



Theory of Action: Overview

MANAGED INSTRUCTION WITH PERFORMANCE EMPOWERMENT

MANAGED FOUNDATION

What are the non-negotiables for each school related to instruction, budgeting, talent management, and operations? What body or policy, law, process, or best practice governs them?

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

What are the metrics, domains, and performance bands the district will use to evaluate and categorize school quality? How will school actions for empowerment and support be differentiated by performance band?

FLEXIBILITY & EMPOWERMENT

What are the specific autonomies schools can earn? How do they qualify for those autonomies? What training or support do they receive to ensure they use them effectively?

STUDENT-BASED BUDGETING

What is the most fair and effective way to allocate funds to schools based on the needs of the students they serve?

CENTRAL OFFICE INFRASTRUCTURE

How should central office be organized to provide schools with the differentiated support and predictable experience they need to achieve success for their students?



In order to ensure that all of our students receive an excellent education, we must bring our Theory of Action to life. We must develop and implement a systematic and consistent approach to providing schools with clear expectations, differentiated support, and autonomy.

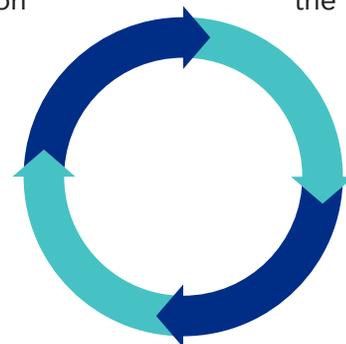
Annual Implementation Cycle for Theory of Action

PHASE 1

Convene a task force to oversee the Theory of Action implementation

PHASE 2

Engage stakeholders to identify successes and challenges of the prior year



PHASE 4

Publish the Theory of Action Guidebook, the district's annual implementation plan

PHASE 3

Review and refine the implementation plan

Theory of Action: Implementation



In Spring 2019, SAISD's Board of Trustees adopted a new Theory of Action: Managed Instruction with Performance Empowerment, AE (LOCAL). It is a framework for delivering high-quality instruction that empowers educators to make decisions related to their vision, strategies, and priorities and enables the district to better support schools and establish performance expectations. The Theory of Action includes five components: managed foundation, performance management, flexibility and empowerment, student-based budgeting, and central office infrastructure.

Managed Instruction with Performance Empowerment

YOUR ROLE

District departments will engage in a series of workshops to bring the Theory of Action to life. Through this effort, the district will develop and implement a systematic and consistent approach to providing schools with direction and autonomy in order to support schools and accelerate student achievement.

Codify your vision, mission, and overarching goals.



Identify the rationale for the services you provide.



Review your organizational structure and identify the individuals accountable for each service.



Identify your key services.



Identify the service areas where schools have autonomy or should be able to earn it.



Vision

Our primary purpose of improving lives through a quality education is driven by an unrelenting determination to have all students graduate and prepare them for success in higher education. Our ideology is reflected in our fundamental beliefs, commitments, and core values that guide us in our daily practices.

Mission

Our mission is to transform the District into a national model urban school district where every child graduates and is educated so that he or she is prepared to be a contributing member of the community.

Core Beliefs, Values, and Commitments

The core beliefs of the District are:

- Every student can learn and achieve at high levels.
- We are responsible for the education and safety of every student.
- We are responsible for the efficient and effective operations of the school system.
- Everyone should be treated with respect.
- People support what they help create.

The core values of the District are:

- Student Centered
- High Expectations
- Commitment
- Passion
- Integrity
- Respect
- Teamwork

The Board is committed to:

- Making all decisions based on attaining student achievement at or above grade level.
- Ensuring that all decisions, actions, and resource allocations are made in the best interest of the students.
- Ensuring a safe learning and working environment for all students and employees.
- Ensuring fiscal responsibility to the taxpayers of the District.

