

## Five Critical Practices for Middle Grades Leadership: A Framework for School Improvement

Ruth C. Nash, *Education Solutions*  
Yvette M. Richardson, *Miles College*  
Patricia H. Hodge, *Education Solutions*  
Peggy H. Connell, *Samford University*  
Zebbra P. Green, *Samford University*

*Based on current research, many students in the middle grades (6 - 8) have not performed at their highest academic levels. In 2011, more than one-half of eighth graders in 16 Southern states scored Basic or Below Basic on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Alternatively, effective principal-leaders strategically demonstrated practices transforming schools into institutions of learning and improved student performance. To support the development and refinement of middle grades leadership expertise, educational leaders in the state collaborated to design a Middle Grades Leadership Academy (MGLA). The following Five Critical Practices synthesize the research findings and are critical to increased student learning: Focus on the direction, build a powerful organization, give life to data, ensure student-focused vision and action, and lead learning. In addition, educational leaders correlated and aligned the the Five Critical Practices with the standards of the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders, and State Department of Education: Alabama Plan 2020.*

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB, 2011) described middle grades as the “*vital center — the make-or-break point — of our K-12 public school system*” (p. i). Failure to develop confident, knowledgeable learners in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades destines hundreds of thousands of young people to failure in high school, college, and careers. In 2011, more than one-half of eighth graders in 16 Southern states scored Basic or Below Basic on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). A Basic level score indicated a student only partially mastered the knowledge and skills needed for success in high school (SREB, 2011).

“Literally millions of young people are out of school and grossly ill equipped to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce and economy” (Association for College and Technical Education (ACTE), 2009, p. 1). The middle grades play a far-reaching role in determining if a student will graduate from high school as college and career ready. ACTE (2009) reported approximately one in every three students entering ninth grade failed to complete high school in four years, and high-risk students were eight to ten times more likely to drop out of school in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Balfanz and Herzog

(2006) agreed ninth grade retention is a major risk factor for dropping out of high school. According to Balfanz (2009), the middle grades are a place where a student launches forward to graduation and success or slips off course to a path of failure.

To accomplish true middle school reform, SREB (2012) recommended principals focus on improving instruction and involving all stakeholders. The principal is responsible for understanding and communicating the relevance and purpose of learning for all students and closing the achievement gap. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) stated, “Leadership has significant effect on student learning, second only to the effects of the quality of the curriculum and teachers instruction” (p. 5).

### **Middle Grades Leadership Academy**

The Middle Grades Leadership Academy (MGLA) Committee began work in May 2013 with 21 members from various backgrounds and areas of expertise including teachers, principals, state and district level administrators, and representatives from national non-profit organizations. The Committee developed a vision for a sustainable, research-based professional development model and formed a smaller group, MGLA Focus Committee, to develop the content and framework, delivery method, and evaluation model for the pilot (see Appendix A).

The intention of the Academy is to foster change and support schools that actively engage students in learning; motivate and support teachers to increase effectiveness; involve parents and families; and implement a continuous improvement process. To accomplish these goals, MGLA will provide a three-year ongoing leadership development academy for principals and school-based leadership teams, through face-to-face contact, on-line connections, networking opportunities, continuous feedback, principal leadership mentors, and resources responsive to the needs of schools.

The Committee selected eight schools to participate in the MGLA pilot. The basis of selection of schools included the following criteria: completed application (Appendix B), signed memorandum of understanding (Appendix C), and benchmark score on a site visit walk through (Appendix D). The Committee distributed invitations to participate in the pilot to 18 districts in central Alabama. The Committee received requests from 15 schools representing 10 school districts. The School Review Committee consisted of 12 veteran educators who attended a two-hour training on the MGLA School Review Rubric (Appendix E). Two School Review Committee members visited each school and submitted a benchmark score. The final selection of the eight schools and the initial training began in the summer 2014.

### **Five Critical Practices**

Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2004) stated effective principals strategically demonstrated practices transforming schools into institutions of learning and improved student performance. The Five Critical Practices that successful principals consistently demonstrated are the following: focus on the direction, build a powerful organization, give life to data, ensure student-focused vision and action, and lead learning (Ash & Hodge, 2012; Ash, Hodge, & Connell, 2013). Each of the critical practices is subdivided into standards. These standards further define the practices of effective principals.

