OHIO UNIVERSITY

EDLE 6815: Mission, Vision, and District Improvement Marci Shepard, PhD, EdD NELP Standards 3 & 4

Leading Collaborative Continuous Improvement

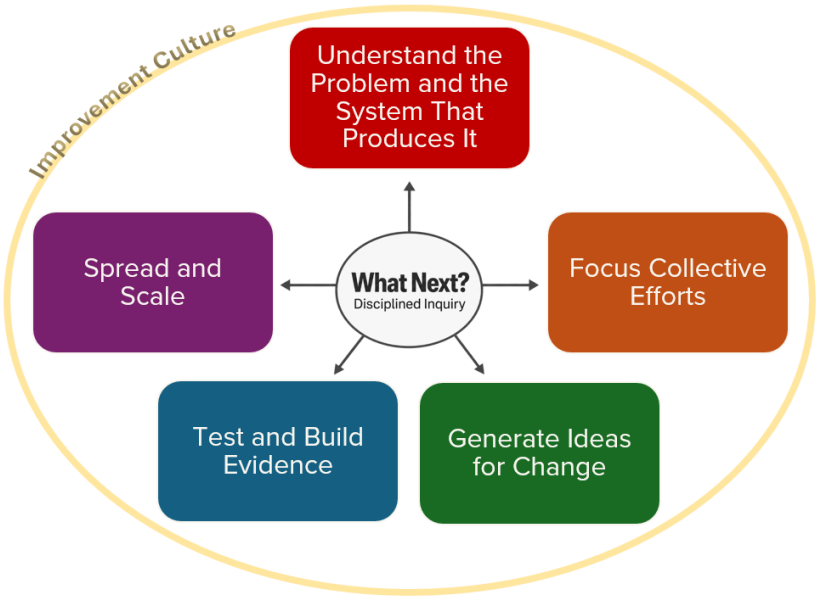
For this project, you will lead an equity-focused district improvement effort by applying disciplined inquiry, evidence-based decision-making, and systems thinking to improve outcomes.

Working within a real district, you will assume the role of superintendent and lead an equity-focused instructional improvement effort. You will evaluate district instructional and cultural systems, identify a student-outcomes-focused instructional equity challenge, determine root causes, establish a measurable improvement aim, develop change ideas, simulate a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle, plan for district-wide equitable spread and scale, and recommend leadership actions that build an equitable and inclusive system-wide culture for continuous improvement.

This portfolio is designed to reflect the work of a superintendent leading an equity-focused instructional improvement effort.

- Real-World Context (Phases 1–3): Complete Phases 1–3 using a real district or a district with which you are familiar. Use authentic district information to evaluate the instructional system, investigate a student-outcomes-focused instructional equity challenge, and design an improvement strategy.
- Simulation (Phases 4–5 and Building a System-Wide Improvement Culture): Because implementation extends beyond the timeframe of this course, complete Phases 4–5 and Building a System-Wide Improvement Culture as realistic simulations based on the district context, evidence, and improvement design developed in Phases 1–3.

To submit this assignment, save this Word document and work directly in it. Throughout the portfolio, use Chapter 6 of *Where the Science of Improvement Meets the Heart of Leadership: Leading Equity-Focused School and District Improvement* (Shepard, 2026) to understand the step-by-step improvement process, and use Appendix 2 to complete the applicable improvement tools. Depending on the task, you will either summarize your findings within the portfolio or insert an image of the completed tool, as directed. You do **not** need to submit the completed Chapter 6 tools separately.



5-Phases (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2018). Used with permission.
Improvement Culture (Shepard, 2026)

Improvement Process

Phase 1: Evaluate the System and Understand the Problem

Improvement begins by understanding both the district's current system and a specific problem within that system. As superintendent, your first responsibility is to engage the appropriate people in evaluating the district's instructional system before selecting a focused area for improvement. Once an instructional equity challenge has been identified, you will investigate the problem, determine its root cause, and synthesize your findings to develop a shared understanding that will guide the district's instructional improvement efforts.

1. **Assemble the District Improvement Team** (ELS 4.4.1)

   As superintendent, your first responsibility is to engage appropriate staff in gathering, synthesizing, and using data to evaluate the quality, coordination, and coherence of the district's academic and non-academic services. Simulate this step.

   a. Complete the Assemble a Team Check-In (Appendix 2.1).
   b. Summarize your District Improvement Team in the table below.

Team Member	**Role/Perspective and Why Selected**
Superintendent	*(Use item #3 of Appendix 2.1 to clarify your role.)*

2. **Evaluate the District's Current System Through an Equity Lens**

   Before selecting an instructional equity challenge to focus on, conduct a broad evaluation of the district's instructional system.

   a. Use multiple sources of evidence to evaluate each system component through an equity lens. Summarize your evidence and evaluation below (in the right two columns).

