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| **2014-15 AF Organizational Priorities** | | |
| **College-Ready Curriculum**  *Ensure that our core curriculum (scope and sequences, assessments, and units) clearly defines a college ready bar of rigor for all teachers and school leaders. We will do this by ensuring all school leaders and teacher deeply understand the Common Core, NGSS, and AP standards, maximizing deep partnerships with leading external organizations, leveraging strong teachers and school leaders as partners, and designing and executing clear internal feedback loops from all key constituents (teaching and learning, regional superintendents, school leaders, teachers, students) that drive continuous improvement.* | | |
| **Measures of Success** | **Category** | **Corresponding Actions** |
| **Student achievement -- Absolute:**   * AF improves 10 percentage points on NY state tests (average of all subjects 3rd to 8th grade) * AF overall score (all grades/subjects 3rd to 8th) tops state averages on CT Smarter Balanced Assessment * XX% of students score above 1550 on SAT   XX% of seniors scoring 3 or higher on one AP course before graduation; XX% of juniors and seniors enrolled in at least X AP courses  **Student achievement – Growth**   * AF students will make gap-closing growth, defined as student value-added averages at the 80th percentile or higher of all comparison schools in NY (and CT if the data is available) for grades 3-8 * AF students grow on average 0.2 (on a 1.0-4.0 scale) across all NY 3rd to 8th grade tests.   **Additional Indicators**   * *Interim Assessments in all subjects up 5% YOY for same question analysis* * *XX% of AF teachers agree or strongly agree to the following question: “AF scopes and sequences, IAs, and units align to the rigor of the Common Core / NGSS / AP and are quality products that help me drive student achievement.”* * *XX% of AF teachers in capstone grades agree or strongly agree to the statement: “AF scopes and sequences, IAs, and units align to the rigor of the Common Core / NGSS / AP and are quality products that help me drive student achievement.”* * *XX% of AF principals and academic deans agree or strongly agree to the statement: “AF scopes and sequences, IAs, and units align to the rigor of the Common Core / NGSS / AP and are quality products that help me and my teachers drive student achievement.”* * *XX% of bright spot schools in top 3 AF schools in absolute performance and in top 85% v. city/state* * *XX% of Course Leads agree or strongly agree to the following statement: “Being a course lead is a positive experience that makes me a stronger teacher.”* * *XX% of Bright Spots have the following vetted (by regional supt and/or T & L/L-Dev/Special Services team) items posted on Many Minds by XX: XX, XX, XX* | **Curriculum Development Roadmap** | * Create 3-year timeline for winning on having a College Ready Curriculum; this would define what excellence looks like (including examples) and map each course with timeline to get to excellence by the start of the 2017-18 school year. * Develop clear curriculum design parameters, including expectations for defining key concepts and skills, non-fiction reading, word knowledge, and world knowledge across all content areas. * Develop and execute clear processes for annual, quarterly, and unit-by-unit curriculum development/review/revision. |
| **Strong Core Curriculum (S+S, IA, units)** | * Revision of S+S, IAs, end-of-course assessments, and units to align better to College Ready bar; internal review process for all grades/subjects * Stronger course lead support with clear roles and responsibilities |
| **Develop capstones and priority courses to excellence** | * Develop Proficiency profiles that articulate college readiness at capstone grades/subjects * Intensive external and internal review of capstone grade and priority course S+S, IA, EOC assessment, units to align squarely to college ready bar * Deepen and crystalize partnership with external organizations to pressure-test our learning and iteration * Leverage the course lead role to both strengthen units and build teacher leader capacity. |
| **Align Student Achievement Measures to College Readiness** | * SAMs and AF Report Card measures in all grades/subjects selected to align to a College Ready bar * In particular, find or create, college ready rigor-aligned measures for K-2 for reading and math * Begin to align IA scores to a 1-5 College Ready/AP-like score |
| **Cultivate Bright Spots to Spread Excellence** | * Align the bulk of school-site time of ach. directors and leadership directors to supporting regional supts, principals/deans, and teachers in building bright spots * Document excellent practice in text and video, curate relevant sections of Many Minds and Better Lesson, and share practices in cohort times. * *Note: The bright spot strategy also is aligned to Intellectual Engagement, Student Grappling, Vibrant Cultures, Special Education, and D & I* |

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| **Intellectual Engagement in Planning & Instruction**  *Build the habits and skills of teachers to intellectually engage with content and conceptual understandings at the course, unit, and lesson level so that they can plan and deliver instruction that ensures deep student intellectual engagement and demand student outcomes at a college ready standard.* | | |
| **Measures of Success** | **Category** | **Corresponding Actions** |
