

School Transformation and Empowerment Project



Cantra

A Handbook for School Improvement - Part I

SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION AND EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

A Handbook for School Improvement

-Part 1

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Foreword

“Schools toh bohot hain sir - lekin acchi kaunsi?”¹

Meet Nitin Dada - a middle aged, middle-class man living in the suburbs of Mumbai, India. The question he is posing is the question of *quality* of education. This is a big shift from what the concern was a few decades back - *access* to education. Quality of education is becoming a focus of both ‘producers’ and ‘consumers’ of education alike. This is reflected in the increased amount of investment in ideas of School Improvement. There are a number of organizations working in this field, and many of them take the effort to put their actions down into ideas that can be shared and borrowed by others. Having said that, there is still a lack of *contextualized* literature and practical guides in the Indian context. Mantra4Change hopes to contribute to the filling of that gap through this handbook. We believe in a culture of sharing - both our successes and challenges - so that other organizations willing to do similar work in the field wouldn’t have to ‘reinvent the wheel’. The problem we face today has many contours and the need is of local change leaders who understand problems in their context and put forth contextual solutions. Thus, what we need is not the scaling up of organizations like Mantra and many others. What we need is for the *idea* of whole school transformation to *spread out*. That is the purpose of this handbook.

About Mantra4Change

Mantra4Change is an NGO based in Karnataka, India; working in the space of Systemic Transformation in Education. This ranges from Whole School Transformation through our program, ‘STEP’ (which this is the focus of this handbook), to Cluster Transformation (watch out for a handbook on this!). Read more about us at <http://www.mantra4change.com/>

¹ Schools are many in number, sir - but which one is good?



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

Acknowledgements

“Some stories move you more than others, they touch a place in your heart that leaves you forever changed.” — Suzanne D. Williams

We have been fortunate to have been touched by many stories, and to have had support in bringing many stories to life. The making of this handbook is one such story. We sincerely extend our gratitude to everyone who has been a part of the Mantra family in one way or another and helped in the making of this document.

First and foremost, our supporters, Mr. and Mrs. Shibulal for their unflinching support in the organization and in our endeavours in creating such open-source documents. Mr. Sanjay Purohit, our mentor, without whose insightful questions and encouragement, this journey would not have been possible.

Prof. Shashi Nair, for his unwavering energy in taking us through the journey of designing our program and building our capacity. Prof. Sujatha Rao, for introducing us to various theories and frameworks, each of which has played a part in shaping our program. Our partners at Azim Premji University - Prof. Saswati Paik and Vikas Maniar, for always being there and providing valuable feedback on our work.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to our partner schools. We are privileged to have been a part of their journey.

Last but not the least - our team at Mantra for providing precious insights that someone sitting at a desk would never get. This document is first and foremost dedicated to you, to continue doing the wonderful job of making schools happier spaces not just for students, but teachers and leaders too.

Thank you all!



“The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.”

Rob Siltanen

Executive Summary

This handbook (Part I) is focused on explaining one of our approaches to school improvement, and the particulars of a particular improvement journey of a school: that from *poor* to *fair*.

Section 1 of the handbook gives a brief overview of what this handbook is, and who it will be useful for.

Section 2 attempts to answer the question - *What is the problem and what do we aim to do about it?* This involves detailing out our problem statement, and the causes of which form the focus of our program.

Section 3 attempts to answer the question - *How will we make change happen?* This is done by detailing out our model of school transformation, our school evaluation framework, our theory of change, and finally, a sample of how and what kind of activities are designed.

Section 4 is the last section of the book and is driven by the question - *How will we keep on track?* Essentially, this section explores how a monitoring and evaluation framework can be developed from our theory of action.



“School improvement is best measured with reference to both student outcomes and school practices or processes”

(NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2014)

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Section 1 - Introduction

In this handbook, we have taken the Program Theory lens. A program theory is an *explicit theory or model of how an intervention, such as a project, a program, a strategy, an initiative, or a policy, contributes to a chain of intermediate results and finally to the intended or observed outcomes* (Funnel and Rogers, 2011). There are three primary questions that Program Theory asks:

- A. What is the problem and what do we aim to do about it?
- B. How will we make change happen?
- C. How will we stay on track?

