ResourceCheck: Assess your District's Resource Use

How well does your district organize its resources to support high-performing schools?

Background: For over a decade, Education Resource Strategies, Inc. (ERS) has helped leaders of urban school districts strategically reallocate their resources to improve student performance. Through this work, funded by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, we have identified seven Core Transformational Strategies that support high-performing schools; in high-functioning districts, resources (people, time, and money) are aligned to support these strategies.

Core Transformational Strategies
1. **School Funding:** Ensure equitable, transparent, and flexible funding across schools adjusted for student need
2. **Teaching:** Restructure teaching to foster individual and team effectiveness and professional growth
3. **School Design:** Support schools in organizing talent, time, and money to maximize learning
4. **Instructional Support:** Ensure access to aligned curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development
5. **Leadership:** Build school and district leader capacity
6. **Central Services:** Redesign central roles for empowerment, accountability, and efficiency
7. **Partnerships:** Partner with families and communities

We have designed this questionnaire to help you better understand how well the resources in your district are aligned to support these Transformational Strategies.

How to Use this Questionnaire: Each of the seven Core Transformational Strategies is broken down into several principles. Each principle has several questions to help you think about your district's practices.

For each principle, rate your district's performance to the best of your knowledge. It is okay to select "don't know," as we do not expect that everyone would know the answers to all questions. Patterns of "don't knows" may be indicators of opportunity for cross-functional discussion.

For questions that have multiple parts, please use your best judgment in picking one of the answer choices.

Tabulating your answers at the end can allow you to view all of your responses at once, which can help identify patterns of opportunity.

We recommend that several people representing different areas (e.g., CFO, CAO, Superintendent) all complete the questionnaire to provide multiple perspectives.

How to interpret your results: There are two ways to use the results of this questionnaire.

1. If multiple people have completed the questionnaire, the first step is to compare results, and discuss areas of disagreement. This can help increase everyone's understanding of your district's resource use.

2. Principles where you answered "Never"/ "Sometimes"/ "Strongly Disagree" / "Disagree" all indicate areas where current resource use does not support the Transformational Strategy and there may be a resource misalignment. These results will help you prioritize what areas need further investigation and what action should be taken.

Additional resources to help you think about resource use in your district and opportunities for reallocation are available on our website.

Principles of Strategic Resource Transformation

1-1: Allocate Resources Equitably - Allocate resources equitably across schools, adjusting for student and school needs.

1-2: Create Funding Transparency - Create transparency and predictability that builds trust and allows school leaders to organize resources to fit school and student needs.

1-3: Ensure Funding Flexibility - Ensure school leaders have the flexibility to organize people, time, and money to fit school and student needs.

2-1: Measure Teaching Effectiveness - Measure and report teacher effectiveness in a way that informs all other aspects of the human capital system.

2-2: Facilitate Hiring & Assignment - Recruit and hire talented individuals to work in teams that match experience and capability to the needs of the school.

2-3: Ensure Team Collaboration & School-based PD - Ensure teams include expert coaching support and schedule time to collaborate to improve instruction in response to student needs.

2-4: Promote Individual Growth & Retention - Structure individual PD and career opportunities to encourage individual professional growth and retain most-effective teachers and leaders.

2-5: Restructure Career Path & Compensation - Create new compensation models and career paths that reward the greatest contributors and attract top talent to biggest challenges.

3-1: Design Portfolio of Schools - Create a diverse portfolio of schools (sizes, programs, locations, pilots/charters) to balance cost, capacity, and choice options, while supporting equitable access and innovation.

3-2: Promote State-of-the-Art "Strategic School Designs" - Provide state-of-the-art strategic school designs (course-offerings, staffing templates, schedules) that help schools strategically organize talent, time, and money to match instructional design and student needs.

4-1: Align Curriculum - Provide access to curriculum that aligns with performance standards and the instruction, assessment, and PD provided in schools.

