

Crafting Quality Recommendations

The goal of recommendations is to provide principals with **CONCRETE** suggestions on things that they can do immediately to improve their school. To achieve this, please adhere to the following guidance:

1. **Recommendations must be school specific.** The recommendations should not apply to multiple schools across the state.
2. **Recommendations must be in concrete terms.** Avoid education-speak. When things are left open for interpretation (and mis-interpretation), the recommendation is bound to be unsuccessful.
3. **For each recommendation, it should be apparent WHO the recommendation is for.** Most often the recommendation is for the principal. Know exactly **who** the recommendation is for when you write it.
4. **The recommendation need to be NEXT STEP recommendations.** They should address what you see as the best way for the school to advance For a school currently at Stage C in the process toward mastery, your recommendation needs to take this into account. If the mastery stage is "Stage R," your recommendation should not be all of the activities needed for "Stage R," but rather what is needed to go from from C to D to E.
5. **Recommendations should be achievable.** For them to be achievable, they should be based on the skill level of the staff and the time and money available to the staff.
 - Broad, ambitious recommendations are going to be hard to achieve.
 - Short recommendations that involve more advanced skills, like analyzing data or differentiating instruction, are going to be hard to achieve.
6. **It should be clear to the principal HOW the team expects each of the recommendations to happen.** After you write your recommendation, see if there is any point where one might ask "**How will that happen?**" If there is an answer to that question, there may be a need to drill down further. Similarly, parameters regarding **WHEN** things will happen will be particularly useful. Instead of saying "Meet with APs to review assessment data" say how often this should occur: "Meet weekly with APs to review assessment data."
7. **DO NOT USE terms such as: "Ensure systems" or "Establish systems" without saying how that will be done.** For example: "Ensure that PBIS is implemented with fidelity **by:**"
8. **DO NOT USE "Provide PD" or "Provide training"** unless you are thoroughly convinced that
 - 1) there has never been training on this topic before AND
 - 2) the reason it is not occurring is solely because the staff has never had training on this topic before AND
 - 3) You are confident that if the staff had received training on this before they would definitely be doing what you want.
9. **DO NOT USE:** "stakeholders" (tell who you mean), "rigorous" (tell what you mean)
10. On completion of your recommendations, read through them as if you are the principal of the school. Ask yourself: 1) Is it **clear** what I need to do as principal? 2) Is it **reasonable** what I need to? Telling principals to model numerous lessons, attend an excessive amount of meetings, or do an

excessive amount of preparation for meetings may be seen as unreasonable. If the principal thinks the recommendation is very unreasonable, chances are it will never be addressed.

11. A good recommendation could typically be easily monitored by an outsider. If it can be easily monitored, then it is getting at the level of concreteness needed. This is another reason why "establish systems" or "meet with parents" is not concrete enough. Be specific.