



FOCUS ON MY BUILDING GUIDE— HIGH SCHOOL VERSION

*Using Building-Level Progress and Achievement Data
to Establish Improvement Priorities*

A Template for School Leadership Teams

Purpose

The primary purpose of this guide is to make productive use of your building-level achievement and value-added results. In particular, this guide will help you recognize and leverage your strengths and identify and address your challenges.

A second important purpose of this guide is to provide you an experience that mirrors the experience your teacher teams will have as they work through similar processes at the teacher-team level.

As you complete this guide, you will:

1. Use achievement and value-added information to assess and prioritize the strengths and challenges associated with your current instructional program;
2. Uncover the root causes of your strengths and your highest priority issues; and
3. Discuss strategies to leverage your area(s) of strength and address your area(s) of challenge.

To provide actionable information to guide building-level improvement, you will spend most of your time examining three building-level value added reports: 1) the School Value-Added Report, 2) the School Search, and 3) the School Diagnostic Report.

Visit the Tennessee Student Progress Portal at www.BattelleforKids.org/Tennessee to learn more and access online learning and resources available at no cost as part of First to the Top.

School Value-Added Reports

2010 School Value-Added Report ABC High School EOC/AYP Algebra I

Subject	Year	N	Mean Student Score	Mean Score %-ile	Mean Pred Score	Pred Score %-ile	System Effect	System Effect %-ile	System vs State Avg
Algebra I	2010	555	699.3	46	696.5	43	2.7	57	NDD

	Progress is significantly above the average system in the state.
	Progress is not detectably different from the average system in the state.
	Progress is significantly below the average system in the state.

The data in this report are displayed in terms of “scale score” points.

The School Value-Added Report is the primary value-added accountability report. It summarizes the aggregate-level results for each tested high school course.

The report displayed above is an example of a School Value-Added Report for Algebra I.

To access your School Value-Added Report:

1. Log in at <https://tvaas.sas.com/evaas>
2. Enter your username (example: firstname.lastname).
3. Enter your password, and click the “Go” button. If you can’t remember your password, click “Forgot Password,” and it will be sent to your district e-mail address.
4. You should be looking at your System Value-Added Report for math.
5. Select “School Value-Added” from the reports menu to navigate to your school report.
6. From the “Tests” drop-down menu, select the test results you wish to examine.

Interpreting ABC High School's Value-Added Report for Algebra I

1. What was the mean predicted score for Algebra I students at ABC High School?
2. What was the mean student score for Algebra I students at ABC High School?
3. What was the school effect associated with ABC High School's Algebra I program?
4. Did the typical Algebra I student at ABC High make above, below or expected gains?

Now, use your School Value-Added Reports to answer the following questions.

1. What was your mean predicted score?
2. What was your mean student score?
3. What was your school effect?
4. Did students make above, below or expected gains?

Focus on My Building Matrix

The *Focus on My Building* matrix is a simple and useful tool to help you identify areas of relative strength and challenge in your building's aggregate achievement and value-added results. Once you have completed this matrix, you will have a better understanding of the specific grade-level and subject-area strengths and challenges that are contributing to your school's results. Use the following instructions to complete your *Focus on My Building* matrix.

Plot Your Grade-Level and Subject-Area Results

1. Go to the "Reports" menu on the TVAAS® site and select "School Search."
2. Enter the name of your school, click "Search" and select your school from the list.
3. Click "Search" at the bottom of the next Web page.
4. Your school is listed with all of the schools in the state that serve the same grade-levels. To the right of your school's name, you see grade-by-grade performance levels.
5. In the example below, you see "means" and "gains" for each grade level for which there is value-added reporting. The "mean" represents the mean achievement level of that grade relative to other schools. The "gain" represents the average value-added gain for your students relative to the average gain in other schools.

