Sample Protocol for Developing a Multi-Year Plan

The following pages outline, at a high level, the approach U Prep took when creating their multi-year Acceleration Plan.

This approach assumes that a thorough reflection (including data analysis) has already identified the key challenge(s) to be addressed; in this case, the challenges grew out of the educational disruptions resulting from COVID-19.

This protocol includes many components critical to any strong planning process:

- Root Cause analysis
- Research to determine viable responses to root causes
- Stakeholder Engagement to ensure critical voices are being included in the planning process
- Consideration of contextual fit and sustainability
- Project and Implementation planning phases
- Target and benchmark setting

At the conclusion of this protocol, the team would be equipped to create strong, aligned action plans (including timelines, actors, and resources) that are backwards mapped in order to achieve set goals, and that can guide daily implementation activities.

PROCESS	CRITERIA / CONSIDERATIONS
Step One: *Project Management.* • *Project Definition:* Ensure everyone understands the problem to be solved and identify an appropriate timeline for that work. • *Logistics:* Determine major deadlines (e.g., when does plan and/or budget need to be approved by school/district board?) and use these to scope out time available to determine priorities and to create a plan. **Step Two: *Research.*** Look at available research (impacts of different approaches) - cast a wide net and read as much as possible. • Research studies • Articles, white papers • Conversations/interviews with others in the field who have experience or expertise in anticipated strategies or challenges **Step Three: *Engage various groups of stakeholders to determine priorities.*** Meet with teams of different stakeholders to generate and refine a list of possible approaches and priorities. a. *Leadership Team:* Brainstorming session to generate initial list of possible priorities. No idea is too big or too small at this point. b. *Larger Community (including parents/families and teachers):* Give input/feedback on initial list. Which should be pursued further? Which should *not* be pursued? Which will most fully address the wants and needs of the community? Which have the highest likelihood of yielding the results needed? Use this feedback to narrow down the list. c. *Iterative Leadership Team Meetings:* Bring the narrowed list back to the Leadership Team for further discussion and development. Iterative meetings to continue developing and honing the list (LT meeting followed by synthesis and re-drafting).	● **Non-Negotiables:** Know your non-negotiables /no-brainers: 　○ Research-based approaches/track record of success. 　○ Stakeholder/family engagement – bold initiatives and big changes will not succeed without support of families. ● **Current State:** Honest and unflinching assessment of current state/challenges and magnitude of changes needed. ● **Most Urgent Challenges:** Prioritize very deliberately -- focus on areas of highest need / most urgent challenges. Everything can't be solved for at the same time – what are we going to win on in the short-term vs. long-term? Why? (clear rationale) ● **Contextual fit:** what will this strategy look like in our context/for our school? Consider the following factors: 　○ Existing/available resources (e.g., curricula) 　○ Existing approaches/strategies/values 　○ Existing structures (e.g., schedule) 　○ Existing staffing model 　○ Existing capacity (staff, students, leadership) 　○ Change-management required 　○ Consider external partners to add capacity if needed. ● **Sustainability:** what is needed for changes to be implemented and sustained? And, in cases where an approach is temporary (i.e. 1 or 2 years) to address an acute need, what does communication look like to ensure everyone understands and accepts *what will be phased out* and *when* – especially where this impacts people and staffing?

DETERMINE FOCUS / PRIORITIES (vertical label, left column)

OUTCOME: PLAN "PILLARS" OR PRIORITIES

Notes	Immersion in research at the beginning of the process helps ensure that ideas generated and presented to stakeholders already have solid grounding in research (not pursuing options that are not evidence-based).

PROCESS	CRITERIA / CONSIDERATIONS

Step Four: *Convene Working Groups to create an implementation plan.* Create one working group for each identified pillar or priority.
 	
