

JULY 28 2026

12:20–1:10

AAEA Summer Conference 2026



Dr. Xavier M. Hodo, Sr.
Helena-West Helena School
District Superintendent



Dr. John M. West
Leadership Development
Coach-ADE

RADICAL IMPROVEMENT

FOR

SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION



<https://bit.ly/4pJISjB>

Agenda

01

02

03

04

05



WELCOME

Enjoy a welcome and introductions from Dr. Hodo and Dr. West.



URGENT LEADERSHIP

We will discuss Blake Mouton's leadership styles and the importance of focusing on the right thing at the right time.



LEVERAGE DATA

We will discuss how to navigate state accountability models and deploying targeted, collaborative teaming structures.



REBUILDING

We will discuss how to rebuild the school environment and trust.



OPTIMIZE

RESOURCES
We will discuss the mechanics of resource optimization.

Who's in the Audience?

District

Building

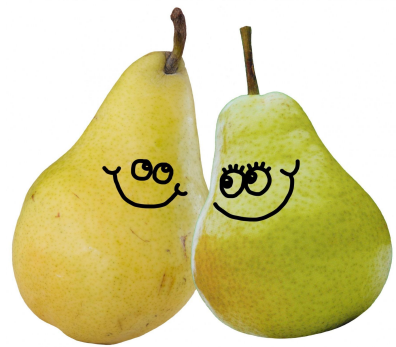
State or 3rd Party Support



Think, Pair, Share



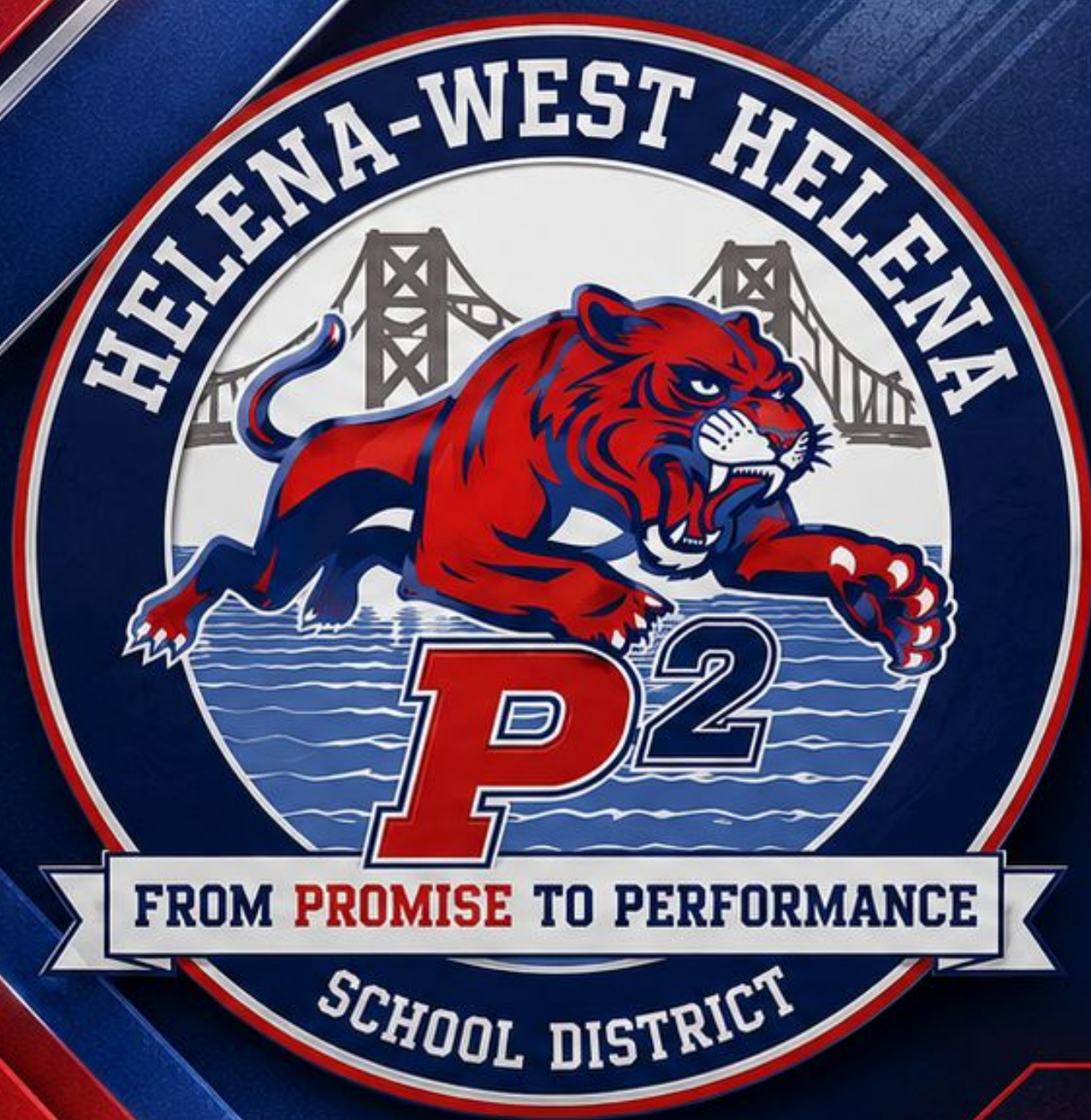
Think: Identify one of your greatest needs. Connect that to your theory of action: What one thing needs to change to improve that outcome this school year?