2010 TVAAS School Search Report Results ABC High School in ABC System EOC/AYP Algebra I

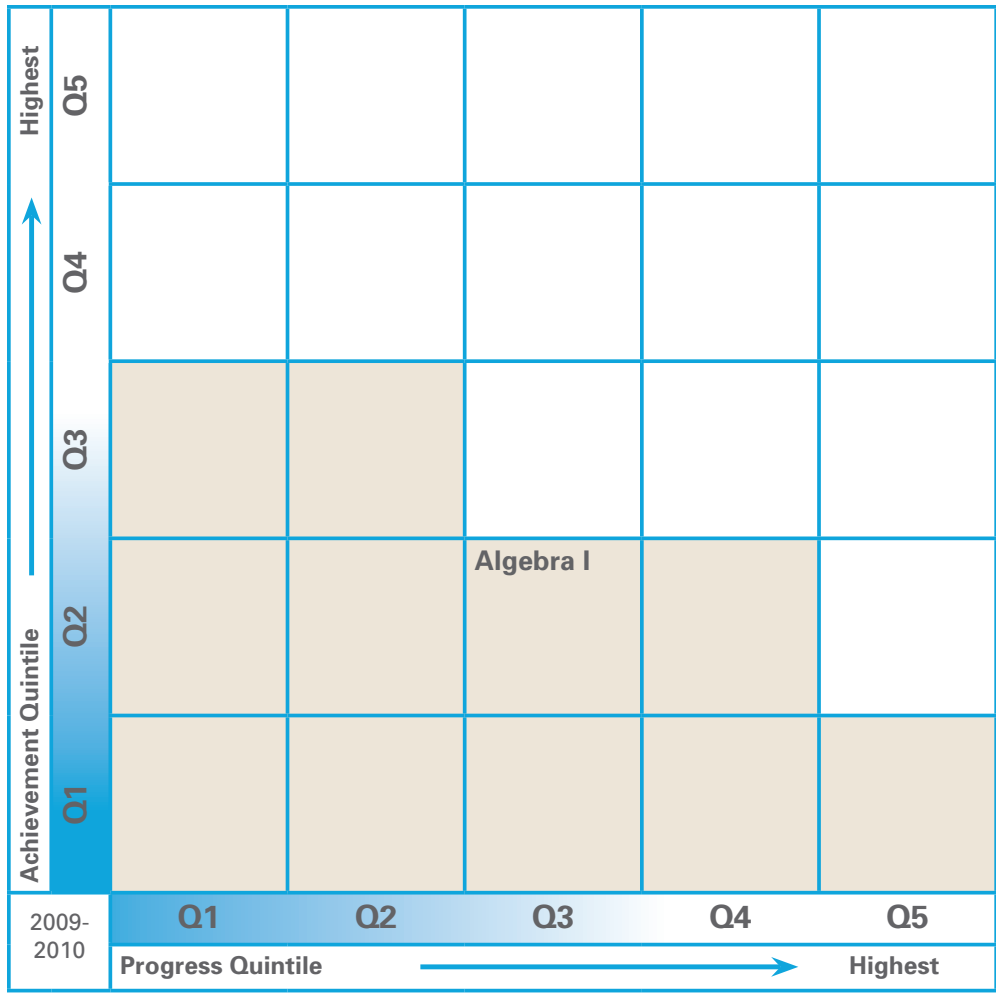
[Select New Search Parameters](#)

School Demographic Information	
Tested Grade Data: 9-12	% Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 27%
% Minority: 15%	% Tested ELL: 1%
% Tested SpED: 10%	Nr of Students Tested: 2072

All schools

School	Cum Gain Index	Mean	Pred Mean	Gain
Selected School				
ABC High School	1.4	2	2	3

Following are ABC High School's Algebra I results plotted on the *Focus on My Building* matrix:





Understanding How to Complete a *Focus on My Building* Matrix

- Mean and gain quintile results were used to plot ABC High School's achievement and value-added results for Algebra I.
- Data from a different tested subject can be entered by opening the "Subjects" tab and clicking another subject area. To access the School Search for other tested areas, select the appropriate test from the "Tests" menu and then select the subject area.

Plotting Algebra I

In the School Search on the previous page, you see an Algebra I mean of 2 and a gain of 3. This result means that the average Algebra I student at ABC High School is between the 20th and 40th percentiles in terms of achievement level and between the 40th and 60th percentiles in terms of value-added gains. These quintile rankings are used to plot the Algebra I results on the *Focus on My Building* matrix above.

Following are all of the data for ABC High School plotted on the *Focus on My Building* matrix:

Highest  Achievement Quintile	Q5			English I Plan English	ACT Sci/Rsn	ACT Reading
	Q4	English II		US History ACT English	ACT Math Plan Rdg Plan Sci/Rsn	
	Q3			Plan Math		
	Q2			Algebra I		
	Q1		Biology I			
2009-2010	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	
	Progress Quintile 					Highest

Interpreting ABC High School's *Focus on My Building Matrix*

Use the *Focus on My Building* matrix on the left to answer the following questions:

1. Where do you see the highest levels of progress and achievement (see the top-right part of the matrix)? The practices in these areas are currently ABC High School's greatest strengths.
2. Where do you see the lowest levels of progress and achievement (see the bottom-left part of the matrix)? These areas are currently ABC High School's greatest challenges. School leaders should examine their Value-Added Summary Report to determine if other schools in the ABC System/District have solved this problem.
3. Where in this school do you see high levels of progress, but low levels of achievement (see the bottom-right part of the matrix)? Educators in these areas have discovered ways to improve their effectiveness. Their practices provide a working model for how to improve.
4. Where in this school do you see high levels of achievement, but low levels of progress (see the top-left part of the matrix)? The practice of these educators has become frozen. They require stretch goals.
5. As you interpret these results, what are ABC High School's greatest strengths?
6. As you interpret these results, what are ABC High School's most critical challenges?

Now, use the School Search feature to complete the following *Focus on My Building* matrix for your high school.

Achievement Quintile ↑ Highest	Q5							
	Q4							
	Q3							
	Q2							
	Q1							
2009-2010	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Progress Quintile → Highest		

Interpreting Your High School's *Focus on My Building Matrix*

Use your *Focus on My Building* matrix on the left to answer the following questions:

1. Where are your highest levels of progress and achievement (see the top-right part of the matrix)? The practices in these areas are currently your building's greatest strengths.
2. Where are your lowest levels of progress and achievement (see the bottom-left part of the matrix)? These areas are currently your building's greatest challenges. Examine your Value-Added Summary Report to determine if educators in other schools have solved this problem.
3. Where in your school do you see high levels of progress, but low levels of achievement (see the bottom-right part of the matrix)? Educators in these areas have discovered ways to improve their effectiveness. Their practices provide a working model for how others might improve.
4. Where in your school do you see high levels of achievement, but low levels of progress (see the top-left part of the matrix)? The practice of these educators has become frozen. They require stretch goals.
5. As you interpret this matrix and all of your School Value-Added Reports, what are your school's greatest aggregate-level strengths?
6. As you interpret this matrix and all of your School Value-Added Reports, what are your school's most critical aggregate-level challenges?

