



LEADERSHIP BRIEF

VOLUME 1 | ISSUE 1

FEATURED THIS MONTH

1

Build Belonging

Culture is what you consistently do.

2

Focus Instruction

Be visible where student success begins.

3

Drive Momentum

What gets measured gets improved.

4

Communicate

Trust builds partnership.

HO

Hiring & Onboarding

Build your team with intention and purpose.

FP

Family Partnership

Communicate early. Build trust.

LC

August Check-In

Daily focus. Weekly evidence.

AUGUST 2026

THE FIRST 30 DAYS ISSUE

Belonging. Instruction.
Data. Communication.

A month-by-month guide to help principals build belonging, protect instruction, use early evidence, and communicate with consistency.



VOCABULARY

BLT = Building Leadership Team. R/Y/G = red/yellow/green readiness

Strong Leadership. Clear Systems.

Better Schools.

*Lead Intentionally.
Build the Engine.*

BUILD THE ENGINE

Practical tools | Proven strategies | Monthly focus | Lasting impact

BUILD THE ENGINE. LEAD WITH PURPOSE. CREATE EXCELLENCE.

Author's Note

A note from Dr. Hunt before you take this issue into the first 30 days.

Why this issue matters

August is where vision meets action. The first 30 days reveal what adults are teaching, what students are experiencing, and what leaders must tighten before patterns harden.

This newsletter was built for the principal who wants more than inspiration. You need a monthly leadership read that also gives you tools to decide, assign, rehearse, inspect, and follow through.

Use it with your cabinet, BLT prospects, mentors, office team, operations lead, and teacher leaders. Do not try to carry every page alone. The strength of a launch is not how much the principal can hold. The strength of a launch is how clearly the right adults can carry the right work together.

If you are new to the chair, let these pages slow the work down enough for you to see it. If you are seasoned, let them sharpen what experience can sometimes make too familiar. Either way, the goal is the same: clear culture, consistent adults, and a school that feels ready before students walk in.

How to use this month

- ☐ Read the feature first, then print the dashboard and use it every Friday.
- ☐ Choose one tool per leadership meeting instead of reviewing every page at once.
- ☐ Write owners and dates directly into the templates.

Dr. Hunt

VOCABULARY

BLT = Building Leadership Team; non-negotiable = a shared expectation adults agree to teach and protect.

Inside This Issue

The First 30 Days Issue reads like a monthly leadership brief and works like a principal's August operating file.

This Month's Engine

Belonging

Greet, teach, celebrate.

Instruction

Be visible in classrooms from day one.

Data

Use early evidence.

Communication

Keep people connected.

Launch Strong

Rehearse, inspect, and reset.

One month. One focus. Practical moves leaders can actually carry.

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FEATURED ARTICLE

Four Moves for August

Belonging. Instruction. Data. Communication.



Subscriber note

The templates in this issue are meant to support the thinking in the articles. Read for clarity, then use the tools to turn the work into owners, dates, evidence, and next moves.

VOCABULARY

BLT = Building Leadership Team; data lens = the evidence leaders use to choose the next adult move.

Leadership Truth

August is not a warm-up. It is the month principals use to build belonging, protect instruction, read early evidence, and communicate so the first 30 days create momentum.

THE AUGUST ESSAY

The first 30 days do not reward vague hope. They reward visible leadership, consistent adult moves, and fast response to early evidence.

First, build a culture of belonging and excellence. Students and staff follow the culture leaders create, so every greeting, correction, celebration, and routine teaches what matters here.

Second, focus on instruction from day one. The best leaders are in classrooms more than their offices, looking for clarity, student thinking, task alignment, and teacher support.

Third, drive data and early momentum. Baseline data, attendance patterns, walkthrough notes, and student work help leaders adjust while the month is still young.

Finally, communicate and connect consistently. Staff, students, and families need to know what matters, what is changing, what is working, and where partnership is needed next.

Coach's Perspective

Belonging is a leadership strategy. Warmth and high expectations belong together.

Why This Matters

Instruction is the heart of student success. Protect classroom visibility early.

Build the Engine Move

Greet every student by name, visit classrooms daily, review early evidence, and communicate the next focus clearly.