4-2: Provide Assessment Systems - Provide access to assessments that align with standards and include timely feedback about student progress on standards.

4-3: Target Professional Development - Provide access to high-quality professional development that fits school needs and system strategy.

5-1: Measure Leadership Effectiveness - Define and measure leadership effectiveness in a way that informs all other aspects of the human capital system.

5-2: Manage Hiring & Assignment - Hire and facilitate assignment of talented individuals who bring the right set of skills as fully developed as possible, for each school and for each district leadership role.

5-3: Promote Growth & Retention - Structure PD, career opportunities, and compensation to encourage professional growth and retain the most effective school and district leaders.

6-1: Measure School Performance - Measure school performance and progress in ways that guide support.

6-2: Differentiate School Support - Organize central roles, timelines, and processes to differentiate support provided to schools based on their needs.

6-3: Turnaround Low-performing Schools - Deliberately organize resources, roles, and processes to support persistently low-performing schools.

6-4: Integrate Data - Develop an integrated data infrastructure that facilitates district-wide monitoring, analysis, and problem solving to improve performance.

6-5: Ensure Efficient Operations - Ensure efficient provision of school operations and services in a way that maximizes resources devoted to instruction.

7-1: Maximize Community Resources - Use local expert resources to augment instruction and provide enrichment and wellness.

7-2: Engage Families - Actively involve parents and family members in their student's learning and in the daily work of the school.

Transformational Strategy	Principle	Statement	Scale (fill in)				
1. Ensure equitable, transparent, and flexible funding across schools adjusted for student need	**1-1: Allocate Resources Equitably**	Students with similar needs (i.e., SPED or ELL) receive the same level of resources regardless of what school they attend. This is more likely if school budgets are determined by: • Allocating staffing $ through per pupil formulas. • Adjusting up <u>and down</u> based on actual enrollment. • Ensuring small schools (<350) have sufficient, but not excessive, resources by deliberately considering school size in budget allocation formula. • Providing students with greater learning challenges (e.g., SPED, ELL poverty or low proficiency) additional resources to support these needs.	Never ⚪	Sometimes ⚪	Frequently ⚪	Always ⚪	Don't Know ⚪
	1-2: Create Funding Transparency	1. The district reports school budgets with all funding sources, and presents it in a format that is easy to understand and compare across schools.	Strongly Disagree ⚪	Disagree ⚪	Agree ⚪	Strongly Agree ⚪	Don't Know ⚪
		2. The rules for how positions and dollars are allocated to schools are clearly published and rigidly adhered to.	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪
	1-3: Ensure Funding Flexibility	Principals can make decisions (hiring, adjusting schedules, trading resources, etc.) without requiring a full faculty vote or having staff they would not have selected placed in their building.	Never ⚪	Sometimes ⚪	Frequently ⚪	Always ⚪	Don't Know ⚪

Transformational Strategy	Principle	Statement	Scale (fill in)				
2. Restructure teaching to foster individual and team effectiveness and professional growth	**2-1: Measure Teaching Effectiveness**	All teachers in the district receive accurate and rigorous evaluations each year based on clear standards for teaching effectiveness and student performance.	Never ○	Sometimes ○	Frequently ○	Always ○	Don't Know ○
	2-2: Facilitate Hiring & Assignment	1. Virtually all teaching positions are filled by August.	○	○	○	○	○
		2. The district identifies schools with a high concentration of new teachers and ensures additional support.	○	○	○	○	○
	2-3: Ensure Team Collaboration & School-based PD	1. All core teachers in the district participate in at least 90 minutes of collaborative planning time a week.	○	○	○	○	○
		2. Collaborative planning is focused on student data and supported by teacher leaders/coaches to ensure that time is used well.	○	○	○	○	○
		3. Teacher professional development is primarily job embedded (versus course based) and driven by student performance data.	○	○	○	○	○
	2-4: Promote Individual Growth & Retention	1. The district rigorously evaluates teachers before making tenure decisions and promotes only those who are high performing.	○	○	○	○	○
		2. Teacher professional development is individualized based on measured performance and identified learning need.	Strongly Disagree ○	Disagree ○	Agree ○	Strongly Agree ○	Don't Know ○
	2-5: Restructure Career Path & Compensation	1. The district's career path provides opportunities for strong teachers to pursue multiple leadership paths (e.g., administrative or teacher leader).	○	○	○	○	○
		2. The teacher compensation increases over their career accumulate more due to increased performance and leadership contribution, than simply increasing years of experience (step) or accumulating course credits.	○	○	○	○	○

