



PNI Hub Leadership Checklist

The work of hub leaders is varied and complex. There is no single way to build an improvement network. Instead, we offer this tool, the *PNI Hub Leadership Checklist*, as a support for hub leaders as they build a new learning organization. We designed this tool based on our Improvement Network Health and Development Framework and our Hub Leadership Practice Framework (see references below). Our design is also informed by our own experiences as hub leaders and developmental evaluation partners as well as incorporating data from hub leaders, district/school leaders involved in improvement work, and network members engaged in Networks for School Improvement (NSI) in the Gates Foundation's Network for School Improvement initiative.

This version of the *PNI Hub Leadership Checklist* is a draft; it is not intended to be widely shared. As we continue with our measurement work, longitudinal analyses, and design of our *PNI Improvement Network Playbook*, we will revise this tool for broad distribution.

❖ Initiate: Support for the early phases of planning for an improvement network

BUILD THE VISION

- ☐ Establish a network initiation team
- ☐ Raise funding necessary for launch and initial operations
- ☐ Recruit initial partnering organizations
- ☐ Analyze how the problem of practice manifests in participating contexts, integrating stakeholder input
- ☐ Specify an initial aim
- ☐ Articulate a theory of improvement, considering the system that has created the problem
- ☐ Determine a timeline for achieving the aim + a plan for how the work will spread/ scale/ sustain
- ☐ Specify a process to analyze network health
- ☐ Specify a process to continuously improve hub operations

BUILD THE FOUNDATION

- ☐ Establish a hub team with the diverse knowledge, skills, and expertise necessary to address the problem
- ☐ Develop hub capacity
- ☐ Foster buy-in and alignment with local leaders' priorities and/or improvement agendas
- ☐ Design a measurement & analytics infrastructure



❖ Develop: Structures, tools, and routines to support network launch & development

DEVELOP NETWORK ROLES & ENGAGEMENT

- ☐ Recruit network membership with diverse knowledge, skills, and expertise
- ☐ Articulate a plan for member engagement with a clear value proposition
- ☐ Build understanding, buy-in, and alignment with members
- ☐ Build understanding, buy-in, and alignment with leaders in members' proximal organizations
- ☐ Develop member capacity for improvement, social learning, and equity
- ☐ Develop leader capacity for supporting improvement in members' organizations

DEVELOP MEMBER CONNECTIONS

- ☐ Design team learning and collaboration routines
- ☐ Build leadership support for team learning and collaboration
- ☐ Design cross-team learning and collaboration routines (members and leaders)

STRUCTURE EQUITY-CENTERED CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESSES

- ☐ Develop support roles (e.g., coaches), processes, and tools for member learning and improvement
- ☐ Engage network members in an equity-centered root cause analysis
- ☐ Refine the theory of improvement, based on learning from the root cause analysis
- ☐ Identify an inquiry cycle that fits the problem of practice and member workflow (e.g., PDSA cycles, 90-day cycles, ROCI)
- ☐ Design tools and routines to collect, analyze, and act on data that support member engagement in inquiry cycles and attend to inequities
- ☐ Establish participation structures that empower all voices and promote an equity-centered culture

DEVELOP NETWORK CULTURE

- ☐ Articulate a shared narrative
- ☐ Engage members in network decision making
- ☐ Support a culture of evidence use
- ☐ Foster an equitable culture
- ☐ Use research knowledge

DEVELOP A KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- ☐ Establish network structures, tools, and routines to support the generation, consolidation capture, sharing, and application of knowledge
- ☐ Establish network structures and strategies to support cross-team learning



❖ **Spread & Sustain: Considerations for sustaining/spreading network learning & impact**

SUSTAIN THE NETWORK

- ☐ Monitor network health
- ☐ Foster effective communication
- ☐ Support positive hub team dynamics
- ☐ Manage resources
- ☐ Ensure alignment between district, school, and network priorities
- ☐ Manage turnover
- ☐ Strengthen team and cross-team processes
- ☐ Strengthen/adapt support roles, processes, and tools

BUILD A LONG-TERM VISION

- ☐ Articulate long-term goals, aims, and desired outcomes for the work
- ☐ Map this vision to available funding; revise timeline
- ☐ Identify roles, tools, routines, practices that will spread and/or sustain
- ☐ Locate additional resources to support the long-term vision (if necessary)
- ☐ Enact the long-term vision for the work

References

Peurach, D. J., Russell, J. L., Sherer, J. Z., McMahon, K., Parkerson, E., Lyle, A. M. (2020) The work and complications of hub leadership in educational improvement networks. Unpublished working paper.

Russell, J. L., Bryk, A. S., & Peruch, D. J., Eds. (2025) Improvement networks: Learnings as we move from theory to action. *The Peabody Journal of Education*, special issue.