Data Lens

Signal	Target	What to ask
Belonging	Daily	Who feels known and welcomed?
Instruction	Visible	What classrooms need support?
Momentum	Weekly	What evidence needs action?

VOCABULARY Non-negotiable = a schoolwide expectation adults teach, model, and protect consistently.

Four August Priorities

August is where vision meets action. Set the tone, build momentum, lead with purpose, and use the first 30 days to create the trajectory for the year.

1

Build Belonging And Excellence

People follow the culture leaders create.

AUGUST MOVES

Greet every student by name. Host a powerful kickoff. Revisit school-wide expectations. Celebrate staff and students daily.

2

Focus Instruction From Day One

Instruction is the heart of student success.

AUGUST MOVES

Conduct daily walkthroughs. Provide specific positive feedback. Hold short coaching conversations. Monitor instruction, not just activity.

3

Drive Data And Early Momentum

What gets measured gets improved.

AUGUST MOVES

Review baseline data. Identify students needing support. Create a plan for small groups. Track attendance and chronic absenteeism.

4

Communicate And Connect Consistently

Communication builds trust. Trust builds partnership.

AUGUST MOVES

Send weekly updates. Be present at arrival and dismissal. Listen more. Highlight good news and celebrate often.

Leadership reminder

Culture is not what you say. It is what adults consistently do. The best leaders are visible, responsive, evidence-driven, and connected every week.

VOCABULARY BLT = Building Leadership Team; evidence check = how leaders know whether a system is working.

August Monthly Dashboard

Use this one-page dashboard every Friday. The first 30 days are about momentum, not perfection.

Week	Priority	Evidence before moving on	Status	Next move
Week 1	Build belonging and teach expectations.	Names learned; routines taught; kickoff completed.	R / Y / G	
Week 2	Focus instruction from day one.	Daily walkthroughs and coaching notes started.	R / Y / G	
Week 3	Drive data and early momentum.	Baseline data, attendance, and support groups reviewed.	R / Y / G	
Week 4	Communicate and connect consistently.	Weekly updates, family touchpoints, and wins shared.	R / Y / G	

First 30 days indicators

Indicator	Baseline	August target	Current evidence	Leader response
Students greeted by name	Draft	Daily		
Daily walkthroughs	0	1+ per day		
Attendance reviewed	Draft	Daily		
Instructional feedback	Draft	Weekly		
Family/staff updates	Draft	Weekly		

Friday reflection: What gained momentum this week? What must tighten Monday?

VOCABULARY

R/Y/G = red/yellow/green readiness status; behavior-response plan = agreed adult response steps.

Weekly Consistency

Each week protects one August leadership priority. Read the guidance like a newsletter, then use the template space to assign the work.

Tools in this section

- Build belonging
- Focus instruction
- Drive data
- Communicate consistently

Weekly Guidance: Week 1 - Build Belonging

Build a culture of belonging and excellence. People follow the culture leaders create.

Principal moves

- ☐ Greet every student by name.
- ☐ Host a powerful back-to-school kickoff.
- ☐ Revisit and teach school-wide expectations.
- ☐ Celebrate staff and students daily.

Evidence to collect

- ☐ Greeting and arrival notes.
- ☐ Kickoff agenda and staff feedback.
- ☐ Expectation reteach list.
- ☐ Daily celebration evidence.

Leader type	Best first move	Watch for	Who helps	Done by
New principal	Be visible where students enter.	Trying to solve everything alone.	AP/dean	
Seasoned principal	Name what must feel stronger this year.	Assuming culture carries itself.	BLT	
All leaders	Pair warmth with consistency.	Only correcting problems.	Cabinet	

Notes, decisions, and open loops

VOCABULARY Belonging = students feeling known, welcomed, supported, and expected to succeed.

Weekly Guidance: Week 2 - Focus Instruction

Focus on instruction from day one. Instruction is the heart of student success.

Principal moves

- ☐ Conduct daily walkthroughs.
- ☐ Provide specific, positive feedback.
- ☐ Hold short coaching conversations.
- ☐ Monitor instruction, not just activity.

Evidence to collect

- ☐ Walkthrough notes.
- ☐ Feedback log.
- ☐ Coaching touchpoints.
- ☐ Student task and work samples.