Examining Your School Diagnostic Reports

To access your School Diagnostic Reports, you must enter the password-protected side of Tennessee's SAS® TVAAS® site. Instructions are provided below.

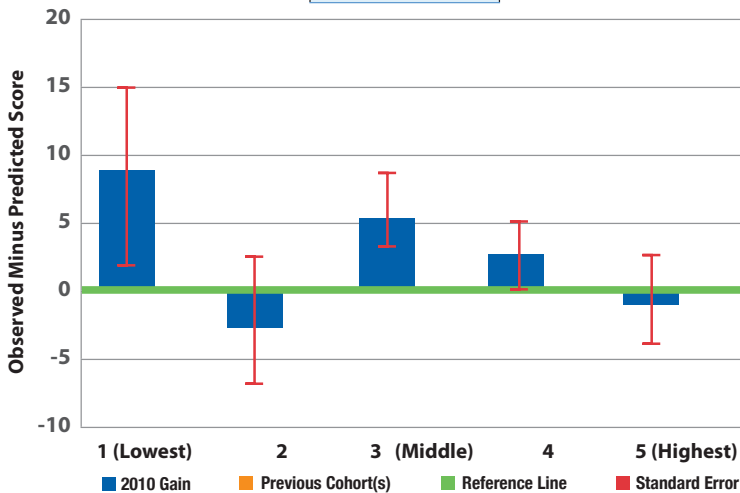
1. Log in at <https://tvaas.sas.com/evaas>
2. Enter your username (example: firstname.lastname).
3. Enter your password, and click the "Go" button. If you can't remember your password, click "Forgot Password," and it will be sent to your district e-mail address.
4. You should be looking at your System Value-Added Report for math.
5. Go to the "Reports" tab and under the "School Reflection" header, select "Diagnostic."
6. Select your school name and click "Submit."
7. You should now be looking at your School Diagnostic Report for Algebra I.