- Ensuring a high level of professionalism, customer service, and respect for everyone.
- Leading by example.
- Maintaining the collaborative process for decision making.

**Theory of Action:
Managed Instruction
with Performance
Empowerment**

A theory of action is a coordinated framework for delivering high quality instruction. The theory of action adopted by the District builds on beliefs about how students learn, the conditions that best promote learning, and the policies, management systems, and culture that further the commitment and high performance of adults to deliver quality education services to all District students.

To meet the District's goals of student growth and achievement under its strategic plan, the Board believes it is essential that we empower educators at all levels to act and lead under a theory of action in which the school is the key unit of change, encouraging innovation, autonomy, and differentiation at each school.

School Empowerment: School leaders, working collaboratively with their leadership teams, teachers, parents, and communities, shall have ownership of all that happens within their buildings – a sense of efficacy and urgency, and a conviction that they are empowered to set the vision, strategies, and priorities for their school.

Role of the District: The District shall play a leading role in establishing and setting performance expectations, driving research and development, scaling innovation and best practices, coaching and support of school leaders, and ensuring that in all respects our actions and practices promote greater equity among our students.

The Board believes that an overarching theory of action shall guide the District on its path of dramatically improving student achievement outcomes for all students and realizing the mission of becoming a national model urban school district. Our theory of action is managed instruction with performance empowerment.

The theory of action shall be centrally focused on student achievement through a whole child approach. The District is using managed instruction with performance empowerment because it provides:

- Students a common, research-based, best-practice foundation for success;
- Families clear, accessible information about a school's performance and best-fit school options that tap into students' interests and aspirations;

- Schools a clear, actionable, and supported core instructional framework and differentiated resources; and
- School leaders and their teams with greater levels of autonomy based on performance.

The District's theory of action shall be composed of the following core components:

1. *Managed Foundation*: Every school begins with the Managed Foundation of the core instructional framework and budgeting and operational requirements (i.e., facilities, transportation, enrollment and access, procurement, etc.) that are based on research-based, best-practices; professional training; and legal requirements.
2. *Performance Management*: Annual performance expectations and needs shall be determined for each school based on a whole child approach. The District shall develop a school performance framework with a set of regulations and procedures to drive decision-making around strategic and equitable allocation of resources, granting and reinforcing levels of school autonomy, and providing differentiated school support and interventions.
3. *Student-Based Budgeting*: The District shall allocate funding of schools to provide for a distribution of funds based more closely on the needs of the students who are being educated by the school, increasing equity, transparency, and flexibility.
4. *Flexibility and Empowerment*: Based on a school's performance level and needs, schools earn autonomies from the managed foundation, allowing schools to innovate and implement alternative models and strategies to accelerate student achievement. In the event earned autonomies and local policy and regulations are in conflict, approved autonomies from the managed foundation tied to performance expectations shall prevail so long as the approved autonomies do not conflict with local, state, or federal law. If such a conflict exists, the local, state, or federal law shall prevail.
5. *Central Office Infrastructure to Support a System of Great Schools*: The District shall organize itself to increase the focus of its central office to create the conditions and culture for school innovation and differentiated school support. It should work to put the decisions about how to educate students as close as possible to those who work with them – school leaders in collaboration with their school community – especially

around key decisions (consistent with the District's needs and mission), including, but not limited to:

- Exercising authority over educational programming, practices, systems, and curriculum;
- Leading engagement with parents and the broader school community;
- Establishing critical priorities based on their root cause analysis of the challenges facing the school, with a focus on equity and closing gaps within the school;
- Exercising discretion over budgets;
- Establishing the culture and behavioral norms and expectations for adults and students in the school, with a focus on inclusion, respect, and equity and consistent with District-wide core beliefs, values, and commitments;
- Selecting and evaluating the dedicated administrative and teaching team that supports schools in its work;
- Defining the use of time in the school; and
- Designing and implementing customized professional development to provide for the school leadership and its faculty and staff.