These are the questions that we have tried to address through this document in Sections 2, 3, and 4, respectively. Although at Mantra4Change, we have tried to answer these questions for our own situation, this handbook can be used by others interested in understanding our approach, and in contextualizing it for their own geography and needs. The design can be taken as is, or modified. These are practices that have worked best for us, and we would like to share them - and perhaps spark an idea that you could implement in your context.

We strongly believe in the power of collaborative efforts towards building innovative solutions. If you find the handbook helpful in building your own contextual solutions, we would be happy to hear from you. If you find it inadequate, we would be happier to receive your feedback in improving this further.

Section 2 - What is the problem and what do we aim to do about it?

First step in evolving a program design is figuring out *why* we are evolving a program. What is the need of it? What is the problem that we are trying to address? In order to answer these questions, we engaged in a *Situation Analysis*. This involves identifying the 'main problem' in the situation we are in, the causes that lead to this problem and its consequences.

At Mantra4change, the problem we are trying to address is *lack of delivery of quality education*.

Few causes of the problem which we aim to address are:

- Ineffective school environment
- Ineffective school leadership practices
- Ineffective teaching-learning practices
- Unsupportive home and community environment

To best address these causes, one of the approaches we take is Whole School Transformation. This involves working with different stakeholders for the holistic improvement of the school. The next section details out our School Transformation and Empowerment Project (STEP) at Mantra4Change.

Section 3 - How will we make change happen?

Section 3.1. School Transformation and Empowerment Project

As mentioned above, one of the approaches we take to address the problem of lack of delivery of quality education is whole school transformation - through our School Transformation and Empowerment Project (STEP). Below is a graphical representation of the key components of the project.