System Component (ELS)	**Suggested Evidence**	Student Response: **List the source(s) of evidence and summarize the key findings.**	Student Response: **Evaluate the component using the language of the identified ELS standard.**
District Culture (ELS 3.1.1)	Culture and climate surveys, empathy interviews		Evaluate the district culture for equity and inclusiveness.
Sources of Inequity and Bias (ELS 3.2.1)	Disaggregated data, academic and non-academic programs		Evaluate sources of inequity and bias in educational opportunities and resources.
Curricula, Instructional Technologies, Other Supports, and Academic and Non-Academic Systems (ELS 4.1.1)	Curriculum documents, instructional technologies, instructional resources, district artifacts, empathy interviews		Evaluate (a) curricula, instructional technologies, and other supports, (b) academic and non-academic systems, and (c) coordination among systems and supports.
Systems of Support, Coaching, and Professional Development (ELS 4.2.1)	Professional learning plans, coaching structures, evaluation processes, district documents, artifacts, empathy interviews		Evaluate the coordination, coherence, and relevance of the district's systems of support, coaching, and professional development for educators, educational professionals, and leaders.
Formative and Summative Assessments of Student Learning (ELS 4.3.1)	Assessment reports, assessment plans, classroom assessments, common formative		Evaluate the quality of formative and summative assessments of student learning.

	assessments, benchmark assessments, state assessments, district assessment documents, empathy interviews		
Coordination and Coherence Among Academic and Non-Academic Assessments (ELS 4.3.2)	Formative and summative assessment data, attendance, behavior, social-emotional data, MTSS data, student support data, climate survey data, graduation data, intra- and extra-curricular participation, program participation		Evaluate the coordination and coherence among academic and non-academic assessments and use data from these sources to support instructional improvement, student learning and well-being, and instructional leadership.

3. Identify a Student-Outcomes-Focused Instructional Equity Challenge

Using your evaluation of the district's current system, identify one broad student-outcomes-focused instructional equity issue to explore further.

a. Complete the Identify an Issue Tool (Appendix 2.2).
b. Summarize the instructional equity issue you identified. Using the evidence gathered during your system evaluation, justify why this challenge represents the highest-leverage opportunity for improving equitable student outcomes.

Instructional Equity Challenge:

4. Understand the Problem and the System Producing It (ELS 3.3.1)

Once you have identified an instructional equity issue, investigate it more deeply to understand its underlying causes and the system producing it.

a. Determine the root cause by completing either the 5 Whys Protocol (Appendix 2.4) or the Fishbone Diagram (Appendix 2.5).
b. Complete additional Chapter 6 tools, as appropriate, to deepen your understanding of the problem. Suggested tools include:
   - Data Analysis Protocol (Appendix 2.3)
   - Process Mapping (Appendix 2.6)
   - Empathy Interviews (Appendix 2.7)
   - Research-Based and Evidence-Based Practices (Appendix 2.8)

5. Synthesize Your Understanding of the Problem

After investigating the problem, synthesize your findings by identifying patterns and themes across the evidence.

a. Complete the Affinity Protocol (Appendix 2.9).
b. Insert an image of your Affinity Protocol below.

(Insert completed Affinity Protocol here.)

Phase 2: Focus Collective Efforts

Once the root cause has been identified, teams must narrow their focus to a specific, high-leverage problem.

1. Develop an Aim Statement

Develop a clear, measurable, and time-bound aim statement that identifies what will improve, for whom, by when, and how improvement will be measured.

a. Complete the Set an Aim tool (Appendix 2.10).
b. Record your final aim statement in the template below. *(Note: The aim statement should be one sentence.)*

By (insert *when)*, we will improve (insert *root cause*) for (insert *who*) from (insert *student-outcomes-focused baseline data*) to (insert *student-outcomes-focused goal data*) as measured by *(*insert *how you will track improvement).*

2. Identify the System Drivers

Once the student-outcomes-focused aim is established, identify the primary and secondary drivers, which are the adult practices, systems, and conditions that must improve to achieve the aim.

a. Complete the Driver Diagram (Appendix 2.11).
b. Insert an image of your completed Driver Diagram below.

(Insert completed Driver Diagram here.)

Phase 3: Generate Ideas for Change

At this stage, teams brainstorm and develop potential solutions. The goal is not to identify a perfect solution immediately but to generate small, targeted change ideas that address the identified root cause and can be tested through iterative inquiry.

1. Generate and Prioritize Change Ideas

Using your completed Driver Diagram, develop research- or evidence-based change ideas that address the identified secondary drivers and support your district aim.

a. Complete the Change Ideas tool (Appendix 2.12).
b. Insert an image of your Driver Diagram updated with the change ideas below.

(Insert completed Driver Diagram with change ideas here.)

c. Record the District Improvement Team's selected change idea below and explain why it was the highest-leverage strategy to test first.