Additionally, the Five Critical Practices correlated with the standards of the following organizations: Wallace Foundation, Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) (Ash et al., 2013). Importantly, the Five Critical Practices correlate with the Alabama State Department of Education Plan 2020 (See Appendix F).

### **Focus on the Direction**

Leaders provide guidance in identifying and developing an understanding of the core beliefs and mission of an organization. The core beliefs guide the work and all decisions of the organization. Consensus among faculty and staff about students and the school's role in student learning is critical to maintaining the focus of the organization (Ash et al., 2013).

### **Build a Powerful Organization**

Leaders build a community of learners and supporters through knowledge sharing with faculty, staff, and community (Waters et al., 2004). Leaders facilitate ongoing informal and formal communication surrounding the status of the school. The communication includes a variety of forums addressing the successes and challenges of the work of the school, which build the sense of community among stakeholders. Establishing an organizational culture encourages productive discussions among all stakeholders reinforces the practice of self-reflection and continuous growth and improvement (Leithwood et al., 2004). The effective leader promotes organizational systems and structures to develop the collaborative school culture, which fosters staff participation in school decisions and enhances productive community relationships. High-quality leaders impact student learning “by setting directions--charting a clear course that everyone understands” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 3). Student learning increases as faculty and staff routinely engage in collegial conversations focused on developing practices to enhance the effectiveness of the instruction (Ash et al., 2013).

### **Give Life to Data**

Leaders ensure the deliberate analysis of key data and share with all stakeholders' critical data related to student learning and school effectiveness. Sharing a variety of sources of data documents student progress and helps identify potential concerns (Knapp, Swinnerton, Copland, & Monpas-Huber, 2006). “Quantitative and qualitative data about various aspects of professional practice can stimulate productive conversation and problem-solving by teachers and administrators. “In the hands of a skilled leader, data become a tool for focusing professional learning on the improvement of daily practice” (Knapp et al., 2006, p. 12). Gaining a solid understanding of data analysis through thoughtful conversations with parent groups, faculty, and staff encourages careful examination of student performance in response to instructional practices (Ash et al., 2013).

## **Ensure Student-Focused Vision and Action**

Effective leaders recognize creating an environment and culture where collaboration for the improvement of student learning is the norm, and includes “space, time, and access to new ideas and expertise” (Fullan, 2001, pp. 64–65). A powerful learning environment for all students focuses on creating a student-centered experience in all areas (Dix, 2012). Leaders protect time, allocate resources, and support personnel in creating and maintaining a focus on improving instructional practices resulting in high levels of learning for all students. Safeguarding routine faculty collaborative time for lesson design and analysis of student work promotes student-centered practices (Ash et al., 2013).

## **Lead Learning**

Leaders model life-long learning and provide routinized time and resources for faculty and staff to learn, collaborate, and reflect on student learning and the implications for instructional practices. Leaders challenge and support faculty and staff as they innovate and examine barriers to meaningful change. Leaders also create a sense of immediacy of the need for improvement in all areas of learning (Ash et al., 2013).

## **Evaluation Component**

In the age of accountability where students are expected to meet high standards and the principal and teachers are held accountable for student results, professional development must be linked to increased student achievement. “Evaluating professional development enables program managers and participants to make data-based decisions about the program” (Killion, 2008, p. 140). An effective professional development model demonstrates an understanding of adult learning; connects adult learning to the objectives of the training; utilizes a clear, practical approach; and measures student learning (Joyce & Calhoun, 2010).

Research studies recommended several professional development evaluation models including the Four Levels of Evaluation of Professional Development (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006), Levels of Evaluation (Guskey, 2000), and Eight-Step Evaluation Model (Killion, 2008). According to Zepeda (2012), evaluating professional development was effective if the program was open to continuous feedback and was adjusted accordingly on day-to-day implementation to improve training and impact learning. Haslam (2010) asserted professional development evaluation evolves as the planning and implementation of the model progresses and recommended five questions to be considered in designing a model. Listed below are the questions and answers guiding the initial development of MGLA’s evaluation model.

