



## Activity: Step 2 Guiding Questions

### Assessing Needs and Establishing Goals through the Lens of the Framework for Great Schools (60 minutes)



A supporting resource for [A Vision for School Improvement: Applying the Framework for Great Schools](#)  
**Step 2: Assess needs and establish goals**

### OVERVIEW

As schools engage in the three-step process outlined in [A Vision for School Improvement: Applying the Framework for Great Schools](#), schools will begin by developing a shared understanding of the Framework as a community ([see here for a guiding activity](#)). Teams will then work together to assess the needs of their school and establish goals that address all six elements of the *Framework*. Through a series of sequenced reflection questions, this activity guides schools through the process of reflecting on and discussing their needs assessment and goals to help ensure that goals address six elements of the *Framework*, as well as the school's strengths and areas for growth. This activity can be done in small or large groups and teams across the school community.

### OBJECTIVE

Participants will engage in a comprehensive needs assessment and goal-setting process aligned to the *Framework for Great Schools* in order to develop an understanding of school needs and to consider the connections and implications to their work.

### MATERIALS

- [Step 2 Guiding Questions](#) (attached)
- [Graphic organizer](#) (attached)
- Chart paper

### CONNECTED ACTIVITIES

While this activity can be conducted on its own, its content also connects with the following activities available on the [Vision for School Improvement](#) website:

- Conducting a Needs Assessment
- Reflecting on the Framework for Great Schools with your community
- Exploring the *Framework for Great Schools*
- Exploring a Vision for School Improvement: Applying the *Framework for Great Schools*
- Exploring the Research Behind the *Framework for Great Schools*

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What current strengths can I build upon in goals that are connected to the *Framework for Great Schools*?
- What areas for growth can I address through our goals?
- How does the *Framework* expand my thinking about our goals?

### FACILITATION NOTES

1. **Introduction and framing (3 minutes).**

- Welcome participants and review the objective and guiding questions of the activity.
  - Explain that participants will work to establish goals that address both current strengths and areas for growth by:
    - Considering both strengths and areas for growth related to the *Framework for Great Schools*
    - Considering how the *Framework* can expand our thinking about goals for our school community
2. **Part A: Exploring the Guiding Questions for Step 2 (30 minutes).**
- Ask participants to independently read part A of the [Guiding Questions for Schools](#) to support discussion among school teams. As participants read, they will answer the following questions on their [graphic organizer](#) in groups:
    - What are current strengths and areas for growth connected to this element in our school? How do we know?
    - What are some of the ways we consider this element when making decisions about key work in our school?
    - What strong practices from other schools and colleagues might expand our thinking about this element?
    - What evidence could we look for in the future to gauge how we are doing in terms of strengthening this element?
    - How could we expand efforts to connect work typically focused on this element to address the interplay of the elements?
  - After participants have finished reading and responding to the questions, invite participants to share out and chart responses.
3. **Part B: Exploring the Interplay among the Elements in the *Framework* (20 minutes).**
- Ask participants to independently read part B of the [Guiding Questions for Schools](#) and consider the following questions on their graphic organizer:
    - How do we leverage our strengths to help address our areas for growth?
    - How might the interplay of elements reflected in the *Framework* shed new light on our goals?
      - Which elements does our goal address?
      - Which elements might it address?
      - Are there adjustments that would increase the impact of the approach in certain elements?
    - How do the goals holistically address the six elements and their interplay? How might we refine your goals to connect more deeply to the elements?
    - If a goal is related to our school’s instructional focus, you might ask the following questions:
      - What have we learned about our school community through our work on the instructional focus?
      - How did we identify our focus?
      - Where did it become most embedded in our schools’ work and culture?
      - Where did it mostly stay at the surface?
      - How are we still working toward improving goals related to the instructional focus?
      - Is it still the right focus? How do we know?
    - How can we systematically stay focused on instruction while attending to the complex interplay of elements in the *Framework*?
  - Ask participants to discuss in small groups and then as a whole group, charting responses.
4. **Part C: Identifying implications of the *Framework for Great Schools* moving forward (5 minutes).**
- Ask participants to discuss the best way to share the information gathered from their team with the larger school community (e.g., if this activity is done with grade level/department teams the discussion might be around how to share the current data collected and continue the discussion with the leadership team).