Following are the math-related **School Diagnostic Reports** for ABC High School

2010 School Diagnostic Report

ABC High School in ABC System
EOC/AYP Algebra

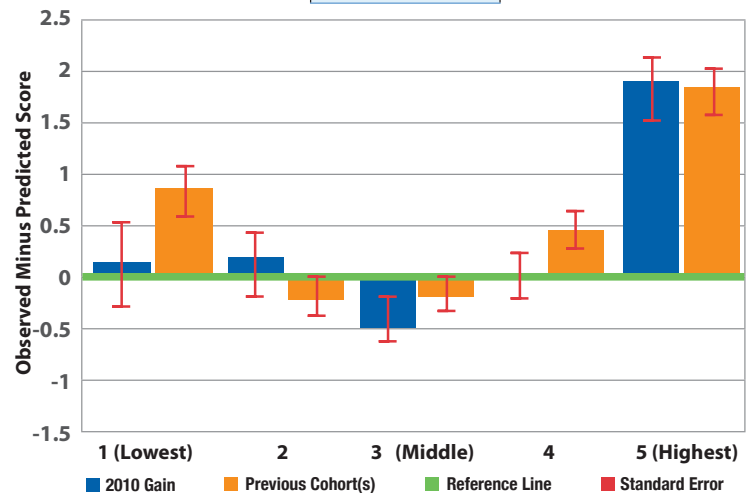
Select Subgroups



2010 School Diagnostic Report

ABC High School in ABC System
PLAN Math

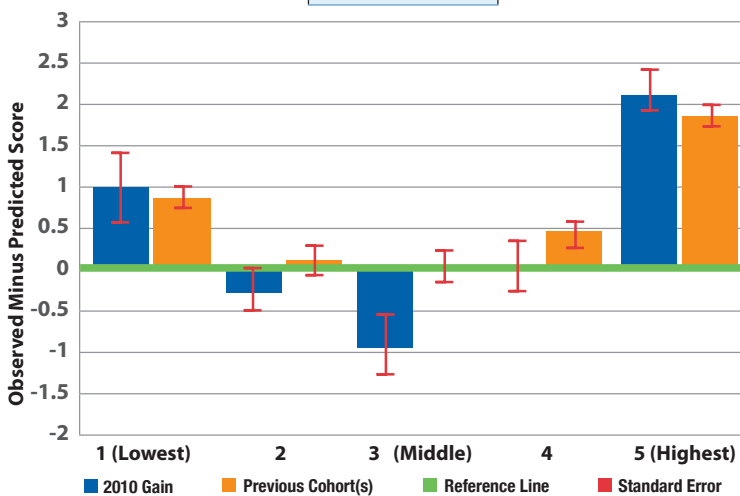
Select Subgroups



2010 School Diagnostic Report

ABC High School in ABC System
ACT Math

Select Subgroups



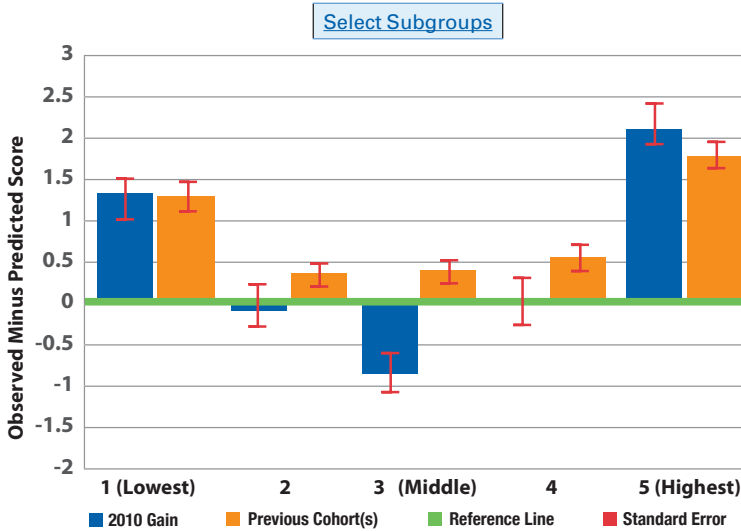
Use the School Diagnostic Reports above to look for subject-area patterns:

Do you see any patterns as you look across all of ABC High School's Math Diagnostic Reports?

Following are the ACT **School Diagnostic Reports** for 5th grade in ABC High School

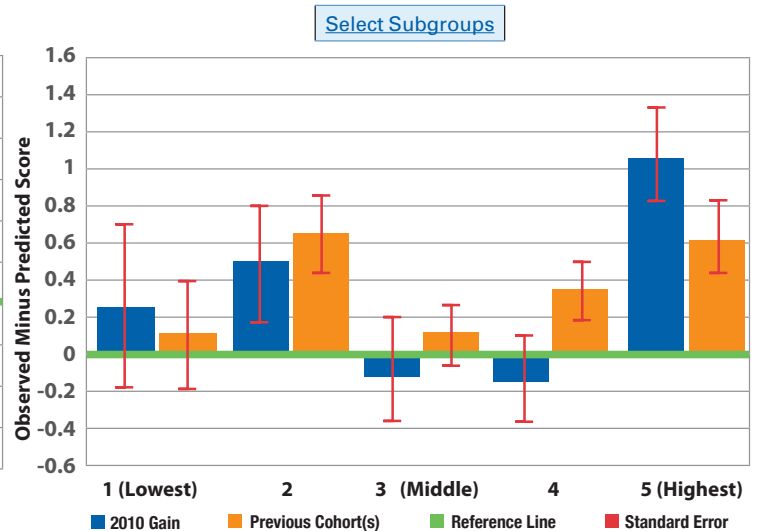
2010 School Diagnostic Report

ABC High School in ABC System
ACT Math



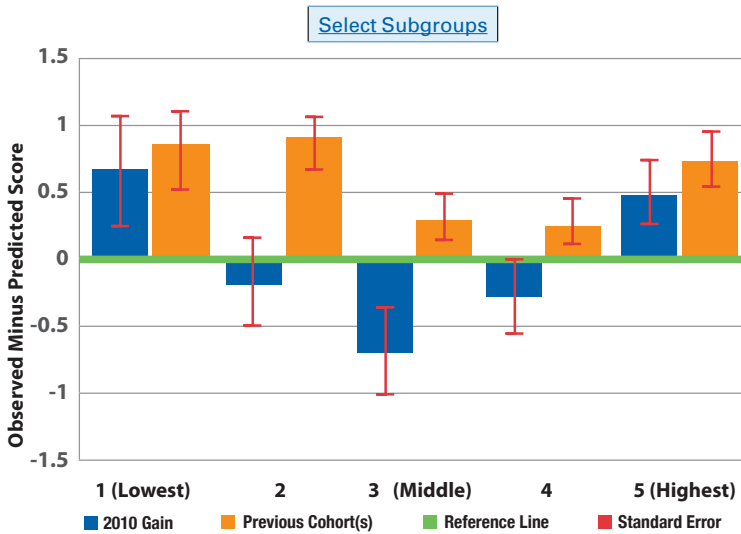
2010 School Diagnostic Report

ABC High School in ABC System
ACT Science Reasoning



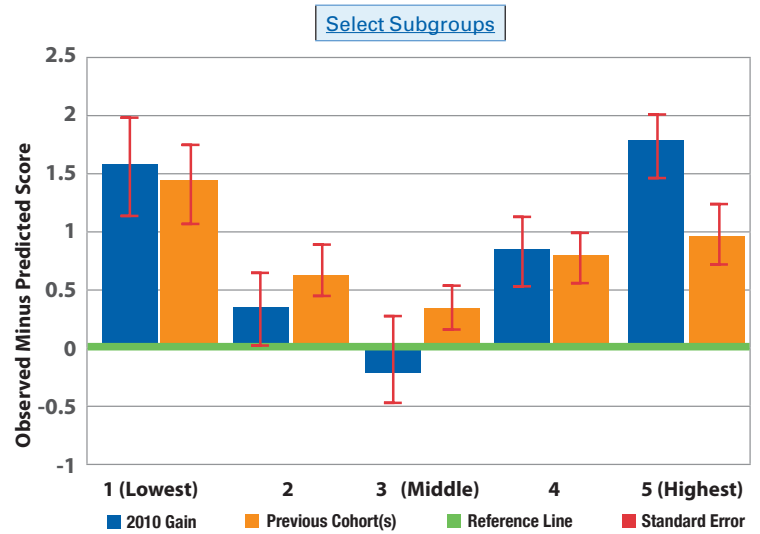
2010 School Diagnostic Report

ABC High School in ABC System
ACT English



2010 School Diagnostic Report

ABC High School in ABC System
ACT Reading



Use the School Diagnostic Reports above to answer the following question:

1. ACT Patterns—Do you see any patterns as you look across all of the ACT Diagnostic Reports?
 - a. ACT patterns?

Now, use your own School Diagnostic Reports to uncover patterns in your results.

