

SREB Critical Success Factors for Principals

A curriculum framework for leadership preparation and development that is based on the practices of principals who raise student achievement

Through literature reviews and research data from its own school reform initiatives, SREB identified 13 Critical Success Factors (CSFs) associated with principals who have succeeded in raising student achievement in schools with traditionally “high risk” demographics. These factors, along with their subset of activities, are the driving force for the work of SREB’s Learning-Centered Leadership Program.

Critical Success Factor 1	
The school leader is able to create a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.	
Field experiences require...	
Activity 1a.	...working with teachers to implement curriculum that produces gains in student achievement as defined by the mission of the school.
Activity 1b.	...working with the administration to develop, define and/or adapt best practices based on current research that supports the school’s vision.
Activity 1c.	...working with the faculty to develop, define and/or adapt best practices based on current research that support the school’s vision.
Activity 1d.	...assisting with transitional activities for students as they progress to higher levels of placement (i.e. elementary to middle, middle to high school, high school to higher education).

Critical Success Factor 2	
The school leader is able to set high expectations for all students to learn high-level content.	
Field experiences require...	
Activity 2a.	...developing/overseeing academic recognition programs that acknowledge and celebrate student’s success at all levels of ability.
Activity 2b.	...activities resulting in raising standards and academic achievement for all students and teachers.
Activity 2c.	...authentic assessments of student work through the use and/or evaluation of rubrics, end of course tests, projects.

Critical Success Factor 3	
The school leader is able to recognize and encourage implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase student achievement.	
Field experiences require...	
Activity 3a.	...using a variety of strategies to analyze and evaluate the quality of instructional practices being implemented in a school.
Activity 3b.	...working with teachers to select and implement appropriate instructional strategies that address identified achievement gaps.
Activity 3c.	...working on a school team to prioritize standards and map curriculum in at least one content area across all grade levels of the school.
Activity 3d.	...working with a group of teachers to unwrap adopted standards and develop assignments and assessments aligned with the standards.
Activity 3e.	...working with a school team to monitor implementation of an adopted curriculum.
Activity 3f.	...involvement in the work of literacy and numeracy task forces.
Activity 3g.	...working with curriculum that is interdisciplinary and provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge in various modalities across the curriculum.

Critical Success Factor 4	
The school leader is able to create a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.	
Field experiences require...	
Activity 4a.	...working with staff to identify needs of all students.
Activity 4b.	...collaborating with adults from within the school and community to provide mentors for all students.
Activity 4c.	...engaging in activities designed to increase parental involvement.
Activity 4d.	...engaging in parent/student/school collaborations that develop long term educational plans for students.

Critical Success Factor 5	
The school leader is able to use data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.	
Field experiences require...	
Activity 5a.	...analyzing data (including standardized test scores, teacher assessments, psychological data, etc.) to develop/refine instructional activities and set instructional goals.
Activity 5b.	...facilitating data disaggregation for use by faculty and other stakeholders.

Critical Success Factor 6	
The school leader is able to keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement.	
Field experiences require...	
Activity 6a.	...analyzing and communicating school progress and school achievement to teachers, parents and staff.
Activity 6b.	...gathering feedback regarding the effectiveness of personal communication skills.

Critical Success Factor 7	
The school leader is able to make parents partners in their student's education and create a structure for parent and educator collaboration.	
Field experiences require...	
Activity 7a.	...working in meaningful relationships with faculty and parents to develop action plans for student achievement.

Critical Success Factor 8	
The school leader is able to understand the change process and has the leadership and facilitations skills to manage it effectively.	
Field experiences require...	
Activity 8a.	...working with faculty and staff in professional development activities.
Activity 8b.	...inducting and/or mentoring new teaching staff.
Activity 8c.	...building a "learning community" that includes all stakeholders.

Critical Success Factor 9

The school leader is able to understand how adults learn and knows how to advance meaningful change through quality sustained professional development that benefits students.

Field experiences require...

Activity 9a.	...study groups, problem solving sessions and/or ongoing meetings to promote student achievement.
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Activity 9b.	...scheduling, developing and/or presenting professional development activities to faculty that positively impact student achievement.
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Critical Success Factor 10

The school leader is able to organize and use time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.

Field experiences require...

Activity 10a.	...scheduling of classroom and/or professional development activities in a way that provides meaningful time for school improvement activities.
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Activity 10b.	... scheduling time to provide struggling students with the opportunity for extra support (i.e. individual tutoring, small group instruction, extended block time) so that they may have the opportunity to learn mastery.
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Critical Success Factor 11

The school leader is able to acquire and use resources wisely.

Field experiences require...

Activity 11a.	...writing grants or developing partnerships that provide needed resources for school improvement.
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Activity 11b.	...developing schedules that maximize student learning in meaningful ways with measurable success.
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Critical Success Factor 12

The school leader is able to obtain support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for their school improvement agenda.

Field experiences require...

Activity 12a.	...working with faculty to communicate with school board and community stakeholders in a way that supports school improvement.
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Activity 12b.	...working with faculty, parents and community to build collaboration and support for the school's agenda.
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Critical Success Factor 13

The school leader is able to continuously learn and seek out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices.

Field experiences require...

Activity 13a.	...working with faculty to implement research-based instructional practices.
Activity 13b.	...working with professional groups and organizations.