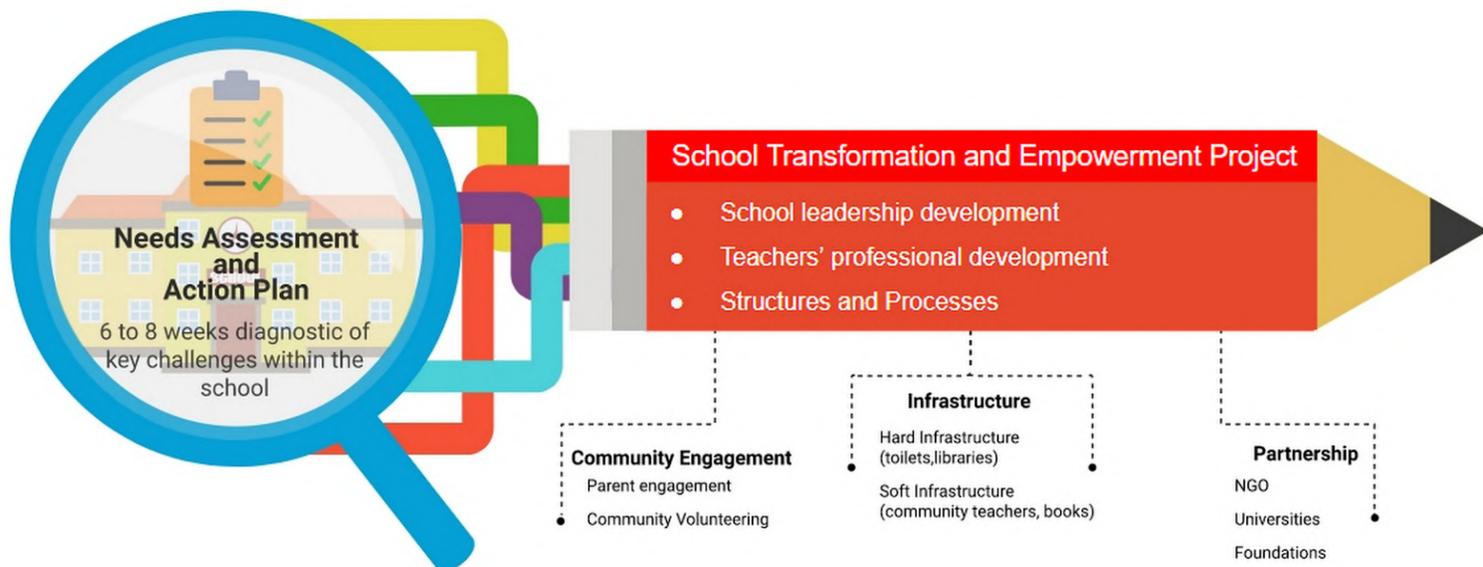


Image 3.1. School Transformation and Empowerment Project

STEP is a holistic, multi-staged approach to **enable under-resourced schools deliver Quality Education**. We recognize that various components of the school improvement process are interrelated and influence each other. Changes in one part of the system will cause changes in other parts as well - it thus becomes important to have a *systemic approach* to school improvement. Although STEP mainly focuses on aspects of school leadership, teaching-learning, and systems - we also recognize the need for certain 'enablers' - community engagement,

infrastructure, and partnerships with organizations. Recognition of all these elements ensures holistic improvement of the school.

Further, STEP is based on the premise that every school is unique. Hence, its improvement journey will be unique as well. In accordance, we begin our engagement in schools with a Needs Assessment Phase that helps us understand the school better, and design contextualized, personalized interventions. There are four stages to the intervention: **Connect, Engage, Integrate,** and **Sustain**. Each of these are detailed out below.

Stage I: Connect- This stage begins with a Needs Assessment, which is a detailed baseline assessment of a possible partner school. The baseline study usually takes 4-6 weeks of time. During this period, we try to understand the current structures & processes of schools, the prevalent culture, nature of leadership, teaching-learning practices in classroom and the extent of parent participation. To assess the current learning levels of students, we also conduct a test in English and Mathematics. A detailed report is shared with the school management / leader at the end of this phase to identify and prioritize potential areas of improvement. Identification of areas is guided by the School Assessment Framework - based on which the different tools and components of the needs assessment were designed. The School Assessment Framework is detailed out in later in this section.

Stage II: Engage - Or the *Ideation phase* - is when Mantra co-creates the improvement journey with the school leaders - their inputs are sought, and suggestions are given for how the partnership will unfold.

Stage III: Integrate - Or the *Implementation* phase is a set of activities. These often consist of conversations and capacity building sessions with school leaders; observations, debriefs, co-planning, and capacity building sessions for teachers, and many more. The interventions database is further explained in the section, **STEP: Theory of Action**. Action on ground is also

continuously monitored so as to ensure that we are on the right track. This is done through our **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**, which is the last section in this document.

Stage IV: Sustain - Or the exit phase: Changes sustain when capacity of the stakeholders in the existing system is built. For this, we ensure that a gradual release of responsibility is planned during the course of the intervention itself. Throughout the two years of project implementation, capacity would be built in the stakeholders to sustain changes on their own and to ask for support when required. Key actors and process owners within the community (school and parents) are identified who would take the changes forward after the exit of Mantra. This might include reinforcing impactful actions of teachers, empowering the second tier of leadership or even infusing in the school leader an idea of transformational change in the learning outcomes of students.

Section 3.2. STEP School Assessment Framework

Background of the framework

As mentioned above, when we start working with schools for our School Transformation and Empowerment Project (STEP), our first step is to *understand the needs of the school*. After this, we start building a school improvement journey for the school. We realized that we need to have an idea or a *vision* for where we want our schools to be after our project, and how we want them to keep reaching greater heights. Thus descriptions began to form for an ideal, or ‘outstanding’ low fee private school, as well as the stages that a ‘poor’ school would go through, in order to reach ‘outstanding’.

In order to make our framework strong, it was important to draw on rich bodies of knowledge around school improvement and school evaluation, as well as integrate those bodies of knowledge into strong practitioner experiences. As a result, this framework draws on some research-driven frameworks like National School Improvement Tool by the government of New South Wales, Australia; The four categories of core leadership practices by Leithwood et al; the Shaala Siddhi School Standards and Evaluation Framework by National University of Educational Planning and Administration, Delhi.