1. EOC/AYP Patterns—Group the School Diagnostic Reports associated with the EOC/AYP tests. Do you see any patterns?
2. EOC Patterns—Group all School Diagnostic Reports associated with the EOC tests. Do you see any patterns?
3. Plan Patterns—Group all School Diagnostic Reports associated with PLAN. Do you see any patterns?
4. ACT Patterns—Group all School Diagnostic Reports associated with ACT. Do you see any patterns?
5. Do any overarching patterns emerge as you review all of your School Diagnostic Reports?
6. What are your school's greatest diagnostic strengths?
7. What are your school's most critical diagnostic challenges? Examine the Diagnostic Summary Reports in these areas to determine if other schools have solved this problem.

Prioritizing Your Strengths and Challenges

Because this guide is aimed at improving student results at the building-level, it is important to prioritize the strengths and challenges that can be addressed at this level.

Prioritizing Strengths

To prioritize, rank order your strengths (from number 5 on page 9 and number 4 on page 13) based on:

- The degree to which patterns are reflected across large segments of the student population in your building.
- The magnitude of a particular strength relative to other apparent strengths.

What are your top three building-level strengths?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Prioritizing Challenges

To prioritize, rank order your challenges (from number 6 on page 9 and number 5 on page 13) based on:

- The degree to which patterns are reflected across large segments of the student population in your building.
- The magnitude of a particular challenge relative to other apparent challenges.

What are your top three building-level challenges?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Root Cause Analysis

In this segment of the guide, you will be uncovering factors, called root causes, that tend to produce your building's particular strengths and challenges. By definition, these are factors over which you have considerable influence. The primary reason for uncovering root causes is that they provide a significant lever for improvement. If something is working, then you need to know why so that you can get more of it. If something is not working, then you need to know why so that you can fix it.

Next, you will experience a process for uncovering root causes associated with your highest-priority area(s) of strength and challenge.

Begin by examining your identified area of strength. This is not an arbitrary choice. Most educators have a better grasp of what they do to create positive outcomes than what they do that contributes to negative outcomes. By starting with an area of strength, you will be practicing a process that will allow you to obtain traction in an area of challenge.

Second, and perhaps more important, educators pay too little attention to things that go well. The "root causes" of your successes can and should be leveraged to produce higher levels of success in other areas.

Begin your strength-based analysis with a particular kind of cause/effect diagram called a Fishbone. (The fishbone diagrams are attached at the end of this document.) This tool allows you to explore the factors that may be contributing to a particular outcome. In this strength-based analysis, the "effect" you are interested in is the area of strength you identified on page 14.

To the left of the "fish head" are large "bones" that represent four categories of "causation" over which you have considerable influence.

These areas are:

1. Curriculum
2. Quality of Instruction
3. Leadership
4. Structures

Attached to these "large bones" are more specific factors that could be contributing to the identified area of strength. The empty lines on the diagram are places to add additional causal factors that emerge from your conversation.

What is an educational root cause?

For our purposes, building-level root causes include curricular factors, quality of instruction factors, leadership factors and/or structural factors that contribute to particular academic outcomes.

An Overview of Your Strength-Based Analysis

In the analysis that follows, you will:

Step 1:

Write down your area of strength in the “head” of the fishbone.

Example:

After reviewing its data, a building leadership team decided that its greatest aggregate-level strength was in consistently producing high levels of growth with its highest-achieving students (Quintile 5 students). They wrote in the head of their fishbone: *High levels of growth with high-achieving students.*

Step 2:

Begin by having each person on the building leadership team independently assess the Curriculum fishbone factors. Highlight those factors that have a clear causal connection to the team’s identified area of strength. **Make sure that you select only those factors that account specifically for the identified area of strength.**

If an important causal factor associated with the curriculum does not appear on the list, then write it in one of the blank spaces in the Curriculum category. **Make sure these additional factors are ones over which your staff exercises a large measure of control.** After each person has highlighted the curricular factors that are causally related to the area of strength, discuss the factors each person selected.

Come to consensus on the Curriculum factors that have a direct causal relation to the area of strength that was selected. Once your team has reached consensus, follow the same process for the Quality of Instruction factors. Continue this process until you have moved through all four Fishbone categories.

Example:

As the building leadership team discussed the set of **Curriculum** factors, they decided to exclude all of the **Curriculum** factors. All of those factors would have impacted the growth of all students and not just the high-achieving students.

When they discussed the **Quality of Instruction** factors, they decided to highlight two factors: 1) *Teachers have deep content expertise*; and 2) *Instruction is differentiated to meet student needs*. The team argued that each of these factors might differentially affect their high-achieving students.

When the team examined the **Leadership** factors, they decided to highlight one factor: 3) *Parents and students enlisted as partners*. A year ago, a team of teachers and the gifted coordinator met with parents of gifted students to talk about how to better support their growth. Since then, gifted parents have been active partners.

When the team examined the **Structure** factors, they decided to highlight two factors: 4) *Professional development is differentiated and linked to improvement goals*; and 5) *Classroom visitations focused on improvement goals*. After the meeting with gifted parents, teachers sought out professional development associated with gifted education. They requested that the principal pay attention to these practices as she visited classrooms.