Leader type	Best first move	Watch for	Who helps	Done by
New principal	Choose one look-for first.	Walking without evidence.	Coach/AP	
Seasoned principal	Protect classroom visibility.	Staying in the office too long.	Instruction lead	
All leaders	Connect feedback to student experience.	Scattered feedback.	Cabinet	

Notes, decisions, and open loops

VOCABULARY
Look-for = the specific instruction or culture evidence leaders inspect during a walkthrough.

Weekly Guidance: Week 3 - Drive Data

Drive data and early momentum. What gets measured gets improved.

Principal moves

- ☐ Review baseline data and early assessments.
- ☐ Identify students needing intervention.
- ☐ Create a plan for small groups and supports.
- ☐ Track attendance and chronic absenteeism.

Evidence to collect

- ☐ Baseline data summary.
- ☐ Priority student list.
- ☐ Small-group support plan.
- ☐ Attendance follow-up tracker.

Leader type	Best first move	Watch for	Who helps	Done by
New principal	Ask what the data means for adults.	Waiting for perfect data.	Data lead	
Seasoned principal	Find one trend to move now.	Overgeneralizing patterns.	Teacher leaders	
All leaders	Choose one adult move from evidence.	Drowning in numbers.	BLT	

Notes, decisions, and open loops

VOCABULARY Baseline data = the starting evidence leaders use to choose supports and monitor growth.

Weekly Guidance: Week 4 - Communicate

Communicate and connect consistently. Communication builds trust; trust builds partnership.

Principal moves

- ☐ Send a weekly update to staff and families.
- ☐ Be present at arrival, dismissal, and events.
- ☐ Listen more and respond with transparency.
- ☐ Highlight good news and celebrate often.

Evidence to collect

- ☐ Weekly update sent.
- ☐ Visibility log.
- ☐ Family/staff questions heard.
- ☐ Good-news and recognition log.

Leader type	Best first move	Watch for	Who helps	Done by
New principal	Create a simple weekly rhythm.	Only communicating problems.	Office lead	
Seasoned principal	Refresh family trust early.	Assuming people know.	Counselor/AP	
All leaders	Tell the next right story.	Silence filling the gap.	Cabinet	

Notes, decisions, and open loops

VOCABULARY Communication rhythm = the predictable schedule leaders use to keep people informed.

Real Talk

The first 30 days will not rise to the level of your slogans. They will settle into what adults consistently model, monitor, and repair.

The honest part

A powerful kickoff will not replace daily visibility. A walkthrough will not matter without feedback. A family message will not build trust if concerns are the first contact.

If this is true	Do not pretend	Make this next move
Adults are unclear.	Do not add more words to the plan.	Model the routine and rehearse it with leaders.
A system has no owner.	Do not hope someone handles it.	Name one owner, one backup, one date, and one evidence check.
Data looks messy.	Do not wait for perfect numbers.	Use the pattern you have and decide the next adult move.
Staff are tired.	Do not call everything urgent.	Protect the few non-negotiables and remove noise where you can.
You are carrying too much.	Do not make exhaustion the leadership model.	Delegate visible work and keep the principal reset commitment.

My real talk commitment for the first 30 days

VOCABULARY Adult move = the specific action adults will take to improve a student-facing pattern.

CULTURE OF BELONGING

Culture is what you do daily.

August is where students decide what school feels like. Belonging is not a slogan or a bulletin board. It is the daily evidence that students are greeted, known, corrected with dignity, and expected to succeed.

The first culture move is visibility. Stand where students enter. Listen for names. Watch how adults respond when routines wobble. Celebrate the adult moves that create warmth and consistency.

The goal is not soft culture or strict culture. The goal is a school where students feel known and understand exactly what excellence looks like.

Leadership reminder

Culture is not what you say. It is what adults consistently do.

FIRST 30 DAYS

The first month teaches the year.

The first 30 days set the trajectory for the entire year. Students learn what adults monitor. Staff learn what leaders notice. Families learn whether communication is proactive or only reactive.

Use August to build momentum in small, visible ways: greet students by name, revisit expectations, conduct short walkthroughs, give specific feedback, review attendance, and communicate good news often.