5. **Identifying next steps and available resources (2 minutes).**

- Ask participants to identify and share one next step they will take collectively and individually to support this work in their school (in pairs, or in the whole group).
- Remind participants of the supporting resources and activities available on the [Vision for School Improvement](#) website:
  - Research brief on the research behind the *Framework for Great Schools*
  - Case studies and snapshots of current practice in NYC schools
  - Exploring the *Framework for Great Schools*
  - Exploring a Vision for School Improvement: Applying the *Framework for Great Schools*



# Guiding Questions for Step 2

*A reflection tool to support school team discussion among school teams*



As schools explore the second step of [A Vision for School Improvement: Applying the Framework for Great Schools](#), these guiding questions can be used as a tool to support reflection and discussion among school teams.

## Step 2: Assess needs and establish goals

As a community, assess your school's capacity to impact student achievement for all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, in each element of the *Framework* by looking at relevant data trends from [NYCDOE measures](#) as well as your knowledge of students, staff, and community. Determine elements of strength upon which you can build as well as areas for growth.

### Part A: After gathering and discussing relevant data trends, you might discuss in each element:

- What are current strengths and areas for growth connected to this element in our school? How do we know?
- What are some of the ways we consider this element when making decisions about key work in our school?
- What strong practices from other schools and colleagues might expand our thinking about this element?
- What evidence could we look for in the future to gauge how we are doing in terms of strengthening this element?
- How could we expand efforts to connect work typically focused on this element to address the interplay of the elements?

### Part B: When developing goals, you might discuss:

- How do we leverage our strengths to help address our areas for growth?
- How might the interplay of elements reflected in the *Framework* shed new light on our goals?
  - o Which elements does our goal address?
  - o Which elements might it address?
  - o Are there adjustments that would increase the impact of the approach in certain elements?
- How do the goals holistically address the six elements and their interplay? How might we refine your goals to connect more deeply to the elements?

If a goal is related to our school's instructional focus, you might ask the following questions:

- What have we learned about our school community through our work on the instructional focus?
  - o How did we identify our focus?
  - o Where did it become most embedded in our schools' work and culture?
  - o Where did it mostly stay at the surface?
  - o How are we still working toward improving goals related to the instructional focus?
  - o Is it still the right focus? How do we know?
- How can we systematically stay focused on instruction while attending to the complex interplay of elements in the *Framework*?

## Part A: Graphic Organizer

	<p><b>Discussion Question 1:</b> What are current strengths and areas for growth connected to this element in our school? How do we know?</p>
<b>Effective School Leadership</b>	
<b>Rigorous Instruction</b>	
<b>Collaborative Teachers</b>	
<b>Supportive Environment</b>	
<b>Strong Family-Community Ties</b>	
<b>Trust</b>	



**Discussion Question 2:**

What are some of the ways we consider this element when making decisions about key work in our school?

**Effective School Leadership**

**Rigorous Instruction**

**Collaborative Teachers**

**Supportive Environment**

**Strong Family-Community Ties**

**Trust**



**Discussion Question 3:**

What strong practices from other schools and colleagues might expand our thinking about this element?

**Effective School Leadership**

**Rigorous Instruction**

**Collaborative Teachers**

**Supportive Environment**

**Strong Family-Community Ties**

**Trust**



**Discussion Question 4:**

What evidence could we look for in the future to gauge how we are doing in terms of strengthening this element?

**Effective School Leadership**

**Rigorous Instruction**

**Collaborative Teachers**

**Supportive Environment**

**Strong Family-Community Ties**

**Trust**



**Discussion Question 5:**

How could we expand efforts to connect work typically focused on this element to address the interplay of the elements?

**Effective School Leadership**

**Rigorous Instruction**

**Collaborative Teachers**

**Supportive Environment**

**Strong Family-Community Ties**

**Trust**

## Part B: Graphic Organizer

How do we leverage our strengths to help address our areas for growth?

How might the interplay of elements reflected in the *Framework* shed new light on our goals?

- Which elements does our goal address?
- Which elements might it address?
- Are there adjustments that would increase the impact of the approach in certain elements?

How do the goals holistically address the six elements and their interplay? How might we refine your goals to connect more deeply to the elements?

If a goal is related to our school's instructional focus, you might ask:

- What have we learned about our school community through our work on the instructional focus?
  - How did we identify our focus?
  - Where did it become most embedded in our schools' work and culture?
  - Where did it mostly stay at the surface?
  - How are we still working toward improving goals related to the instructional focus?
  - Is it still the right focus? How do we know?

How can we systematically stay focused on instruction while attending to the complex interplay of elements in the *Framework*?