Selected Change Idea (or Change Bundle):

2. Develop a Theory of Action

Develop a Theory of Action that clearly communicates how your proposed change ideas are expected to improve student outcomes.

a. Complete the Theory of Action Statement tool (Appendix 2.13).
b. Record your final Theory of Action using the template below. *(Note: Your Theory of Action statement should be one sentence. That's what makes it such a powerful communication tool!)*

If we *(insert change idea)*, ***then*** that will lead to *(insert driver)*, ***which*** will impact *(insert aim).*

Phase 4: Test and Build Evidence

Rather than implementing changes at full scale right away, teams use Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles to test ideas on a small scale, measure effectiveness, and refine strategies before expanding.

Note: Because implementation extends beyond the timeframe of this course, complete this phase as a realistic simulation. Using the district context and evidence developed in Phases 1–3, demonstrate how you would lead a PDSA cycle(s) for the selected change idea (or change bundle).

1. **Plan**
   a. Complete the PDSA Plan tool (Appendix 2.14). Including your selected change idea, prediction, and implementation plan.
   b. Insert an image of your completed PDSA Plan below.

   (Insert completed PDSA Plan here.)

2. **Do** (ELS 3.2.2)
   a. Complete the PDSA Do tool (Appendix 2.15).
   b. Insert an image of your completed PDSA Do tool below.

   (Insert completed PDSA Do tool here.)

   c. Describe how the actions taken during the "Do" phase demonstrate equitable resource allocation. Identify the resources (e.g., time, personnel, funding, instructional materials, technology, professional learning, or other supports) that were allocated and explain how they were intentionally distributed based on the needs of the students, staff, or schools participating in the PDSA cycle. (ELS 3.2.2)

Equitable Resource Allocation:

3. **Study** (ELS 4.4.3)
   a. Using a realistic simulated data set or anticipated results, complete the PDSA Study tool (Appendix 2.16).
   b. Insert an image of your completed PDSA Study tool below.

   (Insert completed PDSA Study tool here.)

   c. Describe how you will use technology and performance management systems to monitor, analyze, and evaluate the results of the PDSA cycle, including curriculum, instruction, services, assessment practices, and student outcomes. (ELS 4.4.3)

Monitor, analyze, and evaluate the results:

4. **Act**
   a. Based on the simulated evidence from the Study phase, complete the PDSA Act tool (Appendix 2.17).
   b. Did your District Improvement Team:
      ☐ Adopt the change
      ☐ Adapt the change and conduct another PDSA cycle
      ☐ Abandon the change and select a different change idea
   c. Justify your decision using the simulated evidence gathered during the PDSA cycle.

Reason for Act decision:

Phase 5: Spread and Scale What Works

Once a change has been tested and refined, the next step is to expand it more widely and, ultimately, across the district. Scaling should not be rushed so teams can ensure that solutions are adapted to local contexts while maintaining the district's overall improvement aim.

1. **Determine Readiness to Spread and Scale**
   a. Complete the Spread and Scale Decision-Making Tool (Appendix 2.18). Insert an image of the completed Table A2.7.

   (Insert completed Table A2.7 here.)

   b. Based on the results of the tool, determine the appropriate next step for your improvement effort**.**
      - ☐ Option A: Very small-scale test (try with a small group of students, one class, or a short timeframe)
      - ☐ Option B: Small-scale test (pilot in one grade level, department, or school)
      - ☐ Option C: Large-scale test (expand to multiple schools or grade levels)
      - ☐ Option D: Full implementation (system-wide adoption)

2. **Share Learning Across the District** (ELS 3.3.3, ELS 3.3.4, ELS 3.2.2)
   a. Complete the Networked Improvement Community (NIC) Shared Learning Tool (Appendix 2.19).
   b. Summarize the key findings from your completed NIC Shared Learning Tool by responding to each of the following:

What worked, where, and for whom? (ELS 3.3.3)
How should the improvement effort be adapted to meet the unique needs and contexts of other schools while maintaining the district's improvement aim? (ELS 3.3.4)
What resources and supports should be equitably allocated across schools to support successful implementation of this improvement effort? (ELS 3.2.2)

Building a System-Wide Improvement Culture

As superintendent, you spent several weeks visiting schools and departments to observe collaborative improvement team meetings and see how continuous improvement was taking hold across the district. You were encouraged to find that teams were learning and using the improvement process, analyzing data, and testing change ideas. However, implementation varied considerably from school to school.

Some teams were deeply engaged in collaborative inquiry and making meaningful progress toward improving student outcomes. Other teams appeared to be completing the improvement process simply to meet expectations rather than using it to drive authentic learning and improvement. In some schools, teams focused primarily on operational or management issues instead of addressing persistent gaps in student outcomes. As a result, the quality of implementation, and ultimately the opportunities available to students, varied across the district.

You recognize that successfully teaching the improvement process is only the first step. To ensure every student benefits from equitable, high-quality improvement efforts, the district must intentionally build a system-wide improvement culture that supports ownership, equity-focused inquiry, and coherent implementation across all schools.
You convene your District Improvement Team to reflect on what you have learned through your observations.

Using your inquiry findings as well as the research and leadership strategies presented in *Where the Science of Improvement Meets the Heart of Leadership* Chapters 7 (Shepard, 2026), record your team's recommendations for bolstering a system-wide improvement culture.