### **Should the activity be evaluated?**

MGLA is part of a middle grades school improvement initiative which includes large-scale professional development to be extended over three years in partnership with the Alabama State Department of Education and Samford University. Evaluations were developed for the initial MGLA walkthrough activities (Appendices G and H).

**What are the key elements of the professional development and what assumptions hold these elements together?**

Based upon research student achievement in the middle grades continue to be an area of concern in student achievement. The focus for MGLA is the design and implementation of an effective leadership model resulting in increased student achievement as measured by national, state, and local assessments. Seed funding was provided by the Alabama State Department of Education. Time and commitment from the selected schools are essential for participation. MGLA will provide on-going professional development for the selected schools and a leadership mentor to collaborate and provide focused feedback for the leadership team.

**Who is likely to be interested in the evaluation, and what do they want to know about the professional development?**

State Department of Education, teachers, administrators, parents, school boards, community leaders, and college and university faculties are some of the audiences interested in the impact MGLA has on student achievement.

**What resources are available to support the evaluation?**

Alabama State Department of Education will provide \$10,000 annually, each participating school will contribute \$3,000 annually, and funding from other institutions.

**Who will work on the evaluation?**

Students in the Samford Doctoral Program will design and implement a developmental evaluation model as described by Patton (2011), Haslam (2010), and Guskey (2000).

**Research Questions**

1. What are the practices of a quality leadership model that will sustain student achievement and how do they align with research?
2. What assets and obstacles exist in the implementation of the leadership model?
3. How is student achievement impacted by the implementation of the MGLA model?

**Methodology**

A developmental evaluation model will be used whereby professional development evaluation evolves as the planning and implementation of the project progresses. According to Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, and Caruthers (2011), while research focused “on the need to produce credible, generalizable knowledge,” ( p. xxv) a developmental program evaluation includes the investigation of the development, processes, theory, viability, outcomes, and impact of the specific program. Program evaluation research questions address the quality of the program not gaps and uncertainties in theories and areas of knowledge. A research project is designed to study these uncertainties and gaps; however, a developmental program evaluation helps answer questions to make decisions

about the program and its components (Yarbrough et al., 2011). “Development evaluation supports innovation development to guide adaptation to emergent and dynamic realities in complex environments” (Patton, 2011, p. 1). Developmental evaluation includes supporting social innovation and adaptive management in the evaluation of projects, programs, products, organizational changes, policy reforms, and system interventions. “Evaluation processes include asking evaluative questions, applying evaluation logic, and gathering real-time data to inform ongoing decision making and adaptations” (Patton, 2011, p. 1). The evaluator may be part of a development team collaborating with the team members to “conceptualize, design and test new approaches in a long-term, ongoing process of continuous development, adaptation, and experimentation” (Patton, 2011, p. 1). The evaluation evolves as the evaluator facilitates team discussions infusing evaluative questions, thinking, and data using systematic, data –based reflection and decision making in response to change needs and conditions (Patton, 2011). Using developmental evaluation concepts, some MGLA school models may move from the exploratory and innovative phase of developmental evaluation into a more traditional formative and summative evaluation to determine scalability and generalizability while others may remain in the developmental mode, never creating a fixed model, but sustaining growth.

### Summary

The MGLA pilot was established to support the development and refinement of middle grades leadership expertise that results in improved student achievement. The researched-based content, Five Critical Practices, is correlated with standards from nationally recognized organizations and the Alabama State Department of Education Plan 2020. Eight middle schools will participate in a three-year Academy and a developmental evaluation model will be used to investigate the quality of the project.

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## Appendix A

### **Middle Grades Leadership Academy (MGLA)**

#### **Who we are**

Established with a mission to address the changing dynamics for middle grades' education, the MGLA Committee draws on a national team of leadership experts with multiple years of experience as teachers, academic coaches, principals, superintendents, central office administrators, deputy state superintendent, researchers, State Board of Education member, university professors, leaders of professional development, and leaders of professional associations. The MGLA Committee is a result of a vision created by a partnership among Dr. Yvette Richardson, Alabama State Board of Education Member, Dr. Tommy Bice, Alabama State Superintendent of Education, and Dr. Jeanie Box, Dean of the Samford University Orlean Bullard Beason School of Education.