Pair: Find someone at your table to exchange thoughts.



Share: Share your outcome and the one change that could improve that outcome.



FROM
PROMISE
TO
PERFORMANCE
P2

“ WE ARE WHAT WE REPEATEDLY DO.
EXCELLENCE, THEN,
IS NOT AN ACT BUT A *HABIT*. ”

— ARISTOTLE —



HWHSD

GROUND RULES



Every Challenge is real & unique.



The experts are in the room.



We absolutely can find solutions to any problem.



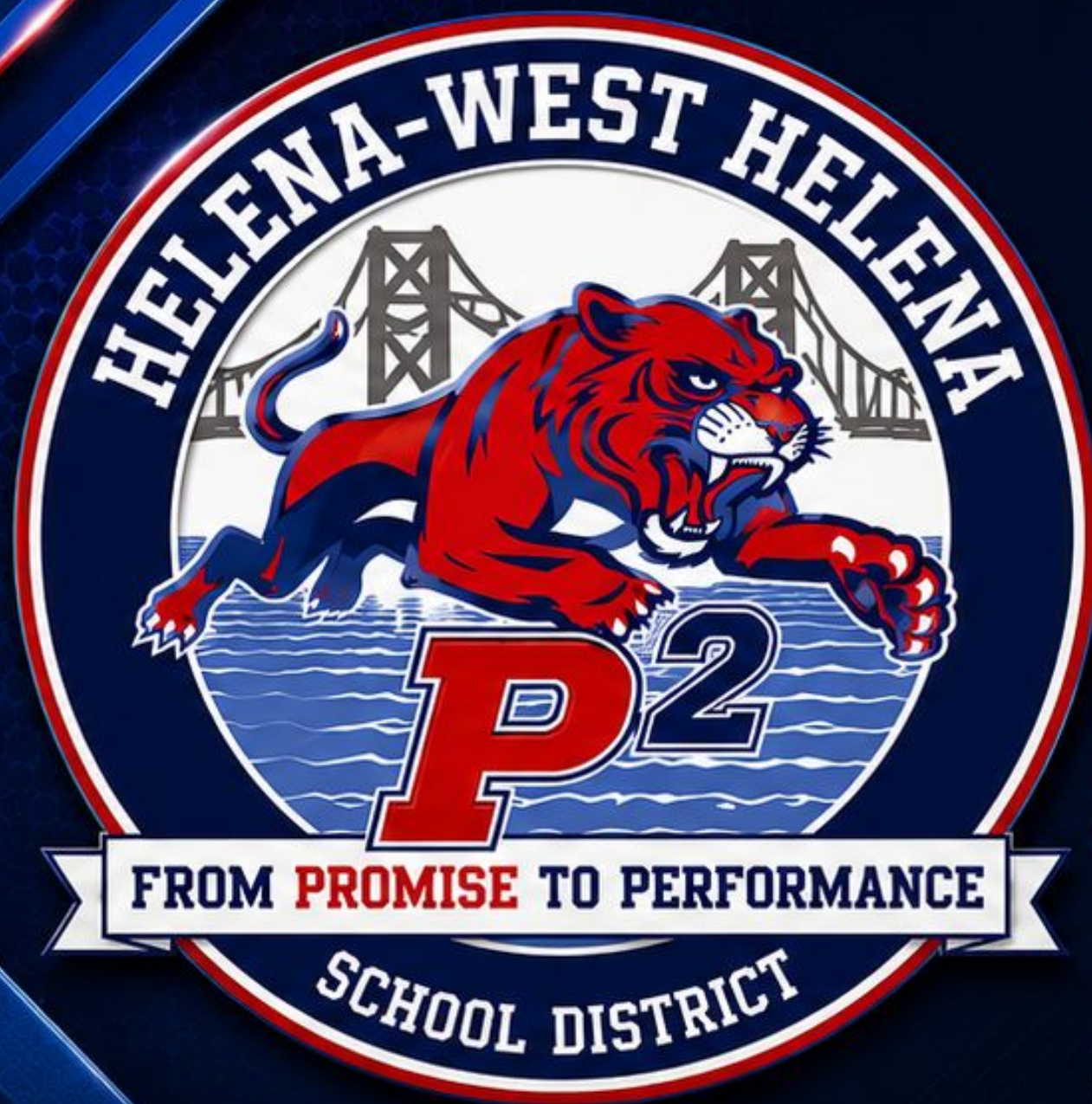
No islands allowed.