Transformational Strategy	Principle	Statement	Scale (fill in)				
3. Support schools in organizing talent, time, and money to maximize learning	**3-1: Design Portfolio of Schools**	1. The district actively plans school sizes and configurations to cost effectively balance: (1) Providing highly effective programs (e.g., SPED, ELL) (2) Utilizing existing facilities (3) Allowing equitable access across neighborhoods (4) Fostering innovative partnerships.	Strongly Disagree ○	Disagree ○	Agree ○	Strongly Agree ○	Don't Know ○
		2. The district has a clear plan for staffing small (<350) and under-filled schools to ensure cost effectiveness.	○	○	○	○	○
		3. The district deliberately manages the assignment of special education and ELL programs to balance quality instruction and the need for inclusion with cost effectiveness (fill rates).	Never ○	Sometimes ○	Frequently ○	Always ○	Don't Know ○
	3-2: Promote State-of-the-Art "Strategic School Designs"	1. The district provides schools with a menu of school design options (aligned schedule, staffing, intervention) so that each school can choose the best plan for its size, priorities, and instructional model.	Never ○	Sometimes ○	Frequently ○	Always ○	Don't Know ○
		2. Schools have the flexibility to lower and raise specific class sizes based on unique content area and student needs.	Strongly Disagree ○	Disagree ○	Agree ○	Strongly Agree ○	Don't Know ○
		3. Schools are encouraged to create teacher teams of diverse experience to maximize impact of skills and combined expertise.	○	○	○	○	○
		4. The district helps schools to maximize academic time for core subjects and extended learning time for students who need it.	Never ○	Sometimes ○	Frequently ○	Always ○	Don't Know ○
		5. Schools implement cost-effective early intervention models that identify learning needs early and organize rapid intervention for at-risk children.	○	○	○	○	○

Transformational Strategy	Principle	Statement	Scale (fill in)				
4. Ensure access to aligned curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development (PD)	**4-1: Align Curriculum**	The district publishes learning standards, topics of study, and approved curriculum materials for each grade level, mapped to state and local standards.	Never ○	Sometimes ○	Frequently ○	Always ○	Don't Know ○
	4-2: Provide Assessment Systems	1. Teachers frequently assess student progress and use the results to adjust their instruction.	○	○	○	○	○
		2. Percent of school leaders and teachers that are trained and proficient in using data to inform school improvement and classroom practice.	0-25% ○	25-50% ○	50-75% ○	75-100% ○	Don't Know ○
	4-3: Target Professional Development	The district has a system that identifies areas of improvement within each school, helps schools develop a multiyear PD plan, and deploys PD resources based on the school's need.	Never ○	Sometimes ○	Frequently ○	Always ○	Don't Know ○

Transformational Strategy	Principle	Statement	Scale (fill in)				
5. Build school and district leader capacity	**5-1: Measure Leadership Effectiveness**	The district evaluates principals on clear and rigorous standards of performance, and uses evaluations to determine appropriate levels of support and compensation or changes in job responsibility.	Never ○	Sometimes ○	Frequently ○	Always ○	Don't Know ○
	5-2: Manage Hiring & Assignment	The district strategically places its best leaders in the toughest assignments.	○	○	○	○	○
	5-3: Promote Growth & Retention	The district uses a leadership building strategy for high-potential school leaders that: (1) provides intensive training in successful school leadership (2) strategically places them in schools where they can have the most academic impact and professional growth (3) infuses significant operational support throughout the school year.	○	○	○	○	○