#### **What we do**

MGLA equips leaders with the knowledge, skills, and strategies listed below.

#### **To foster change and support schools that:**

- Activate students' interests and desire to learn;
- Motivate teachers and provide the necessary support to increase effectiveness;
- Involve parents and families; and
- Enact continuous improvement processes (SREB, 2011).

#### **To build capacity of teachers to:**

- Demonstrate a passion for their work;
- Learn continually, reflect on learning and practice, and identify and solve problems of practice;
- Develop relationships with students grounded in students' interests and background knowledge;
- Demonstrate strong knowledge of content areas and a deep understanding of the development of middle grades students; and
- Collaborate with leadership teams to implement continuous improvement processes.

#### **To ensure students:**

- Demonstrate readiness to begin challenging high school courses by the end of the eighth grade (SREB, 2011);
- Utilize critical thinking, collaborate to solve problems, communicate, and reflect; and
- Demonstrate responsible social and civic behaviors.

#### **How we do it**

MGLA provides initial and ongoing leadership development for principals and school-based leadership teams, through face-to-face contact, on-line connections, networking opportunities, continuing feedback, and supporting resources responsive to the needs of schools.

### **School success starts with effective leadership**

MGLA incorporates research-based leadership practices and supports school leaders through a three-year commitment in a cycle of work that deepens each year. Professional development and ongoing feedback targeted to each school's specific needs support leaders in creating a sustainable framework for success. Mentors work closely with leadership teams to support the schools as they work to achieve their goals.

### **Year One: Building a culture of learning**

The first year builds the big picture as leaders create a learning culture that values the thoughts, opinions, and expertise of the school community. Leadership content focuses on continuous improvement to transform schools into true learning organizations resulting in higher levels of student performance.

### **Year Two: Embedding leadership practices**

Year 2 builds on the work of the first year to create an agile and flexible school by supporting leaders in using data and current research to improve student learning, providing instructional leadership, and analyzing and improving school processes. A primary focus of the work of year 2 is coaching reflective processes (listening, responding, debating, collaboratively making decisions).

### **Year Three: Sustaining innovative leadership practices**

Year 3 focuses on sustaining effective leadership practices in place from Year 1 and Year 2 as well as reviewing, analyzing, and revising current systems as necessary. Year 3 also includes opportunities to generate new ideas in addition to sharing results, leadership expertise, and effective programs and processes with other professionals. Participating schools will serve as model sites in which other professionals can study the implementation of the Five Critical Practices

### **Outcomes**

When fully implemented, the leadership processes, strategies, and practices will build leadership teams' capacity to create a culture of learning and continuous improvement grounded in collegiality and collective expertise, to embed and sustain innovative leadership practices, and to design profound learning experiences that impact student performance.

Appendix B

**Middle Grades Leadership Academy  
Application**

**School** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information:**

District Contact

\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Principal

\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal** \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years as principal \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years at present  
school \_\_\_\_\_

**Academic**

**Coach** \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years in classroom \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years in present  
school \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years in a peer coaching role \_\_\_\_\_ Grade levels  
taught \_\_\_\_\_

Training, professional learning, or self-study in data analysis (list/describe on back, if  
necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Area(s) of expertise/strength

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**School Demographics**

\_\_\_\_\_ % Free/reduced lunch      \_\_\_\_\_ # Student enrollment      \_\_\_\_\_ # Staff enrollment

**School Culture/Identity**

Briefly describe the culture and/or identity of your school.

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**By signing below, \_\_\_\_\_ School agrees to full participation and attendance in the three-year MGLA project.**

**Signatures**

Principal:

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Leadership Team:

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## Appendix C

### **Memorandum of Collaborative Understanding Middle Grades Leadership Academy (MGLA)**

Agreement: Between the Middle Grades Leadership Academy (in affiliation with Samford University OBB School of Education and the Alabama State Department of Education) and \_\_\_\_\_ District regarding a MGLA-  
\_\_\_\_\_ District collaborative in support of select middle school administrators and leadership teams

Goal: Improve student achievement through a research-based professional development model.

MGLA and the \_\_\_\_\_ District agree to the following commitments.