• *Timing:* These Working Groups meet regularly over a period of months. Frequency can increase or decrease depending on volume of work and approaching deadlines.
• *Leadership:* Each Working Group should be led by at least one member of the Leadership Team.
• *Involvement:* Folks with knowledge/expertise in the area being focused on, and/or deep investment in that "bucket of work" should be invited to join a working group (i.e. members of leadership who focus on family partnerships should be a part of any family-focused working group). Key to have a range of perspectives and representation from across the leadership team.
• *Iterative Working Group Meetings:*
  o Working Groups meet separately to develop and draft ideas/proposals.
  o Working Groups meet together to share proposals and give each other feedback.
  o Working Groups meet separately to refine or adjust proposals based on feedback.
  o Repeat as needed until plans are fully drafted and approved by the group / Leadership Team.
    ▪ *Along the way it is critical that leaders of each working group meet with the overall lead of the project so that overlap areas are unpacked and conflicting priorities can be discussed/addressed.*
 	
Step Five: *Synthesize and Finalize Plan.* Synthesize the results of Working Groups into a single, overall plan. Get necessary approvals re: plan, budget, etc. Build out game plan for communicating and socializing the final plan across all stakeholders. Leaders have a deep understanding of the plan, its potential impact, key decisions that were made along the way, etc. and are invested in it. That has to be translated in a digestible and inspiring way to other stakeholders who were not as intimately involved in the development of the plan over time.
	• **Pillar Project Management:** Designate project owners/coordinators: who is keeping their eye on the big picture?
	• **Timeline:** Determine timeline for implementation: what needs to be done, and by when?
	• **Goal(s):** What is our ultimate end-of-plan goal (e.g., 3-year goal?) What is our first step? (Use ultimate goals to set annual targets in order to pace out incremental progress.)
	• **Resources and Capacity:** Allocate resources to support priorities. Prioritize time/capacity of team members.
	• **Owners/Actors:** Determine who will execute each aspect of the plan
	• **Communication and change management**: Who needs to know what, and when do they need to know it? How should they be made aware? What is going to create the greatest level of understanding, commitment and overall buy-in from a wide range of stakeholders?

CREATE PLAN

OUTCOME: HIGH-LEVEL MULTI-YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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	PROCESS	CRITERIA / CONSIDERATIONS

SET TARGETS AND BENCHMARKS	**Step Six: *Set Overall Targets.*** Leadership Team discusses an overall set of targets and metrics that will indicate the success of the plan. These targets should primarily refer to student performance outcomes, but additional measures can also include adult actions or systems insofar as these are integral to the success of the plan.
	
	Step Seven: *Set Annual Targets.* Considering the overall target and the timeline for the improvement plan, set annual targets for at least the first year of the plan to define the scope of the work for the first year. This ensures flexibility after the first year in determining the next set of targets, while still putting accountability measures in place for achievement during the launch year that drives toward the ultimate outcomes.
	
	Step Eight: *Set Lead Measures.* Lead measures should ideally include benchmarks that trace the progress of plan implementation AND/OR interim measures that trace the progress of student performance. It can be meaningful to ensure the inputs being monitored are the highest leverage data points that will drive the results needed for children (i.e. elements tied to system and program set-up, staff hires, adult experience, etc.)
		• **Goal(s):** Use end-of-plan goals set out by Working Groups to inform an end-of-plan target (with metric). How will this be measured?
		• **Progress Monitoring - Metrics:** How will progress be monitored?
		   ○ What benchmarks will tell us whether implementation is proceeding as planned?
		   ○ What measures will tell us whether the plan is having the intended effect?
		• **Progress Monitoring – Process:** When will benchmarks and metrics be measured and analyzed? Is there a process or protocol for this monitoring during the year (or during the term)?
		• **Progress Monitoring – Stakeholders:** Who will be involved in monitoring and reflecting on progress?

OUTCOME: FULL MULTI-YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Notes	For a sample multi-year approach to Progress Monitoring, see https://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/progress-monitoring-plan.

NEXT STEPS: Use Multi-Year Improvement Plan and Annual Targets to create a detailed action plan for Year One implementation.