| **Student achievement -- Absolute:**   * AF improves 10 percentage points on NY state tests (average of all subjects 3rd to 8th grade) * AF overall score (all grades/subjects 3rd to 8th) tops state averages on CT Smarter Balanced Assessment * XX% of students score above 1,550 on SAT * XX% of seniors scoring 3 or higher on one AP course before graduation; XX% of juniors and seniors enrolled in at least X AP courses   **Student achievement – Growth**   * AF students will make gap-closing growth, defined as student value-added averages at the 80th percentile or higher of all comparison schools in NY (and CT if the data is available) for grades 3-8 * AF students grow on average 0.2 (on a 1.0-4.0 scale) across all NY 3rd to 8th grade tests.   **Additional Indicators**   * Interim Assessments in all subjects up at least 7% YOY for same question analysis * 90% of sessions at Days of Practice have at least 85% of AF teachers who agree or strongly agree to the following question for each session: “This session was well-planned and will help me push the quality of student work, intellectual engagement in the planning process, or deep student discussion and/or grappling in instruction.” * 90% of sessions at Academic Dean Cohort Days have at least 85% of AF teachers who agree or strongly agree to the following question for each session: “This session was well-planned and will help me push the quality of student work, intellectual engagement in the planning process, or deep student discussion and/or grappling in instruction.” * 90% of sessions at Principal Cohort Days have at least 85% of AF teachers who agree or strongly agree to the following question for each session: “This session was well-planned and will help me push the quality of student work, intellectual engagement in the planning process, or deep student discussion and/or grappling in instruction.” * XX% of AF principals and academic deans agree or strongly agree to the statement: “AF scopes and sequences, IAs, and units align to the rigor of the Common Core and are quality products that help me and my teachers drive student achievement.” * XX% of bright spot schools in top 3 AF schools in absolute performance   XX% of bright spot schools have growth performance in top 85% | **Intellectual engagement roadmap** | * Define VOE for Intellectual Engagement overall and subject-specific differences * Create 3-year timeline for winning on Intellectual Engagement * Define how Intellectual Engagement fits in broader Teacher Competencies and Leader Competencies/Power Skills |
| **Facilitate deep intellectual**  **engagement in the planning process** | * Extend BOY and during-year training time and align regional superintendent and other support to significantly improve school leader and course lead ability to improve teacher skill by driving effective: * **Looking at Student Work Protocols** that push teachers to define the bar of excellence, rate students v. this bar, and give clear, targeted feedback to this bar * **Intellectual Preparation Protocols for Daily Lessons** that define the big idea/concept, the ending question/task, the quality of work expected, and potential student misconceptions * **Unit Unpacking Protocols** that clearly define the big ideas (essential ?s/enduring understandings) and aims arc of the unit * Data Analysis Meetings (especially @ Data Day time) * Ensure a base of understanding the CCSS and NGSS shifts and the standards for that grade and how it fits in the broader K-12 sequence. * Support schools in defining and sustaining strong systems that ensure a culture of strong planning marked by deep intellectual engagement |
| **Increase student thinking, grappling to precision, engagement, and discussion in classroom instruction** | * Extend BOY and during-year training time and align regional superintendent and other support to significantly improve school leader ability to drive significant improvements in teacher skill through: * **Practice-based, drill-based PD** on:   - Key discussion moves, including response to misconception  - Key student engagement moves (part of Vibrant School Cultures) - **Content-specific moves** (1-3 per content area)   * **Real-time coaching to support thinking / discussion / engagement** that pushes students to grapple to quality and precision * **Observation, Feedback, and Practice to support thinking / discussion / engagement** that pushes students to grapple to quality and precision * Support a focus on the quality of student work through establishing clear daily grade/feedback/redo cycles * Through increased BOY training, ensure there all teachers have a baseline level of classroom management taxonomy skills so that they are ready for to lead student intellectual engagement * By the end of 2014-15 (and earlier if possible), Essentials remixed to better reflect deep intellectual engagement and grappling and enable school leaders to push teachers toward more joyfully rigorous instruction |

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| **Vibrant School Cultures**  *Create and sustain focused and joyful learning environments with a deep sense of community where students, staff, and families are deeply invested in building the academic and character skills necessary for success in college and life.* | | |
| **Measures** | **Category** | **Corresponding Actions** |
