

FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Turning a High-Impact Leverage Point into a Realistic Next Step

Completed Example: Riverbend Community College

A LEVERAGE POINT ONLY MATTERS IF SOMEONE DOES SOMETHING DIFFERENT BECAUSE YOU IDENTIFIED IT.

Riverbend's Selected Leverage Point

After mapping its apprenticeship challenge, Riverbend identified fragmented employer engagement as a high-connectivity system condition. Multiple offices work with employers, but there is no shared ownership, common process, or consistent pathway for connecting employer opportunities to students.

DECISION	RIVERBEND EXAMPLE
Priority	Create a coordinated employer-engagement process for the advanced manufacturing apprenticeship.
Change we want to see	Employers, faculty, advisors, workforce staff, and students experience one clear process rather than multiple disconnected entry points.
First 30-60 day move	Convene Academic Affairs, Workforce Development, Career Services, Advising, Financial Aid, and the employer partner to map the current process and agree on shared ownership and handoffs.
Owner	Dean/VP responsible for workforce and CTE strategy.
Partners	Academic Affairs, Career Services, Advising, Financial Aid, faculty program lead, employer representative.
Executive sponsor	President or Provost/Chief Academic Officer who can resolve cross-unit ownership and resource barriers.
One metric that matters	Percentage of eligible advanced manufacturing students who successfully enter a paid apprenticeship opportunity.

Notice what Riverbend did *not* choose.

It did not begin by creating another office, redesigning every credential, or solving every funding problem. It selected a focused move that could improve several parts of the system at once.

FOCUS IS A LEADERSHIP CHOICE: What will you act on - and what will wait?

1 | Define the Move

Return to the primary leverage point you selected in the previous activity. Translate it from an insight into a concrete change.

Our priority / leverage point is:

What system condition are you choosing to address?

The change we want to see is:

What should be different for learners, employees, partners, or the institution because you acted?

Our first move in the next 30-60 days is:

Name an observable action. Avoid phrases such as 'improve communication,' 'develop a strategy,' or 'increase collaboration.'

ACTION TEST: Could someone outside your team tell whether this action actually happened?

Make the first move smaller if necessary.

A realistic first move should create momentum, clarify ownership, test an assumption, remove a barrier, or bring the right people together. It does not need to solve the entire problem.

2 | Build the Coalition

Systems work crosses organizational boundaries. Identify the smallest group of people needed to move the priority forward - and distinguish participation from accountability.

OWNER Who is accountable for moving this forward?	PARTNERS Who must help design or implement it?	SPONSOR Who has the authority, resources, or influence to remove barriers?

Who needs to be involved EARLY that we normally bring in too late?
Consider faculty, advisors, financial aid, institutional research, students, employers, high school partners, finance, advancement, or others.

Where might these partners see the priority differently?
What interests, pressures, or concerns will need to be acknowledged?

What is the first conversation we need to have - and with whom?
Be specific enough that this could become a calendar invitation.

ALIGNMENT DOES NOT REQUIRE EVERYONE TO HAVE THE SAME ROLE. IT REQUIRES CLARITY ABOUT THE SHARED OUTCOME.

3 | Identify One Metric That Matters

Do not turn this into an assessment plan. Choose one measure that would help you determine whether your action is moving the outcome in the right direction.

ACTIVITY MEASURE	OUTCOME-ORIENTED MEASURE
We created four employer partnerships.	More eligible students complete a paid work-based learning experience.
We redesigned the advising process.	Fewer students accumulate credits that do not apply toward their credential.
We held three cross-functional meetings.	Students experience fewer delays at a critical pathway handoff.

Ask one question:

IF THIS WORKS, WHAT SHOULD WE BE ABLE TO SEE?

The one metric we will watch is:

Choose a measure connected to the outcome - not simply evidence that activity occurred.

What is our starting point?

What baseline, current pattern, or existing evidence will we compare against?

When will we look at this measure again?

Name a realistic checkpoint.

4 | Your 30-Day Action Canvas

Bring the work together. This page should be useful when you return to your institution - not just while you are at the conference.

OUR PRIORITY IS:

WITHIN THE NEXT 30 DAYS, WE WILL:

OWNER

PEOPLE WE NEED AT THE TABLE

ONE METRIC WE WILL WATCH

FIRST CONVERSATION

We will know we have made progress when:

What could prevent this from happening?

Name the most likely barrier - organizational, political, financial, procedural, or capacity-related.

What will we do about that now?

What can you anticipate, clarify, or address before it becomes a barrier?

5 | Test the Plan

Pair with another participant or institutional team. You have 90 seconds to explain your plan using the structure below. Your partner's job is to test the plan - not redesign it.

THE 90-SECOND TEST	
1	Here's the problem/outcome we're trying to improve.
2	Here's the leverage point we selected.
3	Here's what we're going to do first.
4	Here's how we'll know whether we're making progress.

Your partner may ask only two questions:

IS THAT ACTUALLY WITHIN YOUR CONTROL? HOW WILL YOU KNOW?
What did the conversation make you change or clarify? Revise your plan before you leave.

My Commitment

The first action I will take when I return is:
I will take that action by: Date / milestone

INSIGHT ISN'T THE OUTCOME.

What will be different because you were here?