The principal does not need to be everywhere. The principal needs a small number of moves that happen consistently enough for the building to feel steady.

Daily check-in

Ask: Am I building relationships? Am I focused on instruction? Am I using data? Am I communicating and connecting?

August move	What adults do	Evidence to watch
Belonging	Greet, notice, correct, and celebrate.	Students are known by name.
Excellence	Teach routines and success criteria.	Students know what strong work looks like.
Momentum	Respond quickly to first evidence.	Small issues are fixed before they spread.

VOCABULARY First 30 days = the opening month when leaders build culture, instruction, data habits, and trust.

INSTRUCTION FROM DAY ONE

Be in classrooms before patterns harden.

Instruction is the heart of student success. The first weeks should not be spent only in hallways, offices, and arrival lines. Leaders need to see the learning students experience from the beginning.

A daily walkthrough does not need to be long. It needs to be focused. Look for clear tasks, student engagement, checks for understanding, and whether students can explain what they are learning.

When leaders are visible in classrooms early, teachers learn that instruction is the work, not a later initiative.

COACHING RHYTHM

Feedback should be specific, kind, and fast.

Early feedback works best when it is short and tied to one adult move. The purpose is not to evaluate everything. The purpose is to help teachers know what to keep doing and what to tighten next.

Use the evidence first: what students were doing, what task was visible, what routine supported learning, and what next move would improve the student experience.

The strongest coaching conversations end with a return point. The teacher knows what to try, and the leader knows when to recheck.

Feedback stem

The student experience I saw was _____. The move to try next is _____. I will return on _____ to look for _____.

Look-for	Evidence	Leader response
Task clarity	Students know what to do.	Name the clarity move.
Student thinking	Students explain or show learning.	Ask for evidence of understanding.
Routine support	Transitions protect time.	Coach one routine quickly.

VOCABULARY Daily walkthrough = a short, focused classroom visit tied to one instruction look-for.

DATA AND EARLY MOMENTUM

What gets measured gets improved.

August data is not about proving success or failure. It is about seeing patterns while leaders still have time to respond. Attendance, walkthroughs, student work, and support needs tell the story early.

The strongest principals do not wait until the end of the quarter to act. They review baseline data, identify students who need support, and choose one adult move that can change the pattern this week.

Small wins in August create big results later. The point is to find the trend, choose the next move, and monitor again.

Momentum question

What early evidence needs an adult response before it becomes a permanent pattern?

ATTENDANCE WATCH

Attendance is a student safety and belonging system.

Attendance should be reviewed early and often. The question is not only who is absent. The question is what the pattern is teaching leaders about belonging, communication, transportation, routines, or support.

Track daily attendance, repeated absences, late arrivals, and family contact. Assign a leader to follow up before chronic absenteeism becomes the first major data story of the year.

Every attendance conversation should communicate care and clarity: we noticed, you matter, and we are here to help remove barriers.

Leadership reminder

Small wins in August create big results in May.

Data source	Pattern	Adult move	Owner
Attendance			
Walkthroughs			
Student work			

VOCABULARY Early momentum = small August wins that show systems, instruction, and supports are moving.

COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION

People need to know what is happening before they wonder.

August communication builds trust. Staff, students, and families need a steady rhythm of information, celebration, and next steps. Silence creates its own story, and it is rarely the story leaders want told.

Send a weekly update that is clear, short, and predictable. Name the focus, celebrate evidence, clarify what is changing, and tell families or staff what to expect next.

Communication is not only email. It is presence at arrival, listening during dismissal, quick family follow-up, and good news shared before concerns dominate the relationship.

Audience	What they need this week
Staff	Focus, wins, decisions, and next actions.
Families	Welcome, routines, attendance, and partnership.
Students	Belonging, expectations, and celebrations.
Leaders	Evidence, owners, and follow-up dates.

RECOGNITION RHYTHM

Highlight good news before concerns take over.

Recognition should be specific enough to teach the culture. Name the adult move, connect it to student experience, and repeat it often enough for others to copy it.

Celebrate teachers who greet students by name, protect learning time, reteach routines, communicate with families, and adjust instruction from evidence.

