

What Am I Prepared To Do Differently?

What Resonates With Me?	Things I Plan To Start Doing

Authentic Alignment

Authentic Alignment is the process by which schools:

- **Explore** core beliefs and **develop** your guiding school mantra.
- **Envision** and **create** a **description** of the school you seek to become.
- **Reconnect** with the moral imperative of your **collective commitment** to the Five Essential Elements of a PLC.
- **Systematically integrate** the mantra, vision, and commitments into existing school structures.

The four stages of creating a **Culture of Authentic Alignment**:

1. The WHY
2. The EYE
3. The HOW
4. The NOW

Four Stages of Authentic Alignment	
The WHY	Schools identify their fundamental purpose, and develop their guiding school mantra.
The EYE	Schools envision and create a description of the school they seek to become.
The HOW	Schools connect with the moral imperative of their collective commitment to the Five Essential Elements of a PLC.
The NOW	Schools systematically integrate mantra, vision, and commitments into existing structures.

The WHY is the **process** of exploring your school's core beliefs, habits and assumptions. The goal is to get clear on your school's fundamental purpose. The end product of the **WHY** is the development of your school's guiding mantra. A mantra is akin to a motto, albeit more fundamental to a school's internal purpose than simply a slogan. It's concise, repeatable, and core to a school's existence. The mantra is easily understood, easy around which to rally, and represents the unwavering core values that drive your daily work. Your school's mantra encapsulates the answers to questions like:

- What do we believe?
- What do we want to achieve?
- Why do we go to work each day?
- Why does our school exist?

The EYE is the **process** by which you develop a clear, compelling vision of the school you want to become. Schools need to develop a detailed description of what they want to become.

- What does our school look like when it's a GREAT place for students?
- What does our school look like when it's a GREAT place for teachers?
- What does our school look like when it's a GREAT place for parents?

The HOW is **process** by which schools connect with **moral imperative** of the **collective commitments** to the Five Essential Elements of a PLC. Those five elements are:

1. A Focus On Learning
2. The Collaborative Culture
3. Clearly Defining What Every Student Needs To Learn
4. Constantly Measuring Effectiveness
5. Systematically Responding When Students Do/Do Not Learn

The **NOW** is the **process** of systematically embedding the **WHY** (beliefs), the **EYE** (vision) and the **HOW** (collective commitments) into existing school structures. Three practices will ensure that the work of actualizing these deeply held cultural beliefs remains at the front and center in everything a school does. These three practices are:

1. Aligned feedback
2. Aligned storytelling
3. Aligned celebration

The WHY

"We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far."

—Ron Edmonds, Harvard University

The WHY is the **process** of exploring your school's core beliefs, habits and assumptions. The goal is to get clear on your school's fundamental purpose. The end product of the **WHY** is the development of your school's guiding mantra.

What is your school's current mission or guiding statement?

What two words would you use to describe your school's culture?

Developing Your School's Guiding Mantra

What is a mantra?

A mantra is a 3 to 5 word statement that clearly defines who your school is, and why you matter to people. A mantra is a powerful, energy infused chant that everyone inside and outside your organization can instantly get his or her heads around.

A mantra is defined as a word, sound or statement repeated frequently to aid in concentration of thought. In Sanskrit, mantra literally means "instrument of thought". In schools, we suggest a mantra is a highly effective organizing principle easily shared by people who care.

Your school's mantra should be created collaboratively, and meet the following criteria:

Mantra Criteria

Memorable

It is vital that your guiding school mantra finds its way into your schools' subconscious, as Velcro attaching your mission to your commitments, behaviors and decisions.

Simple

In order to be memorable, your guiding school mantra should get one simple idea across in as few words as possible, we recommend 3-5. You can't mean everything to everybody, so just focus on one specific thing. Say ONE thing well.

Credible

At the same time, remember that your guiding school mantra won't be worth anything if you not walking your talk. Everything you say and do should align with your guiding school mantra.

Positive

It almost goes without saying that your guiding school mantra should take an affirmative tone, stated in terms of what you're seeking, not avoiding.

Uniquely Yours

Make sure your guiding school mantra is unmistakably about your school.

Staff members should develop a commitment statement (I message) based on the context of their individual role at the school. Some examples of guiding school mantras and I- messages are provided on the following page.

Mantra Examples

While your school's mantra is a unifying principle, it's critical that you make personal commitments to that end. Collective mobilization begins with individual responsibility. That's why we've included examples of I-messages below.

Mantra	Mantra in practice (I-message)
We Work As A Village	ALL of us are smarter than one of us. I commit to embrace a true collaborative culture. I will pull my weight as part of my interdependent team.
We believe you can achieve!!	I embrace accountability for our results, and I am constantly asking, " <i>Is there something else I can do?</i> "
Every Child Is My Child	I consider every child my child, and the failure of any one of them is not an option. I am humble enough to ask for help, and think abundantly enough to share resources and best practices.
Tomorrow Depends upon TODAY	I will spend time focusing on factors I can control, and hold my teammates accountable to do the same.
Act as If	I operate each day as if we are already the ideal school we described.

In 3-5 words, what would you suggest for your school's guiding mantra?

!
I-Message Commitment

For Clarifying Your Fundamental Purpose and Your School's Mantra, Ask:

1. What is our school's fundamental purpose? What is our school's unshakable sense of mission?
2. What makes our school special and unique?
3. What do we mean when we say that ALL students can learn? Does ALL really mean ALL?
4. Was our school built as a place where teachers come and teach or as a place where students come and learn? What evidence do we have to support our choice?
5. What happens in our school when a student experiences difficulty in learning?
6. What is our school's one non-negotiable that serves as a lens for everything we do? What is our school's North Star?
7. Why did you become an educator?

At the heart of every Great Group is a shared dream. All Great Groups believe that they are on a mission and that they could change the world, make a dent in the universe. They are obsessed with their work. It becomes not a job but a fervent quest. That belief is what brings the necessary cohesion and energy to their work.

(Warren G. Bennis, "The Secrets of Great Groups,"
Leader to Leader Journal, No. 3, 1997)

The EYE

"Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life—think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success."

—The Swami Vivekananda

The EYE is the **process** by which schools **envision** and develop a clear, compelling picture of the school they want to become. What will your school look like when it's a GREAT place for students?

- What does our school look like when it's a GREAT place for students?
- What does our school look like when it's a GREAT place for staff?
- What does our school look like when it's a GREAT place for parents?

In 3 Years, What Do We Want Our Ideal School To:

Look Like	Sound Like	Feel Like

For clarifying the EYE for Your School ask:

1. Can you describe the school we are trying to create?
2. What would our school look like if it were a great place for students? What would it look like if it were a great place for teachers?
3. It is five years from now, and we have achieved our vision as a school. In what ways are we different? Describe what is going on in terms of practices, procedures, relationships, results, and climate.
4. Imagine we have been given sixty seconds on the nightly news to clarify the vision of our school to the community. What do we want to say?

Point to the future and describe, in clear terms, the school you imagine that doesn't yet exist. If others volunteer to help build that future then, and only then, do you become a leader.

PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE COMMITMENTS AS A RESULT OF THIS PRESENTATION ...

I will personally commit to implementing this strategy/idea I heard today:

I will measure my effectiveness by:

I plan to see results from my action by this date _____

My accountability partner is _____

I will encourage my collaborative team to **make a collective commitment** to implement this strategy/idea I heard today:

As a result of our action, we expect to see the following results in student achievement: