

Strategy from the CFO's Office

Colorado School Finance Project

3rd Annual Conference

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Crested Butte, Colorado

Presenter:

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Agenda ~ Being a Strategic Partner

- Part 1 Problem Statement (How to Manage Expectations)
- Part 2 Coherence Making (The Alchemy of Deriving Solutions)
- Part 3 Problem of Practice (Be a Practitioner of Critical Thinking)
- Part 4 Defining Success (Accountability via Benchmarking)

Problem Statement ~ You know your Why. How?

- GFOA recommends that finance officers take an active role in efforts to think and act sustainably.
- GFOA recommends that governments adopt rigorous policies ... aimed at achieving and maintaining a structurally balanced budget ... where recurring revenues are equal to recurring expenditures.
- ERS' "The Strategic CFO" states: How a Strategic CFO approaches responsibilities is as important as what those responsibilities are ... three mindsets consistently came up ... : Look Forward; Reach Outward; & Focus on "How Well" ... to proactively solve challenges and ensure that the District can sustain investment in strategic priorities over time.

Problem Statement ~ You know your Why. How?

GFOA's "Smarter School Spending Framework" suggests Districts develop a collaborative budget process by: setting expectations of what the process will achieve; thoroughly examining underlying causes of achievement gaps and developing goals and strategies to overcome the gaps; analyzing current spending to allocate resources accordingly; crafting a well developed implementation plan; and finally, measuring performance and adjusting as necessary.

Problem Statement ~ You know your Why. How?

- GFOA's "Smarter School Spending" suggests the strategic CFO:
 - Fosters collaboration between the academic and finance staff in the budget process;
 - Sets expectations for the budget process and analyze the district's current state; and
 - Effectively communicates the process and corresponding decisions to stakeholders.

The budget needs to be rooted in the priorities of the district. Intentionally created instructional priorities provide a strong basis for developing a district's budget and strategic financial plan.



Problem Statement ~ What do you know? Really??

- A matter of perspective:
 - What do you know?
 - What do you know you don't know?
 - What don't you know you don't know?

Problem Statement ~ You know your Why. How?

- What you do know to expect is **uncertainty**:
 - School Finance Formulas Continuously Morphing
 - State & Federal Revenues Compromised and Shrinking
 - District Enrollment / Attendance Evolving & Declining
 - COVID-Relief Funds Stale-dated (September 2024)
 - Resource-Challenged Inadequate: Labor, Time, Technology & Money
 - Purchasing Power Eroding: Competition compounded by Inflation
 - Local, Stakeholder Support Dynamic, at best
 - Expenses Unprecedented Liabilities

Coherence Making ~ Alchemy of Deriving Solutions

CRITICAL THINKING:

A mode of thinking — about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of her or his thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it.

- *Critical thinking* is self-disciplined thinking.
- *Critical Thinking* presupposes assent to rigorous standards of excellence.
- *Critical Thinking* entails effective communication and problem-solving abilities.

(Source: The Foundation for Critical Thinking)