When celebration is tied to the work, it becomes more than morale. It becomes leadership language.

Recognition stem

I want to name exactly what you did and why it strengthened the school.

Celebration	Evidence to name
Student belonging	
Instructional clarity	
Family partnership	

VOCABULARY Recognition rhythm = the habit of naming specific adult moves that strengthen student experience.

PRINCIPAL DAILY CHECK-IN

Ask yourself the right questions before the day takes over.

The first 30 days can pull a principal in every direction. A daily check-in keeps the leader connected to the work that matters most: relationships, instruction, data, and communication.

Before the day begins, ask: Am I building relationships? Am I focused on instruction? Am I using data to lead? Am I communicating and connecting consistently?

The questions are simple on purpose. They help the principal notice when the building's urgency is pulling attention away from the engine.

REAL LEADERSHIP PACE

You do not have to be perfect to be consistent.

August will not be perfect. A bus will be late. A routine will need reteaching. A teacher will need support. A family will need a call. The goal is not perfection; the goal is responsive leadership.

Strong principals use the first 30 days to notice, name, coach, celebrate, and reset. They do not chase everything. They choose the next adult move that will improve student experience fastest.

Lead boldly. Build daily. Impact every student.

Reset belief

You do not have to be perfect. You do need to be present, consistent, and willing to adjust from evidence.

Daily question	Evidence	Next move
Am I building relationships?		
Am I focused on instruction?		
Am I communicating clearly?		

VOCABULARY

Daily check-in = a principal reflection that keeps attention on relationships, instruction, data, and communication.

Subscriber Tools

Use these print-and-use templates after reading the issue. They help turn the monthly leadership strategy into owners, dates, evidence, and next moves.

Tools in this section

- Culture non-negotiables
- Systems dashboard
- Hiring and onboarding
- BLT and readiness
- Walkthroughs, feedback, data, and families

Culture Non-Negotiables Builder

Choose the few adult and student expectations that must be consistent school-wide. If everything is a priority, adults cannot carry it.

Area	Non-negotiable	Teach/practice question	Owner	Evidence
Arrival	Every adult greets, scans, and redirects before students enter classrooms.	Where will adults stand? What will they say?		
Transitions	Hallway movement is taught, practiced, monitored, and corrected.	What does silent/quiet/efficient movement look like?		
Class start	Learning begins with a visible task within the first 3 minutes.	What must be on the board or ready at the door?		
Behavior response	Adults use the same first response language and escalation path.	What words do we all use first?		
Family contact	Families hear positive and concern-based communication early.	Which families must hear from us before Labor Day?		

Our 3-5 final culture non-negotiables

VOCABULARY
Non-negotiable = a shared expectation every adult teaches, models, and protects.

School-Wide Systems Readiness Dashboard

Mark each system red, yellow, or green. A yellow system needs practice. A red system needs an owner today.

System	Ready looks like	Status	Owner	Next checkpoint
Culture routines	Arrival, dismissal, transitions, class start, and response are written and teachable.	R / Y / G		
Supervision	Duty posts, hallway zones, lunch, recess, and dismissal have owners and backups.	R / Y / G		
Communication	Staff, families, and new hires know dates, priorities, and where information lives.	R / Y / G		
Walkthroughs	Leaders know the opening culture and instruction look-fors.	R / Y / G		
Building readiness	Spaces are clean, labeled, welcoming, and connected to the school theme.	R / Y / G		
Teacher leadership	BLT prospects, mentors, and returning teacher leaders are identified.	R / Y / G		
Data meetings	Opening indicators, agenda, norms, and evidence sources are ready.	R / Y / G		

One-move decision

If the team can only tighten one system this week, choose the system that will most affect student safety, belonging, or instructional time.

VOCABULARY R/Y/G = red/yellow/green readiness status; checkpoint = the date leaders review progress.

Hiring and Vacancy Tracker

Hiring is a culture strategy. Track vacancies, urgency, interview evidence, and onboarding needs in one place.