| **School Culture**   * School Culture Rubric: XX% of schools score XX or higher on School Culture Rubric in December-February * Parent Survey Satisfaction Surveys: XX * Student Satisfaction Surveys: XX   **Attrition and Suspension**  - Choice attrition  < 5%  - OSS < 10% of students in NYC and CT; ISS + OSS < 20% of students in CT | **Overall** | * Define vision of excellence for Vibrant School Cultures, including how we define quality character/leadership development * Create 3-year timeline for winning on Vibrant Cultures to move toward this vision * Refresh and expand suspension reduction action steps, building on 13-14 bright spots, to drive further reductions in suspensions network-wide and especially at target schools |
| **Common Picture** | * Through leader training and regional superintendent support, ensure that schools create or edit airtight manuals that outline all routines, expectations and core behavior systems * Through leader training and RS support, ensure that these manuals translate into a powerful reality via staff internalization, practice and teaching of expectations to students during the first weeks of school. Everything outlined in the manual will be habit by Week 8. |
| **Taxonomy and Coaching** | * Train all leaders to coach and develop teachers in the core classroom management Taxonomy moves (What to Do, Strong Voice, Positive Framing, Warm Demanding, 100%) * Ensure baseline teacher proficiency in these skills by Day 1 of school and a strong plan for ongoing teacher development during the first weeks of school. |
| **Student Engagement** | * Define and taxonomize core engagement moves that can be used at the classroom level to increase investment; train teachers and leaders in these moves through cohort times Note: This is also part of the Intellectual Engagement priority * Support all schools in pushing everyone-can-do actions (teachers smiling, culture of posi-notes and emails, regular shout outs) to increase the zest and joy * Focus efforts on Bright Spot Strategy-aligned work with 1-2 schools |
| **Ritual & Tradition** | * Support all schools in planning clear, proactive rituals that reinforce joy and community * Focus efforts on Bright Spot Strategy-aligned work with 1-2 schools |
| **Family Engagement** | * Ensure that all schools staff have received core training sequence in parent communication (e.g. effective calls) * Support schools so that every teacher makes five parent phone calls a week (at least three of which are positive) * Ensure that all schools have a baseline of strong family engagement strategies: * Solid Core: New parent orientation, BTS night, report card/PR night, twice/year parent survey, signage * Strong Communication: Family Chats, parent newsletter, PLC w/ principal, family recognitions * Regular Parent touch points: One big event/month planned and executed well (including at least two events that support parents in supporting academics) * Focus efforts on Bright Spot Strategy-aligned work with 2-4 schools |
| **Character & Leadership** | * Focus efforts on Bright Spot Strategy-aligned work with 1-2 schools * Create 3-year plan for pushing character/leadership skills to excellence at AF schools, and prepare to execute year 1 of that plan in 2014-15; this work would include defining character/leadership skills |

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| **Diversity & Inclusiveness**  *Embed diversity and inclusiveness into the fabric of Achievement First, primarily through increasing our individual and collective self-awareness of our blind spots; refining and documenting our core practices and policies, ensuring all school and network staff participate in high-quality initial and ongoing PD, and strengthening our recruitment and management strategies. Important aspects of the diversity and inclusiveness work – student and family engagement – are already embedded within the Vibrant School Cultures org priority.* | | |
| **Measures of Success** | **Category** | **Corresponding Actions** |
| 85% of teachers and school leaders agree or strongly agree to the following statements:   * “The sessions significantly increased my self-awareness and built skills needed to be effective in my work.” * “The culture on at their school has been meaningfully shifted to be more diversity-minded and inclusive.” * “My school is becoming a more diversity-minded organization.”   Indirect metrics   * 90% feel completely or very respected by their teacher (student survey) * 90% of parents feel their teacher is consistently positive and professional in their interactions with him or her and 90% of parents feel that their teacher cares about their child (parent survey) | **Skill & Awareness Building** | **School Staff**   * Ensure all school staff have 4-6 hours of family engagement PD (as part of vibrant school culture org priority) and 2-4 hours of explicit D&I training/year per school; these trainings will focus heavily on family relationships, investment and/or student identity * Ensure all new staff have baseline D&I skill building & awareness * Continue & improve on authentic formal & informal conversations about race, class, diversity & inclusiveness with dean and principal cohorts, PIRs, LFs * Build Many Minds Interactive D&I portal to share & promote resources across the network; offer optional regional D&I book clubs   **Network Support**   * Continue D&I series for new Network Support staff (Oct & March) * All NS team leaders will ensure ongoing conversations at the team-level that build upon ideas and concepts discussed in the initial NS training |
