitor the implementation and impact of the plan, and revise the plan as needed?		

Blogs, Books, Toolkits, Resources



Our weekly blog will have updated applications and recommendations as we come out of the pandemic. Also, we are sure there will be a lot of questions as we enter an unprecedented 21-22 school year. Please feel free to submit questions to our team of experts. We will do all we can to help our fellow educators. We are all in this together.