Samford University will:

1. In collaboration with the District, identify select school leaders that commit to full participation in a three-year training and implementation of professional development to ensure sustainability and to build capacity within middle schools,
2. In collaboration with the District, implement a rigorous and relevant leadership development program that will produce high-quality, transformative school leaders,
3. In collaboration with the District and in strictest adherence to confidentiality, commit to sharing annual student achievement data for purposes of measuring growth and meeting College and Career Ready Standards,
4. Provide appropriate training, and collaborate with the District in providing specific and targeted support for school level implementation through on-site brainstorming, coaching, benchmarking for progress, Skyping, direction/redirection, and supporting school and state initiatives,
5. Respond to District participants' continuous feedback on the effectiveness of training and responsiveness of support, and
6. Collaborate with partner schools through two day-long whole-group meetings during the school year, plus one day-long summer training to improve instructional practices.

\_\_\_\_\_ District will:

1. In collaboration with Samford University, identify select school leaders that commit to full participation in a three-year training and implementation of professional development to ensure sustainability and build capacity within middle schools,
2. Support select school Leadership Teams to include a minimum of six participants,
  - Principal (1)
  - Classroom Teacher (2 or more)
  - Additional School Personnel (3 or more)
3. In collaboration with Samford University, support implementation of a rigorous and relevant leadership development program that will produce high-quality, transformative school leaders,

4. Support MSLA leadership training and collaborate with Samford University in the implementation of specific and targeted support for select schools through on-site brainstorming, coaching, benchmarking for progress, Skyping, direction/redirection, and supporting school and state initiatives,
5. In collaboration with Samford University and in strictest adherence to confidentiality and the rights of students, commit to sharing annual student achievement data for purposes of measuring growth and meeting College and Career Ready Standards,
6. Provide continuous feedback to Samford University on the effectiveness of training and responsiveness of support,
7. Provide district support and endorsement through substitute coverage and costs for participants' involvement in the following:
  - two mandatory day-long whole-group meetings to convene at Samford University during the school year,
  - monthly school Leadership Team Meetings (a minimum of at least 85% of team members present at each monthly meeting) within and across schools,
  - one mandatory day-long summer Leadership Team Training at Samford University to improve instructional practices, and
  - monthly Principal Support meetings at Samford University or via social networking sites (Skype, Oovoo, etc.).

Agreed on this date, \_\_\_\_\_  
Samford University, OBB School of Education, Dean (signature)

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District, Superintendent (signature)

Appendix D

**MGLA Data Collection Sheet**

School: \_\_\_\_\_

**School Demographics**

\_\_\_\_\_ % Free/reduced lunch      \_\_\_\_\_ # Student enrollment      \_\_\_\_\_ # Staff enrollment

**Five Critical Practices**

Critical Practice	Leadership Team Look Fors	Faculty/Staff Look Fors	Student Look Fors
<b>CP 1 Focus on Direction</b>			
1.1			
1.2			
1.3			
<b>CP 2 Build a powerful organizational structure</b>			
2.1			
2.2			
2.3			
<b>CP 3 Give life to data</b>			
3.1			
3.2			
3.3			
<b>CP 4 Ensure student-focused vision and action</b>			
4.1			
4.2			
4.3			
<b>CP 5 Lead Learning</b>			
5.1			
5.2			
5.3			

**Other notes:**

Interview notes

School Selection Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_

School Selection Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix E  
Middle Grades Leadership Academy (MGLA)  
MGLA Review Team Training Session  
Agenda  
January 27, 2014  
9:00 – 11:00 am

9:00 Richardson	Welcome  Introductions	Dr. Yvette
9:05	History of MGLA	Dr. Peggy Connell
9:15 Hodge	Five Critical Practices	Dr. Ruth Ash/Dr. Pat
10:45	MGLA Review Process	Dr. Janet Cumbee
11:20	Evaluation of Training	Ms. Zebbra Green
11:30	Lunch	MGLA Review Team MGLA Work Group
12:30	Adjourn	