Coherence Making ~ Alchemy of Deriving Solutions

Core Values and Concepts

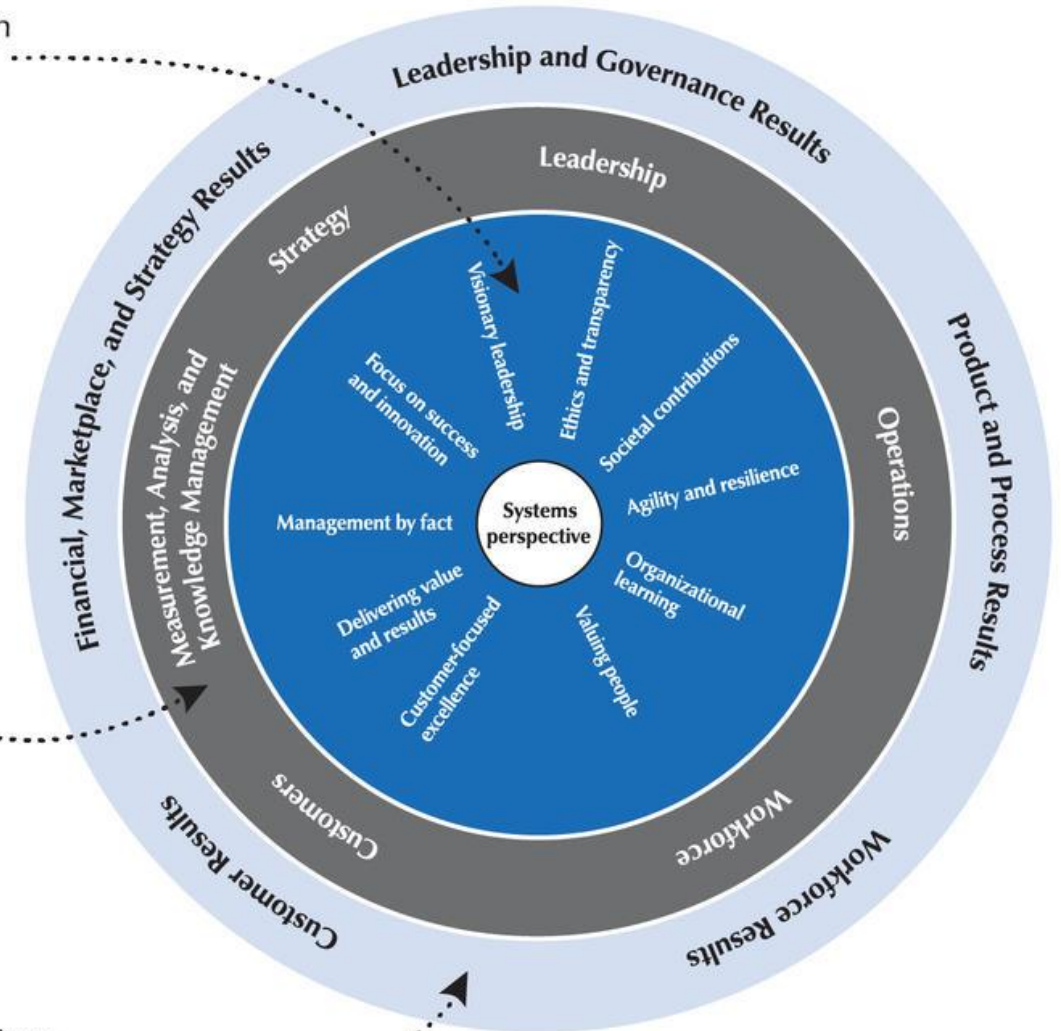
The Baldrige Criteria are built on the following set of interrelated core values and concepts. These beliefs and behaviors are embedded in high-performing organizations. They are the foundation for integrating key performance and operational requirements within a results-oriented framework that creates a basis for action, feedback, and ongoing success.

The Role of Core Values and Concepts

The Baldrige Criteria build on **core values and concepts...**

which are embedded in **systematic processes...**
(Criteria categories 1-6)

yielding **performance results.**
(Criteria category 7)



Coherence Making ~ Alchemy of Deriving Solutions

In collaborating, consider Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* together with and Daggett's *Application Model*.

The framework consists of four quadrants that reflect these two dimensions of higher standards and achievement.

(Source: International Center for Leadership in Education)