Step 3:

As a team, review all factors that were selected and remove those that are less significant than others. You should end up with a list of 3–5 factors across all the categories that have a clear and strong causal relation to the area of strength that was identified.

Example:

As the team went back through the five factors it had highlighted, it decided to drop one of those factors:

1) *Instruction is differentiated to meet student needs.* The building leadership team decided that if instruction were truly differentiated, then it would result in improvement across the board instead of just with one achievement subgroup.

Step 4:

Record the factors that have strong causal links to the identified area of strength.

Example:

The building leadership team recorded four root causes associated with the impressive gains of most of the system's low-achieving students: 1) *Teachers have deep content expertise;* and 2) *Parents and students enlisted as partners;* 3) *Professional development is differentiated and linked to improvement goals;* and 4) *Classroom visitations focused on improvement goals.* The team could easily support the causal connections between this area of strength and these particular root causes.

Root Cause Analysis of an Area of Strength

My most significant area of strength is:

The root causes associated with that area of strength are:

An Overview of Your Root Cause Analysis of an Area of Challenge

Now, you will probe for the root causes of your area of challenge:

Your team has completed the root cause analysis of an area of strength. Now, you will follow a similar pattern to explore the factors that may be producing an area of challenge. This analysis may be a little more difficult because your team may be more puzzled about the factors that are responsible for producing an area of challenge.

Begin your challenge-based analysis with the Building-Level Challenge Fishbone. This tool allows you to explore the factors that may be contributing to a particular negative outcome. In this challenge-based analysis, the “effect” you are interested in is the area of challenge you identified on page 14.

To the left of the “fish head” are large “bones” that represent four categories of “causation” over which you have considerable influence.

These areas are:

1. Curriculum
2. Quality of Instruction
3. Leadership
4. Structures

Attached to these “large bones” are more specific factors that could be contributing to the identified area of challenge. The empty lines on the diagram are places to add additional causal factors that emerge from your conversation.

In the analysis that follows, you will:

Step 1:

Write down your area of challenge in the “head” of the fishbone.

Example:

After looking at all its data, a building leadership team decided that its greatest aggregate-level challenge was low-progress levels with the lowest-level readers. The team wrote in the head of their fishbone: *Insufficient progress in reading for low-level readers.*

Step 2:

Begin by having each person on the building leadership team independently assess the Curriculum fishbone factors. Highlight those that have a clear causal connection to the team’s identified area of challenge. **Make sure that you select only those factors that account specifically for the identified area of challenge.**

If an important causal factor associated with the curriculum does not appear on the list, then write it in one of the blank spaces in the Curriculum category. **Make sure that these additional factors are ones over which your staff exercises a large measure of control.**

After each person has highlighted the curricular factors that are causally related to the area of challenge, discuss the factors each person selected. Come to consensus on the Curriculum factors that have a direct causal relation to the area of challenge that was selected. Once your team has reached consensus, follow the same process for the Quality of Instruction factors. Continue this process until you have moved through all four Fishbone categories.

Example:

As the building leadership team discussed the set of **Curriculum** factors, they decided not to highlight any of the listed **Curriculum** factors, but they did decide to add a factor to the list: 1) *Reading series is not appropriate for low-level readers*. Teachers had discussed this issue for some time, but nothing had really been done to address it.

When the team discussed the **Quality of Instruction** factors, they decided to highlight these factors as well: 2) *Instruction is not effectively differentiated*; and 3) *Low expectations for some students*; and 4) *Little use of formative instructional practices*. The team argued that each of these factors was apparent in their classroom visitations and low-achieving students, in particular, were not reading well.

When the team examined the **Leadership** factors they decided to highlight two factors: 5) *Building improvement agenda is unclear or unfocused*; and 6) *Resources are poorly aligned with improvement goals*. As a system, leaders had been talking about this problem for several years but nothing substantive had really happened to impact results.

When the team examined the **Structure** factors, they decided not to highlight any of those factors as they didn't seem completely relevant to this situation.

Step 3:

As a team, review the factors that were selected and remove those that are less significant than others. You should end up with a list of 3–5 factors across all the categories that have a clear and strong causal relation to the area of challenge that was identified.

Example:

As the team went back through the six factors it had highlighted, the group decided to drop two of them:

1) *Little use of formative instructional practices* and 2) *Resources are poorly aligned with improvement goals*. The building team decided that while formative instructional practices were not being used, teachers had really not received the professional development they needed to make good use of these practices. They also decided that they needed to identify some school-wide improvement goals before they could align resources with them.

Step 4:

Record the factors that have strong causal links to the identified area of challenge.

Example:

The building leadership team recorded four root causes associated with the low-progress rates of low-level readers: 1) *Reading series is not appropriate for low-level readers*; 2) *Instruction is not effectively differentiated*; 3) *Low expectations for some students*; and 4) *Building improvement agenda is unclear or unfocused*. The team could easily support the causal connections between the state of the math program and these particular root causes.

Root Cause Analysis of an Area of Challenge

My most significant area of challenge is:

The root causes associated with that area of challenge are:

Addressing Your Core Issues

You can begin to address your core challenges in at least five ways.

1. Use a strategy aligned with your core strength.
 - a. What are the root causes that enabled the emergence of your core strength?

 - b. Are there ways in which these areas of strength could be enlisted to address your core challenge?

How might you use the root causes of your core strength to address your greatest challenge?