1. Policies and Advocacy (ELS 3.3.2, ELS 3.1.3) What district policies or procedures did your team identify that would cultivate more equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive practices among teachers and staff? How would your team advocate for their adoption and implementation across the district? Use research and evidence from Chapter 7 and your inquiry to support your response.
2. Professional Learning (ELS 4.2.2) What systems of support and professional learning did your team identify as necessary to cultivate reflection, distributed leadership, digital literacy, equity, continuous improvement, and student success?
3. Instructional Coherence (ELS 4.1.2) What design and implementation strategies did your team identify to improve coordination and coherence among curricula, instructional technologies, instructional supports, and other academic supports needed to strengthen this improvement effort?
4. System Coherence (ELS 4.4.2) What design and implementation strategies did your team identify to improve coordination and coherence among the district's academic and non-academic systems needed to sustain this improvement effort across the district?

Rubric for Leading Collaborative, Continuous Improvement

Phase One: Evaluate the System and Understand the Problem (4.4.1, 3.1.1, 3.2.1, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 3.3.1)

Component	Unacceptable	Target	Advanced
Assemble the District Improvement Team ELS 4.4.1 Engage appropriate staff in gathering, synthesizing, and using data to evaluate the quality, coordination, and coherence in and among the district's academic and non-academic services.	Candidate **assembles a team (staff)** and **provides a rationale for team membership** **to gather, synthesize, and use data to evaluate the quality of the district's academic and non-academic services**	Candidate **engages an appropriate** team (staff), provides a rationale for team membership, **including role and responsibilities.** to gather, synthesize, and use data to evaluate the quality, **coordination, and coherence in and among** the district's academic and non-academic services.	Candidate **engages a strategic team (staff) with diverse roles and perspectives,** providing a rationale for team membership, including role and responsibilities. to gather, synthesize, and use data to evaluate the quality, **coordination, and coherence in and among** the district's academic and non-academic services **throughout the improvement process.**
Evaluate the District's Current Instructional System ELS 3.1.1 Evaluate district culture for equity and inclusiveness. ELS 3.2.1 Evaluate sources of inequity and bias in educational opportunities and resources. ELS 4.1.1 Evaluate (a) curricula, instructional technologies, and other supports, (b) academic and non-academic systems, and (c) coordination among systems and supports. ELS 4.2.1 Use research and data to evaluate the coordination, coherence, and relevance of systems of support, coaching, and professional development. ELS 4.3.1 Evaluate the quality of formative and summative assessments of student learning. ELS 4.3.2 Evaluate coordination and coherence among academic and non-academic assessments and use data to support instructional improvement, student learning and well-being, and instructional leadership.	Candidate uses **multiple sources of evidence** to evaluate • District culture for equity and inclusiveness (3.1.1) • Sources of inequity and bias in educational opportunities and resources (3.2.1) • curricula, instructional technologies, and other supports, (b) academic and non-academic systems, and (c) coordination among systems and supports (4.1.1) • coordination, coherence, and relevance of systems of support, coaching, and professional development (4.2.1) • quality of formative and summative assessments of student learning (4.3.1) • coordination and coherence among academic and non-academic assessments and use data to support instructional improvement, student learning and well-being, and instructional leadership (4.3.2)	Candidate uses multiple **academic and non-academic** sources of evidence to evaluate • District culture for equity and inclusiveness (3.1.1) • Sources of inequity and bias in educational opportunities and resources (3.2.1) • curricula, instructional technologies, and other supports, (b) academic and non-academic systems, and (c) coordination among systems and supports (4.1.1) • coordination, coherence, and relevance of systems of support, coaching, and professional development (4.2.1) • quality of formative and summative assessments of student learning (4.3.1) • coordination and coherence among academic and non-academic assessments and use data to support instructional improvement, student learning and well-being,	Candidate uses **comprehensive** academic and non-academic sources of evidence to **critically** evaluate • District culture for equity and inclusiveness (3.1.1) • Sources of inequity and bias in educational opportunities and resources (3.2.1) • curricula, instructional technologies, and other supports, (b) academic and non-academic systems, and (c) coordination among systems and supports (4.1.1) • coordination, coherence, and relevance of systems of support, coaching, and professional development (4.2.1) • quality of formative and summative assessments of student learning (4.3.1) • coordination and coherence among academic and non-academic assessments and use data to support instructional improvement, student learning and well-being,