Transformational Strategy	Principle	Statement	Scale (fill in)				
6. Redesign central roles for empowerment, accountability, and efficiency	**6-1: Measure School Performance**	The district sets targets for academic performance growth for all schools that are easy to understand and used to drive instruction.	Never ○	Sometimes ○	Frequently ○	Always ○	Don't Know ○
	6-2: Differentiate School Support	The district differentiates school support and resources based on each school's academic performance, practice, and leadership capacity.	○	○	○	○	○
	6-3: Turnaround Low-performing Schools	1. Does your district have a deliberate turnaround strategy for persistently low-performing schools? 2. If yes, how many of the six practices below does your strategy have? – Diagnose the needs and resource levels of the school – Ensure transformational leadership – Assemble expert teacher teams – Provide sufficient expert instructional support and collaborative planning time – Target student support (extra time, tutoring, etc.) – Provide additional problem-solving, support, and monitoring from the central office	No ○ Yes ○ ○ 0 components ○ 1 component ○ 2 components ○ 3 or more components ○ Don't know				
	6-4: Integrate Data	The district integrates student, teacher, and resource data through a system that is easy for administrators, teachers, and central office staff to use.	Strongly Disagree ○	Disagree ○	Agree ○	Strongly Agree ○	Don't Know ○
	6-5: Ensure Efficient Operations	The district tracks the costs and service quality for each central department, and manages its spending in response to change in key cost drivers (e.g., enrollment or funding streams).	Never ○	Sometimes ○	Frequently ○	Always ○	Don't Know ○

Transformational Strategy	Principle	Statement	Scale (fill in)				
7. Partner with families and communities	**7-1: Maximize Community Resources**	The district actively partners with community providers to offer enrichment and social service support.	Never ○	Sometimes ○	Frequently ○	Always ○	Don't Know ○
	7-2: Engage Families	The district supports schools to partner with parents around meeting student learning goals.	○	○	○	○	○

Transfer your answers from the preceding questionnaire to this answer sheet to see patterns within and across Transformational Strategies.

1 = Never or Strongly Disagree   2 = Sometimes or Disagree   3 = Frequently or Agree   4 = Always or Strongly Agree   DK = Don't Know

____ **1-1: Allocate Resources Equitably -** Allocate resources equitably across schools, adjusting for student and school needs.

____ **1-2: Create Funding Transparency -** Create transparency and predictability that builds trust and allows school leaders to organize resources to fit school and student needs.

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____ **2-1: Measure Teaching Effectiveness -** Measure and report teacher effectiveness in a way that informs all other aspects of the human capital system.

____ **2-2: Facilitate Hiring & Assignment -** Recruit and hire talented individuals to work in teams that match experience and capability to the needs of the school.

____ **2-3: Ensure Team Collaboration & School-based PD -** Ensure teams include expert coaching support and schedule time to collaborate to improve instruction in response to student needs.

____ **2-4: Promote Individual Growth & Retention -** Structure individual PD and career opportunities to encourage individual professional growth and retain most-effective teachers and leaders.

____ **2-5: Restructure Career Path & Compensation -** Create new compensation models and career paths that reward the greatest contributors and attract top talent to biggest challenges.

____ **3-1: Design Portfolio of Schools -** Create a diverse portfolio of schools (sizes, programs, locations, pilots/charters) to balance cost, capacity, and choice options, while supporting equitable access and innovation.

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____ **7-2: Engage Families -** Actively involve parents and family members in their student's learning and in the daily work of the school.

Reporting Table: when using with a district leadership group, you can use the following format to report results for discussion.

Resource Strategy	Avg. Score	% Don't Know
1-1: Allocate Resources Equitably - Allocate resources equitably across schools, adjusting for student and school needs.		
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