2. Use the School Search to find other schools with similar demographics that are producing large levels of growth.
 - a. Identify demographically similar schools producing large-scale gains in areas where your school is not.
 - b. Call the principal of the school.
 - c. Explore, with representatives of the other school(s), the practices they are using to produce their large-scale gains.

What other schools do you need to contact to begin to address your greatest challenge?

3. Address your area of challenge through its root causes.
 - a. Begin to address and improve all or most of the root causes associated with your area of challenge.
 - b. Create specific goals and action plans for each of the root causes.

How will you address the root causes of your greatest challenge?

4. Use the Student Search to identify the students who have the greatest needs.
 - a. Perform a Student Search in your area of greatest challenge.
 - b. Reorganize the list around the Projection Probabilities.
 - c. Provide more time on task in areas where students are especially weak.

How will you provide additional support to students in their greatest areas of need?

5. Devise a creative solution for your area of greatest challenge.

Congratulations! You have completed your *Focus on My Building* guide.

Building Leadership Team Summary Sheet

Strengths, Challenges and Causal Factors

Now, write the strengths, challenges and causal factors you identified in the following chart:

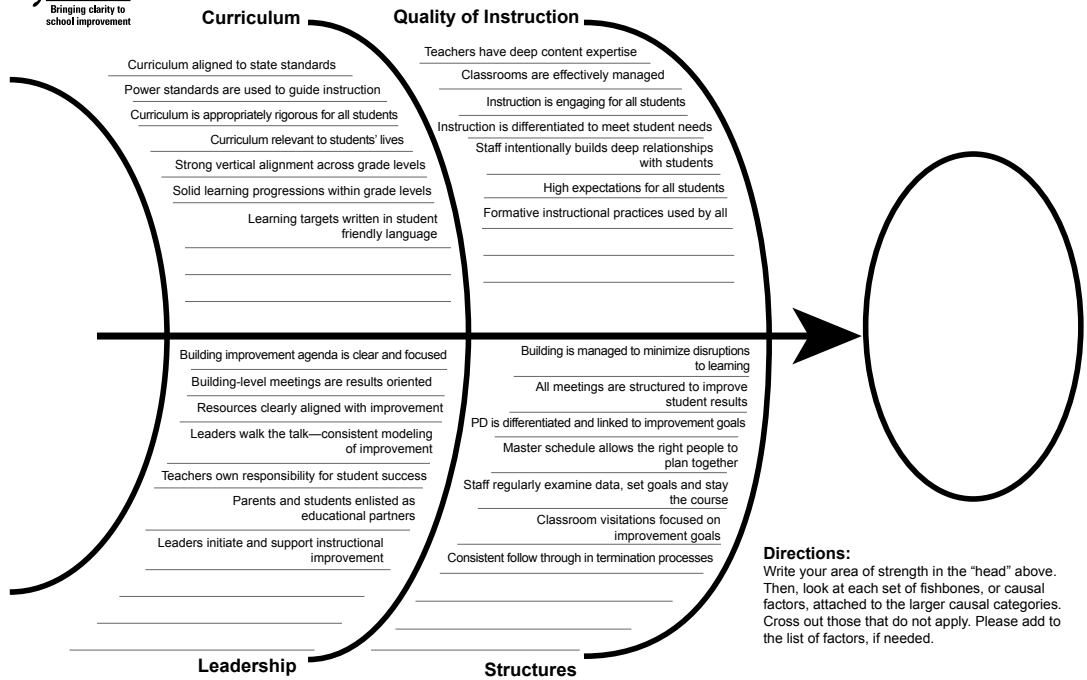
Area(s) of Strength	Area(s) of Challenge

Curricular Factors Strength(s)	Curricular Factors Challenge(s)	Instructional Factors Strength(s)	Instructional Factors Challenge(s)
Leadership Factors Strength(s)	Leadership Factors Challenges(s)	Structural Factors Strength(s)	Structural Factors Challenges(s)

