

## The Main Idea's PD Suggestions for *A School Leader's Guide to Excellence*

I recommend that leaders choose a few of the strategies from the book for their school (or district) to work on, and then get the appropriate chapter (or the whole book) into the hands of their leadership team to follow through. Here's a way to start:

### **Step 1: Choose to focus on 2 - 3 of the 9 strategies that were presented in the book**

Each chapter has an 'Evaluating Success' section at the end that consists of a series of questions to use to determine if the implementation is successful. However, you can flip to these end-of-chapter questions and use them as a self-assessment tool to see if this would be a good strategy for your school (or school system) to start with. Below is an abbreviated version. Ask yourself or your leadership team these questions to determine which are the 2-3 areas with which you would like to start.

<b>Which 2-3 strategies should your school (or school system) focus on?</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Questions to assess if this is an area of need (rate from 1 (lowest rating)-10 (highest rating))</b>
1. Communicate Your Vision	How well is your vision successfully embedded in the school and having a positive impact? Is student achievement in your priority areas improving?
2. One-to-One Conversations	How effectively do you and your leadership team systematically use one-to-one conversations to make school improvements?
3. Book of the Month	Do you regularly distribute and discuss books to your staff to convey your beliefs, improve student achievement, and increase enthusiasm for literacy?
4. Celebrate	How well have you established a culture of celebration that positively impacts the school?
5. Alternative Supervisory Structures	How effectively do you use alternative supervisory structures (such as participatory lessons, teacher portfolios, and peer coaching) to improve teaching and learning?
6. Professional Learning Structures	How well are professional learning structures (such as cabinet meetings, teacher team meetings, study groups, and school walk-throughs) aligned with and addressing the school's needs?
7. Nurturing Teacher Leaders	How effectively are you developing teacher leaders to best meet the needs of the school?
8. Planning for September in June	How well have you created a comprehensive and thoughtful approach to reflecting on the year and planning for the new one? Does it result in a solid, school-wide educational plan that serves as an anchor for all instructional decisions?
9. Parent/Community Engagement	How well have you engaged parents and the community not simply for the sake of engaging them, but rather to raise student achievement?

### **Step 2: Distribute the book or the necessary chapters to your leadership team and DISCUSS!**

Because I couldn't fully capture the wisdom of Carmen Fariña and Laura Kotch in my summary, it is helpful to share the authors' actual words. Distribute the book or select chapters to your leadership team or the staff who will help you to spearhead these new initiatives. Note that each chapter can be read on its own. Choose a date by which the staff involved should read the chapters.

Come together and discuss each chapter chosen. It is best to discuss them one at a time. Here are some general discussion questions you can use regardless of which chapter you are discussing:

**Introductory Letter and Rationale** -- Which ideas struck you as important? Which sentences or passages resonated for you? Share the sentences/passages you underlined. Why are these ideas meaningful given our specific school/district context?

**Getting Started: Step by Step** – There are many implementation suggestions in this section and you don't need to do all of them. Which do you think are the most crucial steps for implementation given the needs of our school? How would the implementation need to be adapted for our school community to work most effectively? What additional steps would we need to take that were *not* mentioned in this section?

**Avoiding Common Pitfalls** – Which of the pitfalls mentioned do you think we need to be particularly careful about at our school? What other pitfalls, not mentioned in this section, do we need to be careful to avoid?

**Evaluating Success** – Which of the book's ideas for measuring success would be best for our school to use? What else?

### **Step 3: Plan the initiative, implement it, evaluate it, and make revisions**

After discussing the chapter using the discussion questions above (or your own questions), make a concrete plan to implement the ideas from the chapter adapted to the needs of your school community. To make sure your plan will be effective, make sure you address all of the components below, write it down, and distribute the written plan to all staff involved:

<b>Questions to Consider</b>	<b>What is the Plan?</b>
WHAT aspects of the strategy presented in the book will we include in our plan?	
WHEN will we implement each step? Create a <i>timeline</i> .	
WHO is responsible for each aspect of the plan?	
HOW well has the plan been implemented? What criteria will we use to evaluate the success of the plan (see the Evaluating Success section of the chapter)? How will we assess the plan's success (Increased student achievement? Feedback on a survey? Etc.)?	
CHOOSE a future date to look at the initiative's results and make revisions to improve it.	