Role	Candidate	Urgency	Evidence from interview	Offer/onboard next step	Owner
		High / Med / Low			
		High / Med / Low			
		High / Med / Low			
		High / Med / Low			
		High / Med / Low			

Interview evidence bank

Competency	Question	Strong evidence sounds like	Follow-up
Student belonging	Tell us about a student who was hard to reach.	Specific action, reflection, and relationship repair.	
Instructional urgency	How do you start class so learning begins quickly?	Clear routine, task, and monitoring plan.	
Team fit	How do you respond when a team expectation changes?	Flexibility plus honest communication.	

VOCABULARY Hiring evidence = what leaders learn from interviews, references, and follow-up tasks.

New Hire Onboarding Template

New staff should feel expected, supported, and connected before the first staff meeting.

- ☐ Send welcome message within 24 hours of hire.
- ☐ Assign a mentor or team contact before orientation.
- ☐ Share calendar, curriculum access, arrival/dismissal routines, and school-wide non-negotiables.
- ☐ Schedule a 15-minute principal or dean check-in.
- ☐ Give the new hire one person to call for operations, one for instruction, and one for culture questions.

When	Connection	What they receive	Owner	Notes
Before day 1	Welcome + mentor	Calendar, contacts, norms		
First week	Check-in	Routines, systems, questions		
30 days	Instruction/culture review	Feedback and next support		
60 days	Team integration	Evidence of confidence/gaps		
90 days	Retention conversation	Successes and needs		

New hire confidence signals we will watch

VOCABULARY New hire onboarding = communication, mentoring, and support before and after the first staff day.

Returning Staff and BLT Starter

Returning does not always mean ready. Re-engage teachers with clarity, voice, and respect for what they already know.

Returning teacher pulse

Ask: What should we keep, stop, and tighten from last year’s launch? Where can teacher voice improve the plan without weakening school-wide consistency?

Possible BLT member	Strength they bring	Staff pulse they hear	Role in launch	Invite date

BLT meeting	Decision needed	Teacher voice needed	Evidence to bring
First conversation	What are the launch priorities?	Questions staff will ask.	
Calibration	What does consistent look like?	Where routines may break.	
After launch	What pattern needs action?	What staff need next.	

VOCABULARY

BLT = Building Leadership Team; staff pulse = what teacher leaders are hearing across the building.

Building Readiness Walk

The building teaches before the meeting starts. Use this walk to make the school feel clean, intentional, and cared for.

Area	Ready looks like	Status	Owner	Fix by
Entry/main office	Clean, current, welcoming, family-facing materials updated.	R / Y / G		
Hallways	Uncluttered, boards intentional, theme visible.	R / Y / G		
Classrooms	Furniture ready, labels/signage clear, basic supplies in place.	R / Y / G		
Staff spaces	Respectful adult spaces with supplies, signage, and welcome touch.	R / Y / G		
Operations	Work orders named, dated, and prioritized.	R / Y / G		
Safety	Doors, radios, maps, visitor process, and supervision zones checked.	R / Y / G		

Theme message and hallway idea

VOCABULARY Readiness walk = a leadership review of spaces, systems, safety, and welcome before launch.

Opening Walkthrough Tool

Look for culture before chasing everything. Early walkthroughs should inspect the adult moves that must be consistent.

Look-for	Evidence	Rating	Pattern	Response
Class start	Task visible; students know what to do within 3 minutes.	Yes / Almost / No		
Routine taught	Teacher models, practices, and narrates the expectation.	Yes / Almost / No		
Redirection	Adult uses agreed language and next step.	Yes / Almost / No		
Belonging	Students are greeted, noticed, affirmed, or supported.	Yes / Almost / No		
Instructional urgency	Learning time is protected and transitions are tight.	Yes / Almost / No		

Date	Culture look-for	Pattern noticed	Leadership response

VOCABULARY Walkthrough = a short, focused visit to look for agreed culture or instruction evidence.

Fast Feedback Bank

Use language that reinforces the non-negotiable and keeps feedback specific enough to act on tomorrow.

Affirm

I noticed students entered and began the task within ____ minutes because you ____.

Tighten

To strengthen consistency tomorrow, try ____ during the first ____ minutes.

Calibrate

The redirect aligned to our school-wide language when you said ____.

Belonging

Students experienced belonging when you ____ before the task began.

Follow-up

I will come back on ____ to look for ____ evidence.