| * 10% YOY incr. in applications and in finalist candidates who identify as Black, Latino, multiracial and/or 1st Gen for school positions * For all NS openings, hiring managers create robust plans for diversity outreach and post jobs with at least 5 organizations that explicitly engage people of color and/or first generation people) * 90% retention of B/L/M/FG staff (5% >than our goal for all staff) * ≤ 5% gap on defined key OH Qs at both network and school * 85% agree/strongly agree: “AF provides a diverse and inclusive environment” and “AF provides a welcoming environment” * ≥40% leaders of color or first gen in pipeline programs (LFs, PIRs) | **Recruitment, Retention &**  **Talent Practices** | * Maintain, expand, refine, and document current D&I talent practices so that they are baked into AF: mentoring, community groups, Dean/DSO dinners * Expand and enhance D&I recruitment outreach and tactics * Continue to analyze all key data sets by disaggregating the data by race and first-gen status (retention, org health, etc) * Expand First Generation Initiative (FGI) to 5 more school sites * Twice/year D&I-focused conversations at Team Super, LT, Cabinet & Principals * Support Leadership Dev efforts to clarify & support school leadership roles (Leadership Competencies, Visions of Excellence) creating clearer pathways to leadership |
| * 100% teams identify D&I commitments in First Class Plans * 90% teams meet all or most of D&I commitments * Indirect: Choice student attrition < 5% * Indirect: - OSS < 10% of students in NYC and CT; ISS + OSS < 20% in CT | **Bringing a D&I lens to our work** | * Support Network Support team leaders to work proactively to identify ways in which D&I will influence their core work; check in with team leaders 3X/year on their D & I commitments; share data and best practices across team leaders * Articulate & Communicate D&I lens in concrete terms (most likely as set of Essential Questions with clear guidance on when & how to use the Questions); pilot use of Essential Questions in one area (e.g., student engagement, family investment) * Continue to analyze& report out on key data sets by disaggregating the data by race and first-gen status (student achievement, suspension, etc.) * D&I lens used when approaching major curriculum & PD shifts over coming years * Research the best practice ways of addressing unconscious bias, supporting positive student identity development, and cultivating tolerance and appreciation of difference * Quarterly step backs on key leadership teams to identify and reflect upon our blind spots and how these blind spots are affecting our decisions as an organization. |

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| **Excellence for All Scholars**  *Build and sustain systems of supports to deliver on excellence for all scholars.* | | |
| **Measures of Success** | **Category** | **Corresponding Actions** |
| **100% of schools are in baseline special education compliance.**  **Equity Measures**:  <X% differential between special populations and general population for:   * all student achievement measures (growth and proficiency) and * all culture measures (parent & student survey, suspension, and attrition)   Special populations include:   * Current and previous students with disabilities (IEPs and 504 plans) * Students who performed in the bottom quartile in first x years at AF * Current and previous English Language Learners * Students who previously struggled to manage behavior (i.e. had >x suspensions the previous months/year)   **Maximizing Co-Teaching (Program Efficacy):**  - Co-taught classrooms in X% grade/subjects.  - Student achievement growth of all students in co-taught classes exceeds growth of students in non-co-taught classes in X% of 3-8 reading, math, and writing classes. | **Equity Data** | * Ensure data systems accurately capture and report meaningful special education data, specifically referral, program, disability, declassification/classification, and population change rates, and equity measures * Define long-term system for tracking equity measures, specifically how to measure performance of special populations (discrete and longitudinal) * Develop the Reading Achievement Tracker to be able to capture comprehensive reading data |
| **Authentic Special Education Compliance** | * Define baseline compliance and create a system and measurement tool to assess it * Support schools in defining and sustaining strong systems that ensure baseline compliance * Create a 3 year timeline for winning on authentic compliance |
| **Effective Co-teaching: Expanding the Range of Students We Serve Well** | * Train all leaders to build systems, structures, and teacher skills to maximize co-teaching * Develop a middle school writing co-teaching bright spot to further develop professional development, and to learn how to integrate co-teaching academic content guidance |
| **Systematic Behavior Supports** | **Note**: Winning on vibrant school cultures, college ready curriculum, and intellectual engagement in planning and instruction are deeply connected to winning on intensifying behavioral support and ensuring students read fluently. These cannot be accomplished in isolation or in sequence; the work is iterative and interconnected.   * Develop a guide and trainings for a pyramid of intensifying supports to identify and support students that struggle behaviorally * Train leaders to support scholars that struggle to manage their behavior (e.g. creating a behavior plan, leading a Child Study Team) * Develop two Child Study Team bright spots * Define components fluent reading and develop comprehensive reading assessment strategy to effectively and efficiently assess students’ reading fluency * Train all teachers and leaders to integrate Tier 1 fluency taxonomy skills * Train reading intervention teachers to deliver decoding and fluency interventions with a high degree of fidelity to the program * Train and ensure all coaches of reading intervention teachers to observe and give feedback on the interventions |
