



FREE BUILD THE ENGINE RESOURCE

School Systems Audit

Score the school systems that drive clarity, consistency, adult action, and student outcomes

Purpose

Use this audit to identify which school systems are helping adults execute consistently and which systems are creating confusion, dependency, or uneven implementation. The goal is not to fix everything at once. The goal is to find the system that needs the next strongest leadership move.

How to Score

Score	What It Means	Leadership Signal
1	Not yet in place or mostly dependent on individual people.	The system needs to be built or clarified.
2	Partially in place, but inconsistent across classrooms, teams, or weeks.	The system needs tighter routines, owners, or monitoring.
3	Mostly consistent and visible, with some gaps to coach or refine.	The system is working but needs accountability checks.
4	Clear, owned, monitored, and consistently improving practice.	The system can be maintained while leaders build the next priority.

Build the Engine reminder

Do not score based on what is written in a handbook. Score based on what adults and students actually experience day to day.

School Systems Audit: Core Daily Systems

Circle or record a score from 1 to 4 for each system. Use the evidence column to keep the conversation grounded.

System	Look For	Evidence to Review	Score	Immediate Leadership Move
Communication	Staff, families, and students receive timely, clear, aligned messages.	Newsletters, staff updates, family contact logs, meeting notes.	1 2 3 4	
Culture	Shared expectations, routines, and belonging are visible across the school.	Walkthroughs, arrival/dismissal, student voice, staff feedback.	1 2 3 4	
Instruction	Teachers know the instructional focus and leaders monitor it with evidence.	Lesson plans, walkthrough notes, student work, coaching logs.	1 2 3 4	
Behavior	Behavior responses are consistent, taught, monitored, and repaired.	Referral data, reset spaces, classroom routines, family contact.	1 2 3 4	
Data	Teams use current evidence to adjust instruction and support students.	Exit tickets, CFAs, intervention groups, PLC notes, data walls.	1 2 3 4	
Operations	Daily logistics protect learning time and reduce adult confusion.	Coverage plans, duty schedules, arrival, dismissal, materials, calendars.	1 2 3 4	
Technology	Tools support communication, instruction, data, and family access.	Platform usage, access issues, data systems, staff clarity.	1 2 3 4	
Attendance	Daily attendance is monitored, communicated, and supported before patterns deepen.	Daily attendance reports, tardy trends, outreach logs, intervention notes.	1 2 3 4	

School Systems Audit: Support and Leadership Systems

These systems often determine whether the core daily systems can be sustained without everything depending on the principal.

System	Look For	Evidence to Review	Score	Immediate Leadership Move
Family Engagement	Families receive proactive partnership, not only problem-focused contact.	Family events, contact logs, survey data, classroom messages.	1 2 3 4	
Student Support	Students receive timely academic, behavioral, social, or attendance support.	MTSS notes, intervention groups, counseling referrals, progress checks.	1 2 3 4	
Special Populations	IEP, 504, multilingual learner, and gifted supports are monitored and coordinated.	Service logs, compliance checks, accommodations, progress data.	1 2 3 4	
Staff Development	PD, coaching, and feedback connect directly to the school priority.	PD plans, coaching logs, walkthrough trends, teacher practice evidence.	1 2 3 4	
Leadership Team	Deans, coaches, APs, and teacher leaders own clear work with evidence checks.	Meeting agendas, owner trackers, dean coaching notes, action items.	1 2 3 4	
Short-Cycle Planning	Goals are narrowed into 4-6 week plans with owners, evidence, and checkpoints.	Short-cycle plans, PLC notes, benchmark data, progress monitoring.	1 2 3 4	
Safety and Crisis	Safety routines are known, practiced, documented, and reviewed.	Drill logs, supervision maps, incident reviews, communication plans.	1 2 3 4	
Talent and Staffing	Hiring, onboarding, retention, and coverage plans protect instruction.	Vacancy reports, onboarding plans, retention data, coverage trackers.	1 2 3 4	

Results Summary

System	Score	What the Score Tells Me	Next Checkpoint
Communication			
Culture			
Instruction			
Behavior			
Data			
Operations			
Technology			
Attendance			
Family Engagement			
Student Support			
Special Populations			
Staff Development			
Leadership Team			
Short-Cycle Planning			
Safety and Crisis			
Talent and Staffing			

Priority Decision

Question	Leader Response
Which system has the lowest score?	
Which system is creating the most daily friction for adults or students?	
Which system, if strengthened first, would improve other systems?	
What is the smallest 2-week move we can make?	
Who owns the move and what evidence will we check?	

Filled-Out Example

This example shows how a principal might turn expanded audit scores into focused leadership moves. Notice that the principal does not fix every low score at once.

System	Score	Evidence	Leadership Move
Communication	2	Staff receive weekly emails, but grade teams report unclear priorities and families receive uneven contact.	Create one weekly staff priority message and require grade teams to use the same family-facing update template.
Culture	3	Arrival routines are strong, but hallway transitions vary by grade.	Dean will coach hallway transition expectations with grades 5-6 and recheck Friday.
Instruction	2	Walkthroughs show objectives posted, but students cannot consistently explain success criteria.	Use success criteria as the one instructional look-for for two weeks.
Behavior	2	Referral data is tracked, but responses vary by adult.	Review top 3 behaviors, reteach response flow, and monitor by location.
Data	1	PLC notes list scores, but next instructional actions are not consistently named.	Add required PLC columns: reteach group, adult move, evidence date.
Operations	3	Coverage and dismissal are clear; supply requests still take too long.	Delegate supply tracker to office lead with Friday review.
Technology	2	Families use multiple platforms and some teachers update inconsistently.	Clarify one family platform and monitor weekly updates.
Attendance	2	Daily reports exist, but outreach begins after several absences.	Create a 3-day attendance trigger with same-day family contact and counselor review.
Leadership Team	2	Deans attend meetings but leave without clear evidence to bring back.	End each meeting with owner, evidence, due date, and next meeting opener.
Short-Cycle Planning	1	Goals are broad and not monitored weekly.	Choose one 6-week math goal, assign owners, and review exit-ticket data every Friday.
Staff Development	2	PD topics are helpful but not connected to walkthrough feedback.	Align next PD to the two-week success criteria look-for.

Want the deeper system?

This free audit helps leaders identify where the school engine is strong and where it is leaking energy. Build the Engine consulting, coaching, and step-by-step guides help schools turn audit results into a focused improvement plan with owners, routines, walkthroughs, and accountability checkpoints.

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