	resulting in **general** strengths, challenges, or opportunities for improvement **of instruction or strategies.**	and instructional leadership (4.3.2) resulting in **meaningful patterns** for improving **equitable student outcomes.**	and instructional leadership (4.3.2) resulting in **sense-making** of meaningful patterns **and relationships across district systems to drive highest-leverage opportunities** for improving equitable student outcomes.
Identify a Student-Outcomes-Focused Instructional Equity Challenge	Candidate identifies a challenge that is **focused on student outcomes.** Challenge is **vague or loosely connected** to the system evaluation. Provides **some evidence supporting** its selection.	Candidate identifies a challenge that is focused on student outcomes **addressing an equity gap.** Challenge is **aligned** to the system evaluation. Provides evidence supporting its selection **and justifies why it represents the highest-leverage opportunity for improvement.**	Candidate identifies a challenge that is focused on student outcomes **addressing an equity gap.** Challenge is aligned **and responsive** to the system evaluation. Provides evidence supporting its selection and justifies why it represents the highest-leverage opportunity for **improving equitable student outcomes.**
Understand the Problem and the System Producing It ELS 3.3.1 Evaluate root causes of inequity and bias.	Candidate uses **appropriate** inquiry tools to investigate the problem and identifies **likely** root causes **of inequity or bias** supported by **some** evidence.	Candidate uses **multiple** inquiry tools **producing diverse data and information** to investigate the problem, **evaluate root causes** of inequity **and** bias, and supported by evidence **resulting in a clear understanding of the problem.**	Candidate uses multiple inquiry tools producing diverse **qualitative and quantitative** data and information to investigate the problem, evaluate **systemic** root causes of inequity and bias, and supported by evidence resulting in a clear understanding of the problem **and the system producing it.**

Phase Two: Focus Collective Efforts

Component	Unacceptable	Target	Advanced
Develop an Aim Statement	Candidate develops an aim statement that includes **most** required components, is **focused** on the identified root cause, and **is** student-outcomes-focused.	Candidate develops an aim statement that includes **all** required components **(by when, root cause, for whom, baseline, goal, measure),** is focused on the identified root cause, and is student-outcomes-focused.	Candidate develops an aim statement that includes **all** required components (by when, root cause, for whom, baseline, goal, measure), is **clearly grounded in the system evaluation,** root cause **analysis,** and **equity-focused** student outcomes. **Aim provides a compelling direction for collective improvement efforts.**
Develop a Driver Diagram	Candidate develops a Driver Diagram that includes **most** primary and secondary drivers. The drivers are **aligned** to the aim statement **and** are **connected** to one another.	Candidate develops a Driver Diagram that includes **thorough** primary and secondary drivers needed to achieve the aim statement. The drivers are aligned to the aim statement and are connected to one another, d**emonstrating logical relationships among the adult practices, systems, and**	Candidate develops a Driver Diagram that includes **comprehensive** primary and secondary drivers needed to achieve the aim statement. The drivers are aligned to the aim statement and are connected to one another, demonstrating logical relationships **among the adult**

		conditions needed to achieve the aim.	**practices, systems, and conditions needed to achieve the aim. Drivers are clearly grounded in the system evaluation, root cause analysis, and theory of improvement, and demonstrate systems thinking.**

Phase 3: Generate Change Ideas

Component	Unacceptable	Target	Advanced
Generate Change Ideas	Candidate generates **most** change ideas **aligned** to the identified root cause, driver diagram, **and** aim statement. The change ideas are **research-informed**, and **identifies** a **strong** change idea to test.	Candidate generates **thorough** change ideas aligned to the identified root cause, driver diagram, and aim statement. The change ideas are research-informed, **connected to the appropriate drivers**, and **identifies and justifies** a **high-impact** change idea that is **specific, actionable, and measurable**.	Candidate generates **comprehensive** change ideas aligned to the identified root cause, driver diagram, and aim statement. The change ideas are research-informed, **culturally responsive**, and connected **by logical relationships** to the appropriate drivers. The candidate identifies and justifies a high-impact change idea that is specific, actionable, measurable, and **targets equity gaps.**
Develop a Theory of Action	Candidate develops a Theory of Action that **includes** required components (change idea, driver, or aim) and **communicates** the cause-and-effect relationship.	Candidate develops a Theory of Action that includes **aligned** required components (change idea, driver, and aim**) and clearly communicates** the cause-and-effect relationship **connecting the strategy to the vision.**	Candidate develops a Theory of Action that includes aligned required components (change idea, driver, and aim) and clearly communicates **a compelling** cause-and-effect relationship connecting the strategy to the **equity-focused** vision.

Phase 4: Test and Build Evidence (3.2.2, 4.4.3)

Component	Unacceptable	Target	Advanced
PDSA Plan	Candidate develops a PDSA Plan that **includes** required components (change idea, prediction, tasks, who, when, and where) and **aligns** to the selected change idea.	Candidate develops a PDSA Plan that includes **aligns** required components (change idea, prediction, tasks, who, when, and where) and **targets support** for the selected change idea.	Candidate develops a **culturally responsive** PDSA Plan that includes aligns required components (change idea, prediction, tasks, who, when, and where) and **equitable** supports for the selected change idea.
PDSA Do ELS 3.2.2: Implement equitable resource allocation strategies.	Candidate documents **process and outcome measures** describing what was implemented and observed. Candidate **aligns resources** to the identified needs of the improvement effort.	Candidate documents **aligned** process and outcome measures describing what was implemented and observed. Candidate **implements equitable resource allocation strategies** (e.g. t**ime, personnel, materials, funding, technology)** to the identified needs of the improvement effort.	Candidate documents **comprehensive** process and outcome measures describing what was implemented and observed. Candidate implements equitable resource allocation strategies (e.g. time, personnel, materials, funding, technology) to the identified needs of the improvement effort. **Resource allocation is responsive to implementation evidence and the unique needs of students, staff, and the local context.**
PDSA Study ELS 4.4.3: Use technology and performance management systems	Candidate **documents** reflection, evidence, process measures, and outcome measures. **Vaguely connects** results to predictions.	Candidate documents **aligned** reflection, evidence, process measures, and outcome measures**. Compares** results to	Candidate documents **comprehensive** reflection, evidence, process measures, and outcome measures**. Analyses**