## Appendix F

### Five Critical Practices Correlated with Alabama Plan 2020

#### **AL 2020 Objectives**

#### **Five Critical Practices (CP)**

##### **Alabama's 2020 Learners**

1. All students perform at or above proficiency and show continuous improvement (achievement/growth).

2. All students succeed (gap closure).

3. Every student graduates from high school (graduation rate).

4. Every student graduates high school prepared (college and career readiness)

##### ***CP1 Focus on Direction***

1.1 Creating an organizational culture

1.2 Working with others to support, encourage, or require high-quality performance

1.3 Using a vision, mission, and strategic plan to make decisions and inform actions

##### ***CP2 Build a powerful organizational structure***

2.1 Working with others to create a powerful organizational structure

2.2 Leading an organization in becoming agile and flexible

2.3 Leading others in developing, maintaining, and improving processes that increase the effectiveness of the organization.

##### ***CP3 Give life to data***

3.1 Ensuring that key data are analyzed in a deliberate manner

3.2 Using data and current research to improve student learning

3.3 Communicating key data to all stakeholders

##### ***CP4 Ensure student-focused vision and action***

4.1 Creating a vision and a culture that focus on student learning and student needs

4.2 Providing instructional leadership

4.3 Leading the development of guidelines and procedures for classrooms

##### ***CP5 Lead Learning***

5.1 Establishing an environment of daily learning and providing time for others to collaborate, reflect, and share knowledge

5.2 Challenging the status quo and working with others to achieve change goals

5.3 Implementing methods to motivate, support, and/or encourage innovation

## AL 2020 Objectives

## Five Critical Practices (CP)

### Alabama's 2020 Support Systems

1. All students will attend school daily and be engaged in rigorous and relevant learning environments.
2. All students will develop a sense of personal and civic responsibility to ensure a learning environment that is safe and civil.
3. All students will be provided with individual and group counseling services.
4. All students will enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade prepared and with a 4-year plan that addresses their individual academic and career interest needs.
5. All students will be provided with healthy meals, physical education and health instruction supported with needed medical and related services.

### *CP1 Focus on Direction*

- 1.1 Creating an organizational culture
- 1.2 Working with others to support, encourage, or require high-quality performance
- 1.3 Using a vision, mission, and strategic plan to make decisions and inform actions

### *CP2 Build a powerful organizational structure*

- 2.1 Working with others to create a powerful organizational structure
- 2.2 Leading an organization in becoming agile and flexible
- 2.3 Leading others in developing maintaining, and improving processes that increase the effectiveness of the organization.

### *CP4 Ensure student-focused vision and action*

- 4.1 Creating a vision and a culture that focus on student learning and student needs
- 4.2 Providing instructional leadership
- 4.3 Leading the development of guidelines and procedures for classrooms

### *CP5 Lead Learning*

- 5.1 Establishing an environment of daily learning and providing time for others to collaborate, reflect, and share knowledge
- 5.2 Challenging the status quo and working with others to achieve change goals
- 5.3 Implementing methods to motivate, support, and/or encourage innovation

## AL 2020 Objectives

## Five Critical Practices (CP)

### Alabama's 2020 Professionals

1. Every child is taught by a well-prepared, resourced, supported, and effective teacher.
2. Every school is led by a well-prepared, resourced, supported, and effective leader.
3. Every school system is led by a prepared and supported visionary instructional leader.

### *CP1 Focus on Direction*

- 1.1 Creating an organizational culture
- 1.2 Working with others to support, encourage, or require high-quality performance
- 1.3 Using a vision, mission, and strategic plan to make decisions and inform actions

### *CP2 Build a powerful organizational structure*

- 2.1 Working with others to create a powerful organizational structure
- 2.2 Leading an organization in becoming agile and flexible
- 2.3 Leading others in developing, maintaining, and improving processes that increase the effectiveness of the organization.

### *CP3 Give life to data*

- 3.1 Ensuring that key data are analyzed in a deliberate manner
- 3.2 Using data and current research to improve student learning
- 3.3 Communicating key data to all stakeholders

### *CP4 Ensure student-focused vision and action*

- 4.1 Creating a vision and a culture that focus on student learning and student needs
- 4.2 Providing instructional leadership
- 4.3 Leading the development of guidelines and procedures for classrooms

### *CP5 Lead Learning*

- 5.1 Establishing an environment of daily learning and providing time for others to collaborate, reflect, and share knowledge
- 5.2 Challenging the status quo and working with others to achieve change goals
- 5.3 Implementing methods to motivate, support, and/or encourage innovation

## AL 2020 Objectives

### Alabama's 2020 Schools/Systems

3. Schools and Systems will be granted flexibility to innovate and create 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments to meet the individual and collective needs of their students.

