



## Get to Great: Year 2

After concentrating on developing results leaders during year one, the second year's work with Get to Great represents a big, exciting challenge: taking the pursuit of greater results to scale, across classrooms, schools, and operations. Success in the second year is critical in reaching the major district goals/targets, and in securing the ongoing engagement of the staff and community in the never ending push toward world class results.

**Setting the Stage:** It is helpful to take stock of first year accomplishments. The members of the leadership team are using results leadership and understand the results process through experience with their prototypes. The board of education members understand and have committed to the work, and teacher and support personnel association leaders are ready to give it a go. Time has been established for teams of teachers and staff to meet, think, and work together in advancing toward targets.

**The Second Level of Leadership:** No matter how small the district, there is always a second level of leadership, both formal and informal. All districts have informal leaders who are influential - those teachers and staff most respected by their colleagues. In larger school systems, the second tier of department chairs and grade level leaders are essential to achieving better results. Therefore, a key step is to communicate clearly and provide professional development to these people, so that they, too, are prepared to lead teams.

**Using the Prototype Model with Teams:** The first question here is how to comprise the teams. Teams involve the individuals who share responsibility for the same result. Examples are the third grade teachers, the high school science department, the middle school custodians. In the same way that members of the leadership team selected different targets for their prototypes during the first year, the second year teams, guided by principals and other leaders, select a significant area of under performance on which they want to focus. Then they use the prototype process as the model for their work. As an example, high school math teachers recognize that students are struggling with word problems on the regents exam. They use the previous year's exam results to set a baseline - only 60% of the students were proficient with word problems. They set a stretch target, say, getting 80% of their students to proficiency. It's helpful to translate percentages into numbers of kids to make it real. 80% might mean 3 more kids per classroom. The teachers know and care about these students so the target becomes more compelling and less daunting.

The next step is for the teachers to develop the best strategy to accomplish it. They share the best instructional approaches among themselves and try these out together, talking every two weeks about how it's going, what's working and what isn't. The data they use along the way, readily available, are teacher observation and student performance on quizzes and unit tests. Based on the data, they change their approach as needed, determined to do whatever it takes to hit the target. Because they have good data all along, they have a pretty accurate idea of how the students will perform. The new regents results verify the level of achievement.

**Team Targets and District Goals:** Note that the teams are not working on every aspect of poor student performance all at once. This is purposeful. It's best not to overwhelm people, initial success fosters long-term engagement, and team members will best understand and master the results process when it is specific and concrete. Once the team has accomplished this, they can apply the approach to the next set of problems. Building toward the major district goals occurs in these smaller steps as the gains accumulate.

**The Role of Second Year Leaders:** Remember Hal's advice, "You can't delegate results." The leader sets the example and sends the results message. There are several essential components to second year leadership. Our advice. Join the teams as a participant, colleague, and coach. Assist them in selecting an area of under performance and setting the target. Guide them along the way. Establish a clear, efficient way to track results for all teams. Anticipate and overcome obstacles, both on the teams and across the school and district. Create opportunities to share successes and disappointments.

**Trouble-shooting:** Count on encountering problems during the year. It helps to work closely with the early adopters and to not become entangled in negativity. Constantly check in with the people who will give you an accurate read on how things are going. You may want to set up a small, informal steering committee to help you gauge progress, anticipate problems and make adjustments.

**Sharing the results:** You will want to create multiple opportunities to share the nature and results of the teamwork. While the district has identified dedicated time for the teams to pursue their targets, all other regularly scheduled meetings and times are available to communicate results across teams: faculty, department, administrative, and PTA meetings, conference days. Sharing the work is important for many reasons. Teams will learn from each other and become more resilient for it. The combined experience of groups working on different targets will reveal the need for changes in school organization, curriculum, professional development, and resources. Superintendents and principals need to be attentive and responsive to these insights. The board of

education is a key player. Presentations from various teams at board meetings will deepen the board's commitment and highlight the work to the community.

**The Role of Parents and Students:** Parents and students will provide good thinking as to the most effective strategies to hit targets. The prototype model can also be applied to teams of students or parents who want to work on improving an area of under performance. As an example, think of what students can accomplish with a variety of projects, things like in-school recycling, partners for the elderly.

**Toward a Results Community:** Much has been written about professional learning communities. Teams working together and sharing results are just such a community. The difference is that the learning and dialogue occurs for one purpose - to advance student achievement and district performance toward world class status.