| **Ensuring all Students Read Fluently RTI Reading** |

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| **Scaling with Excellence**  *Prepare AF to continue to grow the network with increasing excellence, including strengthening internal communication and overall organizational culture, building core IT and data systems for scale, decreasing volume and complexity, deepening our advocacy and community outreach, and investing in the development of a new “greenfield” school design.* | | |
| **Measures** | **Category** | **Corresponding Actions** |
| - By NS survey in spring 2015, achieve 65+% score on “We have good coordination and communication across teams and/or geographies”  - 65% of NS staffers respond + to “How connected do you feel to the larger Achievement First network?”  - 80% of network support teams earn a 3.0+ on the quarterly knowledge deep dive | **Strengthen Internal Communication & Org Culture** | * Create a more robust internal communications plan, including more “thick” channels of communications with genuinely two-way dialogue, such as town halls and live video events, with embedded, ongoing reinforcement of our mission and values * Develop clear structures that facilitate partnership and focused dialogue across teams (e.g. annual curriculum revision input) * Continue to clarity and tighten decisionmaking / OAPICS across school-facing teams * Document with detail a critical, cross-functional start-up pathway for a new school * Use big steps work as a case study/test case of a bright spot of teams working together – seek at least two opportunities to apply lessons/tactics learned elsewhere * Improve usability/user interface of Better Lesson to improve information teachers have access to |
| - Grade of each business information systems will be a 3.0 (B) or better on the annual grade by school leadership teams  - All new systems on systems roadmap are launched on time and on budget | **Data & IT Systems for Scale** | * Roll out critical new/improved systems and establish and train business owners on appropriate teams. The following systems will be built (with upgrades noted in the data roadmap on Many Minds): Adaptive Planning, next version of Athena, contact management system, improve candidate tracking, and sped system for RI (Note: final systems for 14-15 still need to go through systems governance process) * Expand and support significantly enhanced videoconferencing and other cross-school communication vehicles |
| - 65% of school staff respond “very easy” or “easy” to NS survey question: “How easy is it for you to get a question or an issue resolved when you reach out to Network Support?”  - Execute at least three, high-impact steps to reduce volume and/or complexity | **Volume & Complexity / NS-School Relationship** | * Complete learning agenda from larger organizations about lessons for scale * Aggressively push teams to align their team calendars to the School Leader and Ops Calendars * Refresh and then reinforce norms about reaching out to schools and how to respond to school requests * Clarify the points of contact between NS and schools and best way for RSs and RDOs to route questions they receive * Establish Network “311” emails and phone numbers – and actively monitor usage |
| TBD | **Advocacy / Community Outreach** | * Set key advocacy expectations for all schools and parents * Ensure ability to communicate to one, groups, or all schools via text, voice mail, email, homework folders, and regular mail * Reinforce advocacy expectations and update information regularly through all staff and all parent communication. |
| - Develop a new school design model that 85% of AF Direction Team feels is very likely to result in “breakthrough” performance in at least 2 of 4 design priorities (ELA/Literacy, Character/Habits of Success, Human Motivation, Excellence in an Area of Passion)  - At least 75% of our pilots / prototype tests at existing AF schools in 2014-2015 are successful in terms of achieving clear goals outlined at the beginning of the pilots  - Open two greenfield schools (one elementary and one middle) in fall 2015 | **Greenfield R&D** | **Phase 1: New School Design in partnership with IDEO** (ends by September 1)   * Complete strong IDEO blueprint design, which includes all elements outlined in the “what will success look like” document * Most important research findings and design elements are captured on Many Minds page in a way that is easily shared both internally and externally. * Define greenfield implications for AF consistent and core practices   **Phase 2/Phase 3: Pilots and Program Build Out** (ends by June 2015)   * Pilot / prototype key elements of greenfield design at 3-4 interested, existing AF schools; build out prototypes and any other necessary, new elements of school design into the concrete tools, systems, and trainings * By December 2014 (and sooner, if possible), define any start-up requirements that are unique to greenfield (e.g. special facility configurations, technology infrastructure, hiring profiles, etc). * Clarify and codify AF learnings around innovation and how to support innovation beyond/outside of greenfield   **Phase 4: School Start Up**   * Perform all necessary school start-up steps (e.g., facilities, procurement, staffing, enrollment, technology) * Implement ongoing design/iteration plan to evolve the model as new learning arises; develop plan for adapting school design for new grades as school matures to full enrollment |