## Five Critical Practices (CP)

### *CP4 Ensure student-focused vision and action*

4.1 Creating a vision and a culture that focus on student learning and student needs

4.2 Providing instructional leadership

### *CP5 Lead Learning*

5.1 Establishing an environment of daily learning and providing time for others to collaborate, reflect, and share knowledge

5.2 Challenging the status quo and working with others to achieve change goals

5.3 Implementing methods to motivate, support, and/or encourage innovation

Appendix G  
 Middle Grades Leadership Academy (MGLA)  
 Walkthrough Training Evaluation  
 February 5, 2014  
 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Optional) Position/Title:

To what degree do you agree with the items below? (5 Strongly Agree – 1 Strongly Disagree) NA Not Applicable

<b>The MGLA Training</b>	5	4	3	2	1	N A
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1. Presentation and activities were of high quality.
2. Handouts were engaging and useful.
3. Sufficient time was allowed for learning and practicing concepts.
4. The workshop was well planned and interactive.
5. The atmosphere was enthusiastic and conducive to a collegial professional exchange.
6. Session content and strategies met the purpose of the training.
7. The format and structure facilitated my learning.
8. I acquired the intended knowledge and skills to meet the purpose of the MGLA Training.
  
9. Which of the following statements best describes the primary purpose of the MGLA Walkthrough Training? (Select One)

The purpose of the MGLA Walkthrough Training was:

- A. To provide an opportunity to learn more about MGLA.
- B. To conduct a MGLA Walkthrough and appropriately assess participating school.
- C. To prepare me to select the best school to participate in MGLA.
- D. Not Clear

10. What is the most significant thing you learned today?
11. What support do you need to implement what you learned?
12. How can we build on this session for follow-up learning/training?
13. What was the most useful part of the MGLA Training? Why?
14. What was the least useful part of the MGLA Training? Why?
15. Additional Comments:

Appendix H  
Middle Grades Leadership Academy (MGLA)  
Walkthrough Evaluation

Date of Walkthrough:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Optional) Position/Title:

To what degree do you agree with the items below? (5 Strongly Agree – 1 Strongly Disagree) NA Not Applicable

<b>The MGLA Training</b>	5	4	3	2	1	N A
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|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 16. Master Schedule was helpful for the completion of the walkthrough.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17. Map of School was helpful for the completion of the walkthrough.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18. Overall atmosphere of the school was receptive.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19. Area for meeting after walkthrough was sufficient.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20. Sufficient time was allowed for the walkthrough to gain information to complete the Five Critical Practices Grid.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21. The Five Critical Practices of the Grid met the purpose of the walkthrough.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22. The format and structure of the walkthrough allowed me to gather information needed to thoroughly complete the Five Critical Practices Grid .                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 23. Sufficient time for the exit conference at the end of walkthrough was scheduled.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 24. The atmosphere in the exit conference was enthusiastic and conducive to a collegial professional exchange.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 25. The exit interview allowed me to gain information to clarify any questions concerning the walkthrough or Five Critical Practices Grid.                                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 26. Overall, I felt I met the purpose of the walkthrough: to gain sufficient knowledge to gather information needed to thoroughly complete the Five Critical Practices Grid. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 27. Did you complete the walkthrough with a partner?   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| YES  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| NO   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 28. What was the most significant part of the school visit that impacted your thinking concerning the Five Critical Practices Framework?                                     |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 29. What was the most significant part of the walkthrough? Why?  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 30. What was the least useful part of the MGLA walkthrough? Why?   |  |  |  |  |  |  |

31. Did the Five Critical Practices Framework meet the purpose of guiding the “Look Fors” during the walkthrough? How could the Five Critical Practices Framework be improved?
32. What suggestions do you have for future MGLA Walkthroughs?
33. What support do you need to better implement a MGLA Walkthrough?
34. Additional Comments: