



## Activity: Connecting the *Framework for Great Schools* to Case Studies of NYC Schools (80 minutes)



A supporting resource for [A Vision for School Improvement: Applying the Framework for Great Schools](#)  
Step 1: As a community, develop a shared understanding of the *Framework for Great Schools*.

### OVERVIEW

The [Framework for Great Schools](#) (the *Framework*) highlights six essential elements of improving schools: effective school leadership, rigorous instruction, a supportive environment, collaborative teachers, strong family-community ties, and—necessary for growth in any of the elements—trust. The case study collection on the [Vision for School Improvement](#) website shares examples of how schools currently integrate these elements into their communities. Through the lens of the [Framework](#), this activity leads participants through an exploration of the practices of a current NYC school. By analyzing and discussing a school's written case study and supporting artifacts (e.g., videoed interviews, student work samples, planning templates), participants can learn from the practices of other schools in order to inform and enrich their own work in supporting students.

### OBJECTIVE

Participants will analyze a case study of a current NYC school's practices through the lens of the [Framework for Great Schools](#) and consider implications for putting their learning into action in their own work.

### MATERIALS

- [Framework for Great Schools](#)
- Case study collection (available on the [Vision for School Improvement](#) website, with separate case studies available at the elementary, middle, and high school levels)
- Chart paper

### CONNECTED ACTIVITIES

While this activity can be conducted on its own, its content also connects with the following activities available on the [Vision for School Improvement](#) website:

- [Exploring "A Vision for School Improvement: Applying the Framework for Great Schools"](#)
- [Exploring "Learning to Improve: The Research behind the Vision for School Improvement"](#)
- [Looking at Current Practice toward a Shared Understanding of the Framework for Great Schools with Your Community](#)

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What implications does the *Framework for Great Schools* have for our work?
- What can we learn from another school's practices, connected to the *Framework for Great Schools*, to strengthen our work?
- How can we put our learnings into action to best support students?

### FACILITATION NOTES

#### 1. Introduction and framing (2 minutes)

- Welcome participants and review the objective and guiding questions of the activity.
- Share with participants that the *Framework* calls on schools to:

- Address the six elements of school improvement.
- Consider and strengthen the interplay and connection among the six elements.
- Explain that participants will explore how another school integrates the elements of the *Framework* by:
  - Analyzing a case study and related artifacts from another school and connecting them to their own practices.
  - Considering the implications this learning has for work moving forward.

## 2. Optional: Building upon strengths with the *Framework for Great Schools* (10 minutes)

- Explain to participants that while this activity will largely focus on learning from another school's practices, it is important to begin our thinking with how the *Framework* is currently alive in our own school.
- Ask participants to consider the *Framework for Great Schools* and identify a specific practice that they, or the school community as a whole, do well, connected to one of the elements of the *Framework*.
- Ask participants to share their reflections with a partner or in small groups.

**Note:** For a full introductory activity, see the Exploring the *Framework for Great Schools* activity [here](#).

## 3. Analyzing the case study and artifacts (45 minutes)

**Note:** If video is available from the chosen case study, show the video before participants explore the written case study. Based on the number of artifacts and participants, groups may choose to jigsaw this analysis and share out in a large group. Participants may require additional time during this step to fully explore all available artifacts.

- Ask participants to independently read the written case study (collection available [here](#)). As they read, participants will choose 4–5 pieces of evidence which they believe are the strongest practices of the school and write them on sticky notes.
- After reading, ask participants to place the sticky notes on the appropriate element of the *Framework* on chart paper (*Framework* should be drawn on chart paper ahead of time).
- Ask participants to discuss the following questions:
  - What are two elements that you believe are strengths for this school? Why? What trends do you see in this school's practice?
  - How do the elements of the *Framework* work together to support the school's best practices?
  - What additional questions does it raise?

## 4. Debriefing as a whole group (20 minutes)

- Lead the group in a discussion of:
  - How do this school's practices connect to the *Framework* and impact student learning and growth?
  - What have we learned from another school's practices, connected to the *Framework*, that could be applied in our school?
  - How do this school's practices show ways we can build upon the strengths we identified in our own school during Step 2 of this activity?
  - How do we put our learnings into action to best support students?

## 5. Identifying next steps and available resources (3 minutes)

- Ask participants to identify and share one next step they will take collectively and individually to support this work in their school (in pairs, or in the whole group).
- Remind participants of the supporting resources and activities available on the [Vision for School Improvement](#) website:
  - [Exploring "A Vision for School Improvement: Applying the Framework for Great Schools"](#)
  - [Exploring "Learning to Improve: The Research behind the Vision for School Improvement"](#)
  - [Alignment across the NYCDOE: Linking Each Element of the Framework for Great Schools to NYCDOE Measures and Resources](#)

- [Looking at Current Practice toward a Shared Understanding of the \*Framework for Great Schools\* with Your Community](#)

## Graphic Organizer:

### Connecting the *Framework for Great Schools* to Case Studies of NYC Schools

#### Session Objective

Participants will analyze a case study of a current NYC school's practices through the lens of the [\*Framework for Great Schools\*](#) and consider implications for putting their learning into action in their own work with students.

#### Guiding Questions

- What implications does the *Framework for Great Schools* have for our work?
- What can we learn from another school's practices, connected to the *Framework for Great Schools*, to strengthen our work?
- How can we put our learnings into action to best support students?

#### Building Upon Strengths with the *Framework for Great Schools*

Reflecting on your role in your school community, consider how your work and experiences connect with the *Framework for Great Schools*. What is an action or process that you (or your entire school community as a whole) do well that is linked to one of the elements of the *Framework*? Be as specific as possible.

## Analyzing the Case Study and Artifacts

As you read, note any evidence of practices that you see connected to each of the *Framework* elements. After reading, identify 4–5 pieces of evidence which you believe are the strongest practices of the school and write them on sticky notes.

**Effective School Leadership:**

**Rigorous Instruction:**

**Supportive Environment:**

**Collaborative Teachers:**

**Strong Family-Community Ties:**

**Trust:**

What are two elements that you believe are strengths for this school? Why? What trends do you see in this school's practice?

How do the elements of the *Framework* work together to support the best practices at the school?

What additional questions does it raise?

## Whole-Group Debrief

1. How do this school's practices connect to the *Framework* and impact student learning and growth?
2. What have we learned from another school's practices, connected to the *Framework*, that could be applied in our school?
3. How do this school's practices show ways we can build upon the strengths we identified in our own school during Step 2 of this activity?
4. How do we put our learnings into action to best support students?

## Next Steps

What is one specific next step you will take to support this work in your school?