Building-Level Strength and Challenge Fishbones



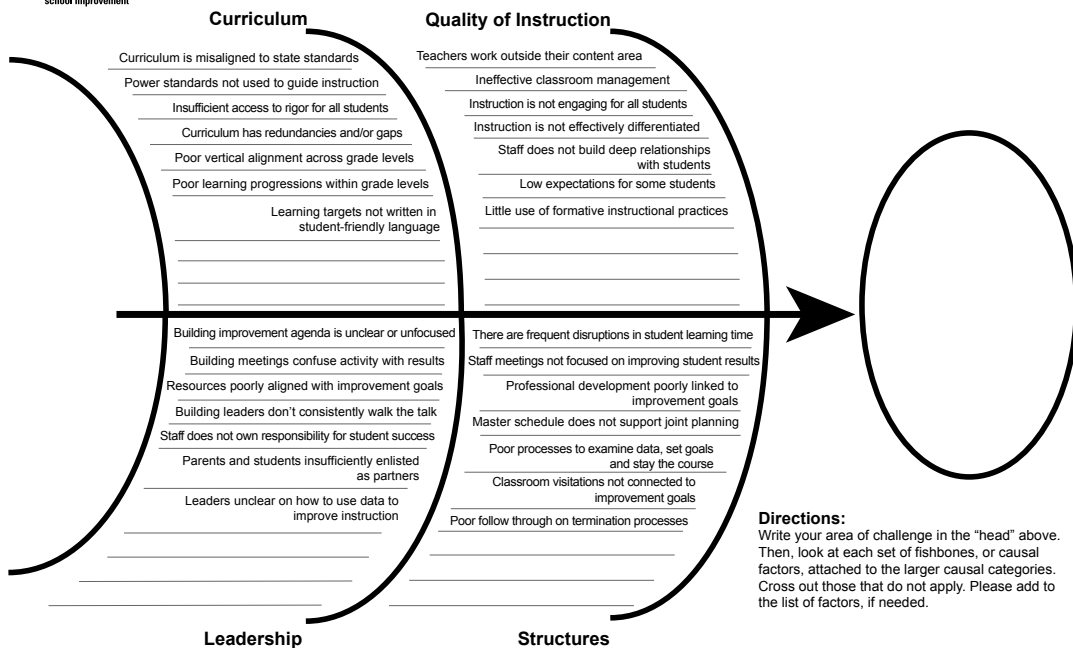
Building-Level Strength Fishbone



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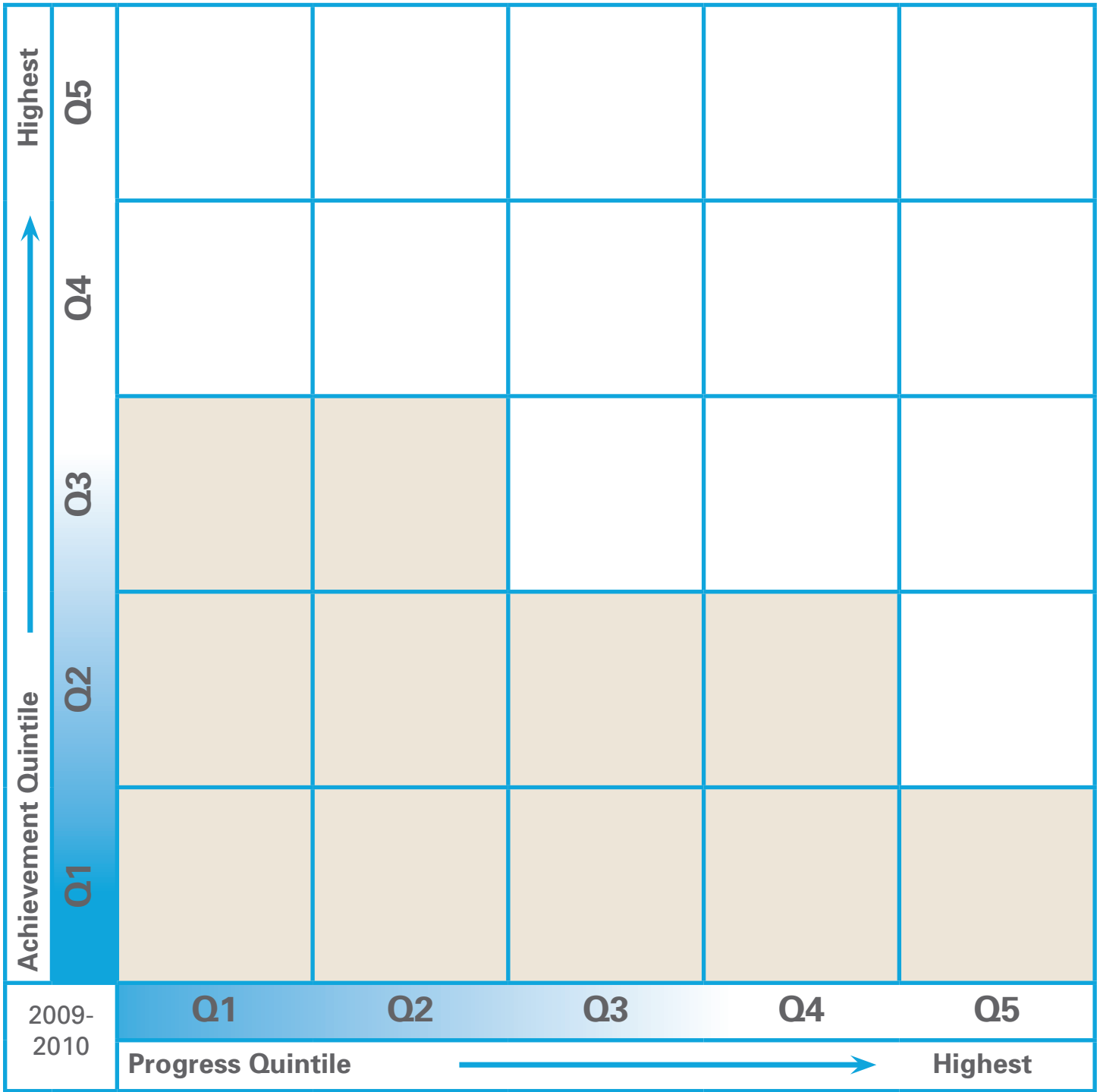


Building-Level Challenge Fishbone



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Focus on My Building Matrix



Battelle *for Kids*

**Bringing clarity to
school improvement**

Battelle for Kids is partnering with the Tennessee Department of Education to expand the use of value-added analysis and formative instructional practices as well as other educational-improvement strategies to increase student progress and achievement in K–12 public schools statewide as part of First to the Top.

Visit the Tennessee Student Progress Portal
at www.BattelleforKids.org/Tennessee
to learn more and access online learning and resources
available at no cost as part of First to the Top.