to monitor, analyze, and evaluate district curriculum, instruction, services, assessment practices, and results.	**Uses** technology and performance management systems to monitor, analyze, and evaluate district results.	predictions. Uses technology and performance management systems to monitor, analyze, and evaluate district **curriculum, instruction, services, assessment practices, and** results.	results against predictions. **Leverages** technology and performance management systems **to ensure equity** by monitoring, analyzing, and evaluating district curriculum, instruction, services, assessment practices, and results.
PDSA Act	Candidate selects **and explains** Adopt, Adapt, or Abandon using **some evidence or learning from the PDSA cycle.**	Candidate selects and **justifies** Adopt, Adapt, or Abandon **using** evidence **and** learning from the PDSA cycle.	Candidate selects and justifies Adopt, Adapt, or Abandon using **comprehensive** evidence and learning from the PDSA cycle, and it **informs the next cycle of continuous improvement.**

Phase 5: Spread and Scale (3.3.3, 3.3.4, 3.2.2)

Component	Developing	Target	Advanced
Determine Readiness to Spread and Scale	Candidate **selects** readiness considerations (confidence, cost of failure, commitment) for appropriate spread or scale next steps.	Candidate **aligns and justifies** readiness considerations (confidence, cost of failure, commitment) for appropriate spread or scale, **and uses the information to plan next steps.**	Candidate aligns and justifies readiness considerations (confidence, cost of failure, and organizational commitment) for the appropriate spread or scale and **identifies how the change will be adapted and monitored in new contexts**.
Share Learning Across the District ELS 3.3.3: Advocate for culturally responsive instructional practices. ELS 3.3.4: Foster culturally responsive systems across district schools. ELS 3.2.2: Implement equitable resource allocation strategies.	The candidate **identifies** • what worked, where, and for whom (ELS 3.3.3) • how the improvement effort should be adapted to meet the unique needs and contexts (ELS 3.3.4) • what resources and supports should be allocated to support successful implementation of the improvement effort (ELS 3.2.2)	The candidate identifies • what worked, where, and for whom **to advocate for culturally responsive instructional practices** (ELS 3.3.3) • how the improvement effort should be adapted **in culturally responsive ways** to meet the unique needs and contexts **across the school system** (ELS 3.3.4) • what resources and supports should be **equitably** allocated **across schools** to support successful implementation of the improvement effort (ELS 3.2.2)	The candidate identifies • what worked, where, and for whom to advocate for culturally responsive instructional practices **across the district** (ELS 3.3.3) • how the improvement effort should be adapted **in culturally responsive ways** to meet the unique needs and contexts across the school system **with those who are close to the work** (ELS 3.3.4) • what resources and supports should be equitably allocated across schools to support successful implementation of the improvement effort **based on unique contexts and needs** (ELS 3.2.2)

Build a Systemic Improvement Culture (3.3.2, 3.1.3, 4.2.2, 4.1.2, 4.2.2)

Component	Unacceptable	Target	Advanced
Policies and Advocacy ELS 3.3.2: Develop equitable district policies and procedures. ELS 3.1.3: Advocate for equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive policies.	Candidate **identifies** district policies or procedures that are equitable. (3.3.2) Candidate **describes** how the team would **communicate about** equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive policies. (3.1.3)	Candidate describes how they would **develop** district policies or procedures that are equitable. (3.3.2) Candidate describes how the team would **advocate** for equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive policies **using research and evidence**	Candidate describes how they would develop district policies or procedures that are equitable, **inclusive, and culturally responsive**. (3.3.2) Candidate describes how the team would advocate for equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive policies