RIGOR/RELEVANCE FRAMEWORK®

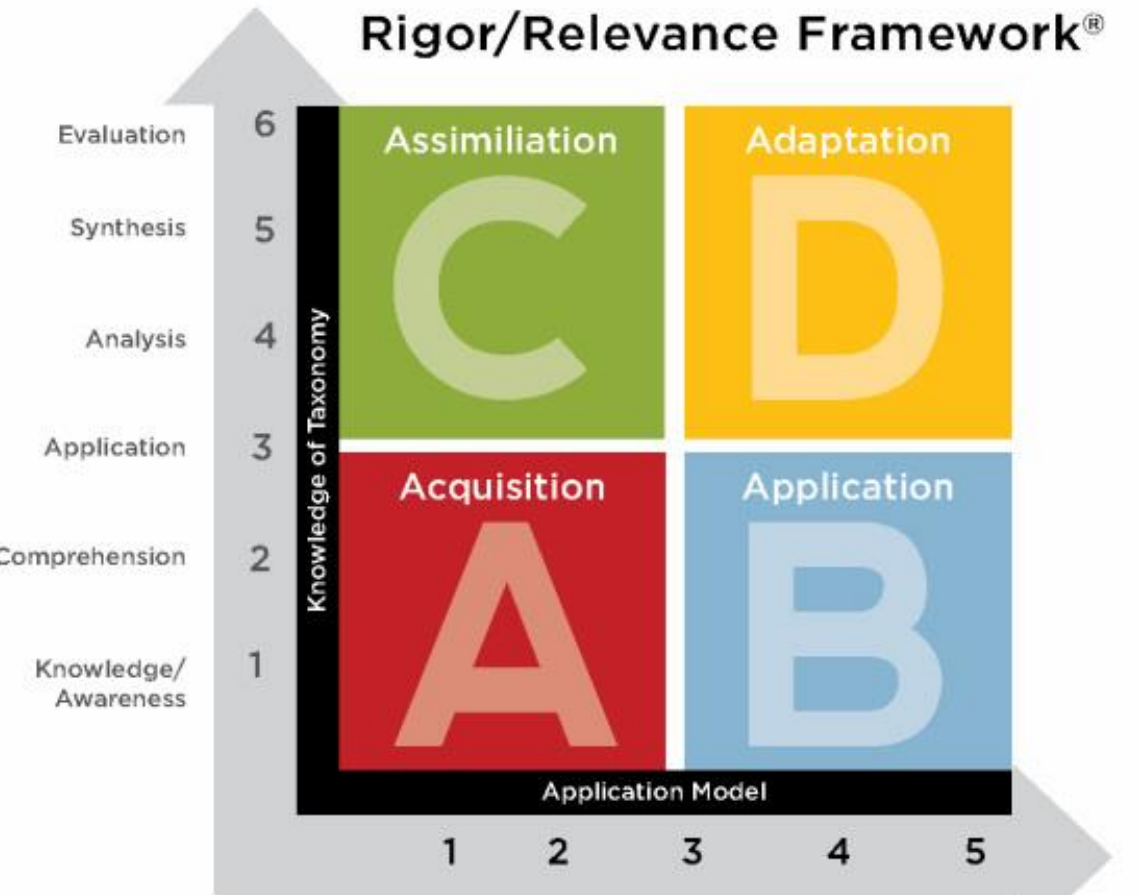
A Students gather and store bits of knowledge and information. Students are primarily expected to remember or understand this knowledge.

B Students use acquired knowledge to solve problems, design solutions, and complete work. The highest level of application is to apply knowledge to new and unpredictable solutions.

C Students extend and refine their acquired knowledge automatically and routinely to analyze and solve problems and create solutions.

D Students have the competence to think in complex ways and to apply their knowledge and skills. Even when confronted with perplexing unknowns, students are able to use extensive knowledge and skill to create solutions and take action that further develops their skills and knowledge.

QUADRANT A



Knowledge in one discipline

Apply in discipline

Apply across discipline

Apply to real-world predictable situations

Apply to real-world unpredictable situations

QUADRANT B

QUADRANT C

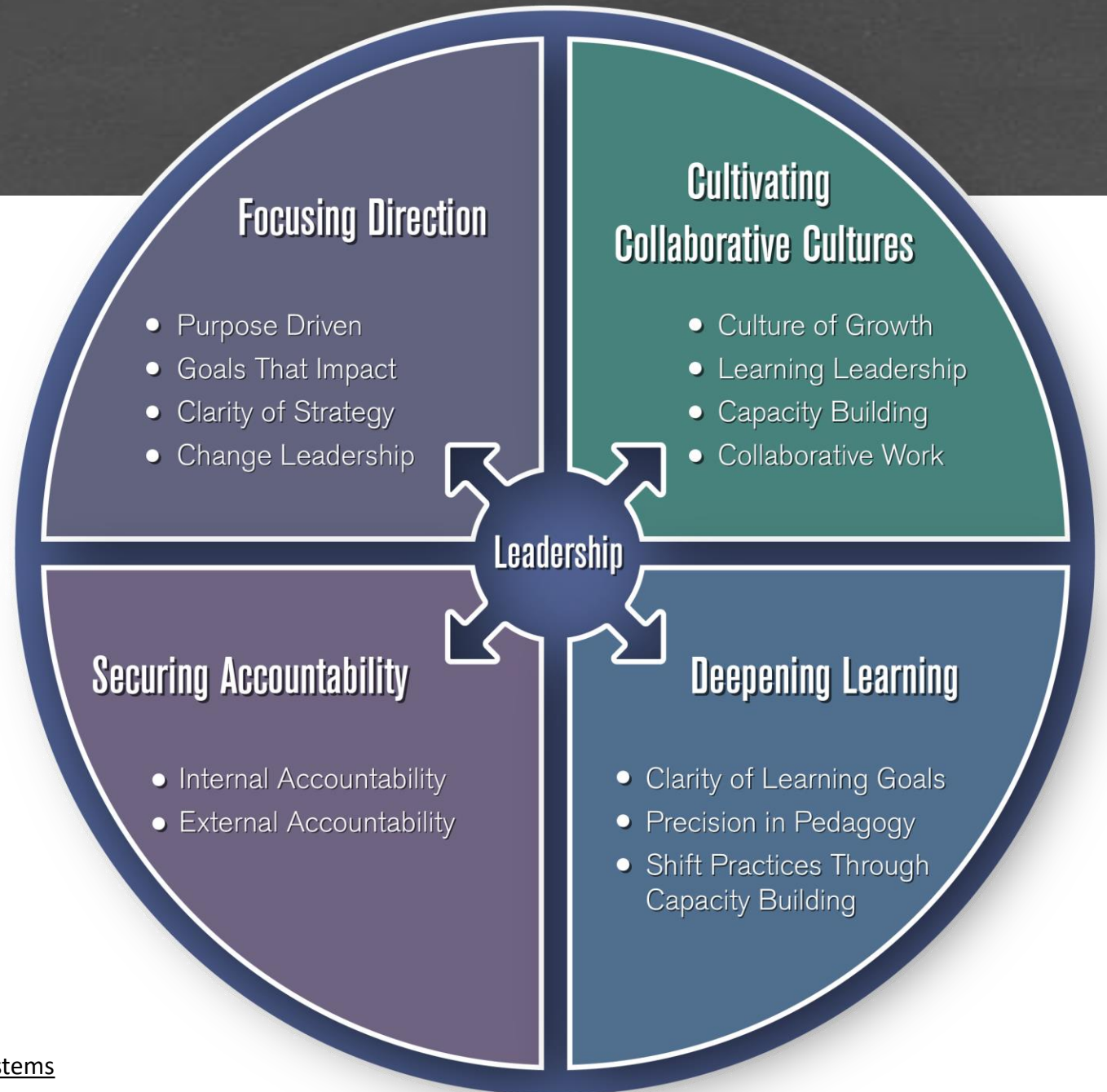
QUADRANT D

Coherence Making ~ Alchemy of Deriving Solutions

“It is not simply alignment of goals, resources and structures ... coherence is the shared depth of understanding about the nature of the work. ... How do leaders achieve shared understanding? ... through purposeful interaction among members ... working on a common agenda, identifying and consolidating what works and making meaning over time.”

(Source: Michael Fullan

Coherence: The Right Drivers for Action for Schools, Districts, and Systems



Problem of Practice ~ Protocols

1. Present the problem – 5 min
2. Consultancy group asks “yes” or “no” questions – 2 min
3. Consultancy group asks probing questions – 5 min
4. Consultancy group discusses amongst themselves – 13 min
Presenter should be taking notes and not part of the discussion
5. Presenter reflects on what they’ve heard and shares what they’ve learned – 5 min

Problem of Practice ~ Striking the Right Balance

How do you effectively prepare for the loss of
[COVID-Relief Funding]
while enhancing teaching, learning and student
achievement?

Problem of Practice ~ Striking the Right Balance

Report Out

Thank you!

THANK YOU