Feedback language I want leaders to practice

Handwriting practice lines for feedback language. The page contains eight horizontal lines. A large, faint watermark of the 'BUILD THE ENGINE' logo is visible across the middle of the page.

VOCABULARY Fast feedback = short, specific coaching language tied to the agreed non-negotiable.

Data Meeting Protocol

Use data meetings to decide the next adult move. Do not let the meeting become a tour of numbers.

Step	Leader question	Evidence	Decision
1. Name	Which opening indicator matters most this week?	Attendance, class start, response language, contacts, walkthroughs.	
2. Notice	What pattern is showing up across rooms, teams, or times?	Trends, not one-off stories.	
3. Narrow	Which adult move would change the pattern fastest?	Practice, script, schedule, feedback, or resource.	
4. Assign	Who owns the move and when will we check it?	Owner, date, evidence.	
5. Follow up	What changed by Friday?	Before/after evidence.	

Indicator	Current	Pattern	Adult move	Friday evidence
Attendance				
Class starts				
Response language				
Family contacts				

VOCABULARY Data meeting = a short meeting where leaders use evidence to choose the next adult move.

Family Communication Toolkit

Families should know the culture before concerns begin. Prepare simple messages that explain expectations and invite partnership.

Starter language

This year, our school is focused on clear routines, strong attendance, respectful communication, and every student knowing what success looks like. You will hear from us early and often because family partnership matters.

Message	Purpose	Audience	Send date	Owner
Welcome	Build belonging and clarity.	All families		
Attendance	Explain why every day matters.	All families		
Culture expectations	Name routines and response language.	All families		
Celebrations	Log positive contact early.	Priority families		
Concern response	Set response time and escalation path.	As needed		

Date	Student/family	Reason	Method	Follow-up

VOCABULARY Family partnership = early, clear communication that builds trust before concerns begin.

Final August Action Board

Close August with momentum. Every early pattern should be celebrated, tightened, assigned, or retaught.

Question	Decision	Owner	By when
What are our 3-5 culture non-negotiables?			
Which school-wide system needs the most attention before August?			
Who needs to be part of the first BLT conversation?			
What building/theme readiness work must be completed?			
Which data indicators will we review every Friday?			
What will I delegate so I can protect reset time?			

Principal reset commitment

VOCABULARY Open loop = a task, question, or decision that must be closed, assigned, or postponed.

Day-by-Day August Principal Focus

Adjust dates to match your district calendar, but keep the order: build belonging, protect instruction, study early evidence, and communicate consistently.

Aug 3 Greet students by name; watch arrival evidence.	Aug 4 Teach routines again before correcting patterns.	Aug 5 Visit classrooms for task clarity.	Aug 6 Send first family/staff update.	Aug 7 Debrief first-week wins and reteach needs.
Aug 10 Conduct daily walkthroughs with one look-for.	Aug 11 Give specific positive feedback.	Aug 12 Hold short coaching conversations.	Aug 13 Review student work or exit tickets.	Aug 14 Name one instruction trend to tighten.
Aug 17 Review baseline and attendance data.	Aug 18 Identify students needing support.	Aug 19 Create small-group support plan.	Aug 20 Check attendance follow-up evidence.	Aug 21 Celebrate one measurable momentum win.
Aug 24 Send weekly update with focus and wins.	Aug 25 Be visible at arrival and dismissal.	Aug 26 Listen for staff/family questions.	Aug 27 Highlight good news and recognition.	Aug 28 Reset communication rhythm for September.
Aug 31 Close first 30 days; choose September focus.	Sep 1 Confirm owners for reteach and support.	Sep 2 Review leadership dashboard evidence.	Sep 3 Prepare first September data meeting.	Sep 4 Celebrate progress and name next move.

Principal reminder

The goal is not a perfect August. The goal is to notice early evidence, respond quickly, and build momentum one adult move at a time.

VOCABULARY August calendar = daily leadership focus for belonging, instruction, data, and communication.

Printable Notes and Team Commitments

Use this page during BLT meetings, cabinet check-ins, data meetings, or personal planning.

VOCABULARY Team commitment = the written next move an owner agrees to complete by a specific date.