BOTTOM LINE:
Improve Achievement.



Act *NOW*
to be ready for tomorrow.

HWHSD 2026-2027 GOALS



FROM
PROMISE TO
PERFORMANCE **P2**

1



By June 2027, the district will improve its parent and student customer service satisfaction rating by **15%** and decrease internal communication response times to under **24** business hours, as measured by biannual climate surveys and centralized communication tracking logs.

2



By May 2027, **100%** of schools in the district will implement the **Professional Learning Community (PLC)** process with fidelity.

3



By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, the Helena-West Helena School District will increase the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced by **34%** in Science, **33%** in English Language Arts (ELA), and **30%** in Mathematics, as measured by the Arkansas ATLAS state summative assessments.



INSPIRE

ENGAGE

EMPOWER

EXCEL



- School districts do not transform by polishing leaves. They transform when educators nourish roots, strengthen the trunk, and grow a canopy where every learner can thrive.
- A tree survives storms because what is unseen is strong. Districts improve the same way.



What does YOUR Tree Look like?



Deepen Roots

- Create clarity of mission, trust-filled relationship, and non-negotiable adult commitments. Weak Culture produces shallow growth.

Strengthen the Trunk

- Build coherent systems for instruction, staffing, feedback, and accountability so the district can carry the weight of change.

Expand the Canopy

- Use improvement to produce visible outcomes: stronger literacy, safer schools, healthier staff culture, and broader student opportunity.

Leadership Charge

- Do not chase quick wins that die in one season; build conditions that renew themselves year after year.