		from Chapter 7 and the inquiry process. (3.1.3)	using research and evidence from Chapter 7 and the inquiry process, **attending to communication modalities that meet the needs of diverse stakeholders**. (3.1.3)
Professional Learning ELS 4.2.2: Use research to propose designs and implementation strategies for cultivating systems of support and professional development that promote reflection, digital literacy, distributed leadership, data literacy, equity, improvement, and student success.	Candidate **identifies** professional learning and systems of support needed to cultivate reflection, distributed leadership, data literacy, equity, continuous improvement, and student success.	Candidate **describes** professional learning and systems of support the team would **propose** to cultivate reflection, distributed leadership, data literacy, equity, continuous improvement, and student success **using research and evidence from Chapter 8 and the inquiry process.**	Candidate describes professional learning and systems of support the team would propose to cultivate reflection, distributed leadership, data literacy, equity, continuous improvement, and student success using research and evidence from Chapter 8 and the inquiry process, **connecting professional learning, coaching, evaluation, and the district's instructional improvement priorities into a coherent system of support.**
Instructional Coherence ELS 4.1.2: Use research and evidence to propose designs and implementation strategies for improving coordination and coherence among curricula, instructional technologies, other supports, and academic and non-academic systems.	Candidate **identifies** design and implementation strategies needed to improve coordination and coherence among curricula, instructional technologies, instructional supports, and other academic supports.	Candidate **describes** design and implementation strategies the team would **propose** to improve coordination and coherence among curricula, instructional technologies, instructional supports, and other academic supports **using research and evidence from Chapter 9 and the inquiry process.**	Candidate describes design and implementation strategies the team would propose to improve coordination and coherence among curricula, instructional technologies, instructional supports, and other academic supports using research and evidence from Chapter 9 and the inquiry process, **aligning curriculum, instruction, assessment, instructional technologies, and supports into a coherent instructional system focused on the district's instructional improvement priorities.**
System Coherence ELS 4.4.2: Use research to propose designs and implementation strategies for improving coordination and coherence among the district's academic and non-academic systems.	Candidate **identifies** design and implementation strategies needed to improve coordination and coherence among the district's academic and non-academic systems.	Candidate **describes** design and implementation strategies the team would **propose** to improve coordination and coherence among the district's academic and non-academic systems **using research and evidence from Chapter 10 and the inquiry process.**	Candidate describes design and implementation strategies the team would propose to improve coordination and coherence among the district's academic and non-academic systems using research and evidence from Chapter 10 and the inquiry process, **connecting academic and non-academic systems, policies, professional learning, instructional supports, and district improvement priorities into a coherent system that embeds continuous improvement.**

AI Acknowledgement Statement

(Only required if AI was used)

Hillier's AI Literacy Framework	Ethical Use of AI Tools	Knowledge of AI Affordances	Working Effectively with AI Tools	Evaluation of AI Output	Use and Integration into Practice
Purpose	• Indicate AI-generated work • Disclose information source, purpose, and reason for use • Commit to prompt transparency • Maintain privacy and security	• Use a variety of relevant tools in authentic ways • Consider benefits and risks of the tools	• Leverage online tools • Refine prompts	• Own the quality and accuracy of your work • Mitigate risks such as hallucinations, false information, plagiarism, and biases	• Use GenAI when it adds value
Acknowledgement Statement Directions	Include: • AI tools used (e.g. Chat GPT, MS Copilot) • Purpose of use (e.g. generate ideas, create an outline, revise tone, edit) • Reason for use (e.g. save time, stimulate thinking, experiment for fun, feedback) • Prompt(s) used	Include: • What you learned from the tool	Include: • How you integrated the output with your own work	Include: • How you accounted for limitations, inaccuracies, ethics, and biases	Include • How it impacted or added value to your work
Student Response					

Created by Marci Shepard using the article A *proposed AI literacy framework (*Hillier, 2023)

Alignment to National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Standards

NELP Standard 3: Equity, Inclusiveness and Cultural Responsiveness

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and wellbeing of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive district culture.

NELP Standard Component 3.1 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive district culture.	
Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:	Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:
CK 3.1.1 Research on inclusive district cultures	ELS 3.1.1 Evaluate district culture
CK 3.1.2 Dimensions of positive and inclusive district culture (i.e., fair, safe, healthy, caring, responsive, inclusive, and respectful)	ELS 3.1.2 Use research and evidence to design and cultivate a supportive and inclusive district culture
CK 3.1.3 Processes for evaluating district culture	ELS 3.1.3 Advocate for a supportive and inclusive district culture
CK 3.1.4 Processes for fostering cultural change	
CK 3.1.5 Strategies for advocacy	

NELP Standard Component 3.2 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable access to safe and nurturing schools and the opportunities and resources, including instructional materials, technologies, classrooms, teachers, interventions, and adult relationships, necessary to support the success and well-being of each student.	
Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:	Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:
CK 3.2.1 Research on the consequences for students of equitable and inequitable use of educational resources and opportunities	ELS 3.2.1 Evaluate sources of inequality and bias in the allocation of educational opportunities and resources, including instructional materials, technologies, classrooms, teachers, interventions, and adult relationships
CK 3.2.2 Equitable allocation of educational opportunities and resources, including instructional materials, technologies, classrooms, teachers, interventions, and adult relationships	ELS 3.2.2 Cultivate the equitable use of educational resources and opportunities through procedures, guidelines, norms, and values
CK 3.2.3 Broader social and political concerns with equity and inequality in the use of educational resources and opportunities	ELS 3.2.3 Advocate for equitable access to educational resources, procedures, and opportunities