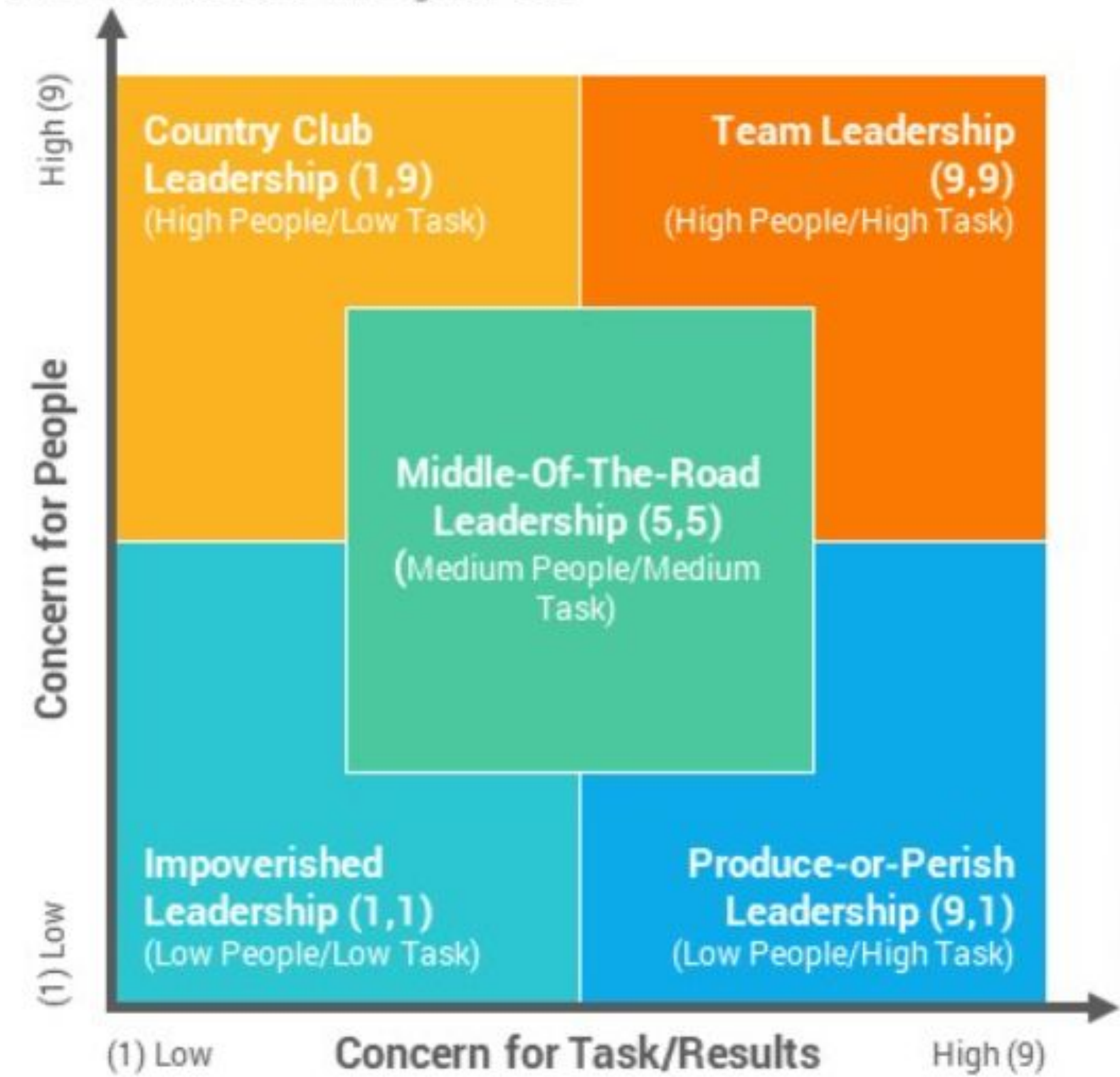
Lens 1: Establish Urgent Leadership

- **Urgent Leadership** requires focusing on the **right thing** at the **right time**.
- Let's discuss Blake and Mouton's Leadership Styles.



Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid

Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid



- Impoverished Leadership (Indifferent Management)
(1,1)
- Produce or Perish Leadership (Dictatorial Management)
(9,1)
- Middle-Of-The-Road Leadership (Status Quo Management)
(5,5)
- Country Club Leadership (Accommodating Management)
(1,9)
- Team Leadership (Sound Management)
(9,9)

Reciprocal Accountability

“Leadership is creating the conditions that allow others to succeed at what they are being asked to do.”

–Richard DuFour in Marzano’s *Leading a High Reliability School* p. 16



Recognizing Turbulence In Your District

	Turbulence	Chaos
Origin	• External/Adjacent • Lack of Control/Power	• Internal • Lack of Structure, Shared Values, Accountability
Scope	• Varies (Class, Team, School, District) • Others may not recognize it	• Pervasive • Everyone sees it
Impact	• Individual Burnout • Feeling of being “on edge” • Knowing what should be done BUT	• High Turnover/Attrition • Open fighting • Unsafe Conditions/Just Trying to Survive

Turbulence or Chaos

Urgency:

Take one minute to think again about the change you identified earlier. Is it **turbulence** or **chaos**?

What **evidence** is there that you are addressing this urgently?



Lens 2: Leverage Data for Action



Data Rich. Information Poor.

- Districts collect attendance, achievement, behavior, staffing, intervention, and finance data every day. The real problem is not access to data; it is the failure to turn scattered numbers into **timely** decisions that **improve outcomes**.
- When every metric is urgent, nothing becomes actionable.

Lens 2: Leverage Data for Action



- **Narrow the Focus**

- Identify a small set of must-answer questions: Who is not learning, why, and what response happens next? Clarity precedes competence.

- **Build Data Literacy**

- Leaders need routines for identifying trends, spotting patterns, and distinguishing noise from real instructional signals.

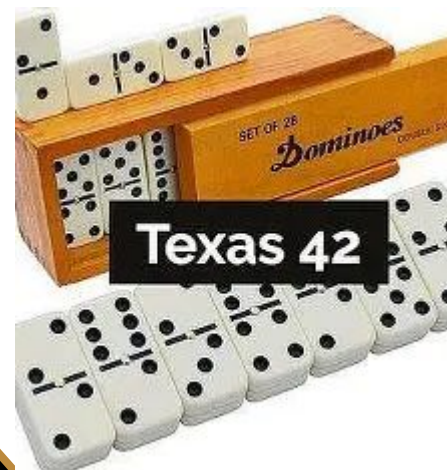
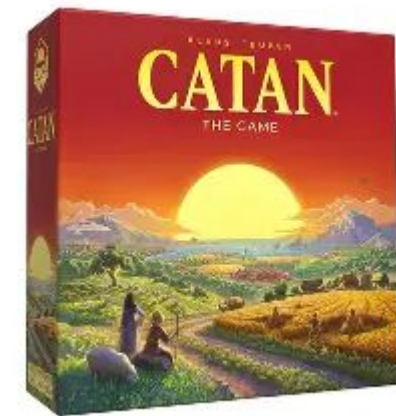
- **Create Response Cycles**

- Data Matters only when it triggers action: Intervention coaching, reteaching, staffing support, or resource shifts within a predictable cadence.

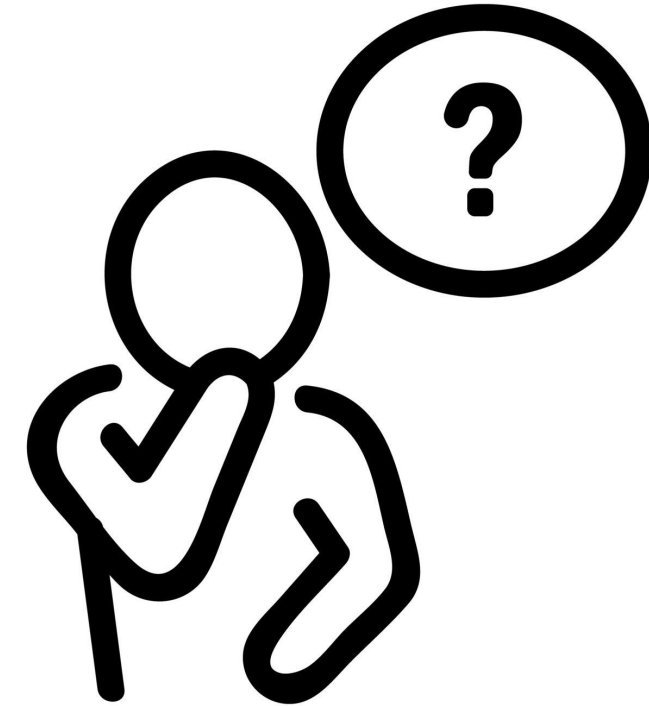
Play the Game!



Arkansas Teaching & Learning
Assessment System



Are Your Pieces Aligned to Win?



- Who is the designated responsible party in your school and district for accountability?
- How well do you know the rules? How about other leaders? Teachers? Students and families?
- Which teachers contribute to student success on tested subjects in tested grades? (All)
- Who is responsible for building vocabulary? (All)

Self Assessment

Quick Assessment on Aligned Practices

- Are you an expert on the accountability model?
 - School board?
 - All district and school level administrators? Teachers?
- Is there a written plan to communicate and align practices with the accountability measures?
- Does each measure have monitored leading indicators?
- Are credits made up *after* the school year only?
- Is there a policy or defined practice of planning HS coursework that aligns with merit and distinction diplomas?
- Does every student have a useful, leveraged student success plan?

Lens 3: Rebuild Environment and Trust

"A rising tide lifts all boats."

-JFK in Heber Springs, AR in 1963



Lens 3: Rebuild Environment and Trust

- Trust is the shared belief that district leaders will communicate honestly, make competent decisions, apply expectations fairly, and respond in ways that protect both people and student outcomes.
- A district can be full of reports and still be empty of truth. People share what is real only when they believe leadership will listen, act fairly, and follow through.



Lens 3: Rebuild Environment and Trust



Leadership Behaviors

- Communicate early and clearly so departments and schools hear the truth before they hear rumors.
- Use consistent expectations for ALL Impacted Parties so systems feel fair.
- Close the loop by showing what decisions were made after feedback or data review.
- Model competence through preparation, timely support, and disciplined execution.



“A HOLE *in the boat,*
is a **HOLE** *in the*
WHOLE *boat!!”*

— A Granddaddy Hodoism —

Lens 3: Rebuild Environment and Trust

Turn and Talk:

"What is one specific stakeholder group in your community that currently feels disconnected from your strategic goals? What leadership behavior needs to improve to connect with that group?"



Lens 4: Optimize Resources

Greatest source of revenue?

Students



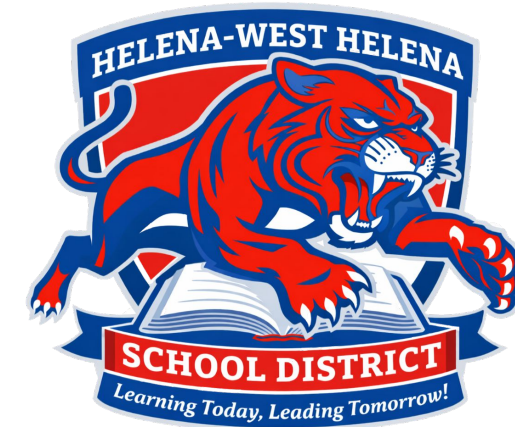
Greatest expenditure?

Staff



Lens 4: Optimize Resources

NOT ONE LEADER AT THE DISTRICT OR BUILDING LEVEL EVER HELD THEIR CURRENT POSITION PRIOR TO COMING TO HWH.



Lens 4: Optimize Resources

- What is your district staff development plan?
- Tiering staff on specific skills.
- Induction aimed at success leads to retention.
- New administration.
- What resources do you need to make the plan effective?



Summary

- **Lens 1:** Establish Urgent Leadership
- **Lens 2:** Leverage Data for Action
- **Lens 3:** Rebuild Environment and Trust
- **Lens 4:** Optimize Resources





“When in
Leadership,
if you don’t address it,
you bless it.”



— *Hodoism*



THANK YOU

for attending.

CONTACT US WITH QUESTIONS.

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