NELP Standard Component 3.3 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, advocate, and cultivate equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instructional and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.	
Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:	Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:
CK 3.3.1 Culturally responsive instructional and behavior support practices	ELS 3.3.1 Evaluate root causes of inequity and bias
CK 3.3.2 Characteristics and foundations of equitable and inequitable educational practice	ELS 3.3.2 Develop district policies or procedures that cultivate equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive practice among teachers and staff
CK 3.3.3 Research on implications for students of equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive practice	ELS 3.3.3 Advocate for culturally responsive instructional and behavior support practices among district staff and across district schools
CK 3.3.4 Broader social and political concerns with equity and inequity in schools and districts	ELS 3.3.4 Cultivate culturally responsive instructional and behavior support practices across the district and its schools

NELP Standard 4: Learning and Instruction

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and wellbeing of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to evaluate, design, cultivate, and implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, data systems, supports, assessment, and instructional leadership.

NELP Standard Component 4.1 Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, design, and implement high-quality curricula, the use of technology, and other services and supports for academic and non-academic student programs.	
Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:	Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:

CK 4.1.1 Research on the leadership of academic and non-academic programs	ELS 4.1.1 Evaluate (a) curricula, use of technology, and other supports, (b) academic and non-academic systems, and (c) coordination among systems and supports
CK 4.1.2 Research-based curricula, technologies, and other supports for academic and non-academic programs	ELS 4.1.2 Use research and evidence to propose designs and implementation strategies for improving coordination and coherence among (a) curricula, instructional technologies, and other supports, and (b) academic and non-academic systems
CK 4.1.3 Approaches to coordinating among (a) curricula, (b) the use of technology, and (c) academic and non-academic systems of support	
CK 4.1.4 Infrastructures for the ongoing support of academic and non-academic programs	

NELP Standard Component 4.2 Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to collaboratively evaluate, design, and cultivate systems of support, coaching, and professional development for educators, educational professionals, and school and district leaders, including themselves, that promote reflection, digital literacy, distributed leadership, data literacy, equity, improvement, and student success.	
Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:	Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:
CK 4.2.1 Research on instructional leadership at the school and district level	ELS 4.2.1 Use research and data to evaluate the coordination, coherence, and relevance of the district's systems of support, coaching, and professional development for educators, educational professionals, and leaders
CK 4.2.2 Research-based approaches on using data to design, implement, and evaluate professional development for teachers and other educational professionals that promotes reflection, digital literacy, distributed leadership, data literacy, equity, improvement, and student success	ELS 4.2.2 Use research to propose designs and implementation strategies for cultivating systems of support and professional development that promote reflection, digital literacy, distributed leadership, data literacy, equity, improvement, and student success
CK 4.2.3 Research-based approaches to leadership development focused on improving instructional practice (i.e., leadership evaluation, coaching, development of professional learning communities, etc.)	
CK 4.2.4 Approaches and strategies for supporting district and school collaboration	

NELP Standard Component 4.3 Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to design, implement, and evaluate a developmentally appropriate, accessible, and culturally responsive system of assessments and data collection, management, and analysis that support instructional improvement, equity, student learning and well-being, and instructional leadership.	
Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:	Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:
CK 4.3.1 Research, theory, and best practice regarding effective and ineffective assessments of academic and non-academic factors (i.e., instruction, student learning and well-being, instructional leadership, etc.)	ELS 4.3.1 Evaluate the quality of formative and summative assessments of student learning
CK 4.3.2 Research on assessment practices that are culturally responsive and accessible	ELS 4.3.2 Evaluate coordination and coherence among academic and non-academic assessments and use data from these sources to support instructional improvement, student learning and well-being, and instructional leadership
CK 4.3.3 Research and best practices regarding systems for collecting, analyzing, managing, and utilizing assessment results and other sources of data	ELS 4.3.3 Use research to propose designs and implementation strategies for district-wide assessment systems that are culturally responsive and accessible

NELP Standard Component 4.4 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to design, implement, and evaluate district-wide use of coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, assessment, student services, technology, and instructional resources that support the needs of each student in the district.	
Content Knowledge: Program provides evidence of candidate knowledge of:	Educational Leadership Skills: Program provides evidence that candidates demonstrate skills required to:
CK 4.4.1 Research on the coordination (or lack thereof) within and among academic and non-academic services and its impact on student learning and well-being	ELS 4.4.1 Engage appropriate staff in gathering, synthesizing, and using data to evaluate the quality, coordination, and coherence in and among the district's academic and nonacademic services

CK 4.4.2 Appropriate and ethical use of data to monitor and continuously improve the district's curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices	ELS 4.4.2 Use research to propose designs and implementation strategies for improving coordination and coherence among the district's academic and non-academic systems
CK 4.4.3 Approaches and strategies for developing and implementing coherent and equitable systems of curriculum, instruction, assessment, student services, technology, and instructional resources	ELS 4.4.3 Use technology and performance management systems to monitor, analyze, and evaluate district curriculum, instruction, services, assessment practices, and results