Overview

The STEP school assessment framework (Annexure 1) is primarily designed for assessing low-fee private schools, but is not exclusive to such schools. There are 6 primary domains in the framework:

1. Effective School Leadership Practices
2. Effective Pedagogical Practices
3. Learners’ Progress, Attainment, and Development
4. A Culture that Promotes Learning
5. Productive Community Participation

6. Enabling Resources of the School

Each of these domains are further broken down into subdomains - these subdomains are made as lean as possible in order to make the process of marking a school on this rubric easier. However, as a result - these strands may also overlap across domains. Further, each of the strands progress through four stages: Poor, Fair, Good, and Outstanding. A trend that has been noticed in the school improvement journey from Poor to Outstanding is that the school moves from being leader(s) driven to being collectively driven.

In addition to marking the school on each strand along poor-fair-good-outstanding, the school itself can be broadly placed along one of these stages. Further, we recognize that it is difficult to compartmentalize unique schools, and so the descriptions of some strands might not apply exactly for specific schools, but the idea is to go with our sense of the school - based on data - and mark descriptions that most closely resemble reality.

Each of the domains of the framework are briefly described below:

1. Effective School Leadership Practices

This domain, as the name suggests, is about understanding and assessing leadership practices in the school. For our context, we understand 'school leadership' as the team or group of all the *formal* leaders in the school - ranging from the principal to the academic coordinators. Based on Leithwood's framework as well as our practitioner experiences, leadership practices are categorized into five subdomains: Setting Directions, Developing People, Improving the Teaching and Learning Program, Developing the Organization, and Developing the Self.

2. Effective Pedagogical Practices

This domain is aimed at capturing the teaching and learning practices in the school. The school is marked based on what practices are being carried out by *most* teachers. One *may* find teachers who do better or worse than what the whole school is marked. The teaching practices which are assessed range from subject knowledge to lesson delivery to willingness to learn.

3. Learners' Progress, Attainment, and Development

This domain is about understanding the state of learners in the school - ranging from their curricular attainment, to their personal and social development.

4. A Culture that Promotes Learning

This domain aims at capturing the culture of the school. Research shows that drivers of school improvement are far more likely to be successful if they foster intrinsic motivation; engage educators and students; inspire teamwork; and affect all teachers and students - which are essentially attributes of a healthy school culture. Cultural change is identified as *essential* for sustainable change - this meant that it was important for us to consciously keep school culture in mind, and 'track' it. Although we recognize that school culture is not a tangible, observable aspect of the school, there are some aspects which can be described and marked on the rubric. The school culture applies to all the stakeholders of the school, and includes aspects ranging from overall commitment to improvement, to morale, to having an inclusive learning environment.

5. Productive Community Participation

Productive Community Participation is aimed at assessing two aspects:

- a) How involved the community is in their children's education
- b) And what the school does to involve the community.

The term 'community' at its minimal means the parents of the children attending the school, but is not restricted to the parents. For example, in a school moving from poor to fair, 'community' might mean just the parents; but for a school moving from good to outstanding, it becomes important to engage with the larger community as well - for example, the local community leaders, political leaders, corporates, other NGOs active in the geography, and so on.

6. Enabling Resources of the School

As the name suggests, the primary focus of this domain is assessment of the physical resources of the school. This part of the rubric draws inspiration from the Shaala Siddhi Framework. Although there could be several resources that a school has, this list is restricted to the ones that are essential for the running of the school, as well as to provide a safe environment for children.

On marking a school on this framework, we know two things:

- Which improvement journey seems to broadly apply to the school: from poor to fair, fair to good, or good to excellent.
- Key areas of the school which need attention.

Once this has been identified, we move into the *Theory of Change*, which is detailed out next.

Section 3.3. STEP - Theory of Change

So far we have identified the improvement journey of the school that we would be working with, and a broad idea of the areas that the school needs to improve in. However, the question still remains, *how will we make change happen?* The following image gives a graphical representation of the *series of changes* that need to take place.

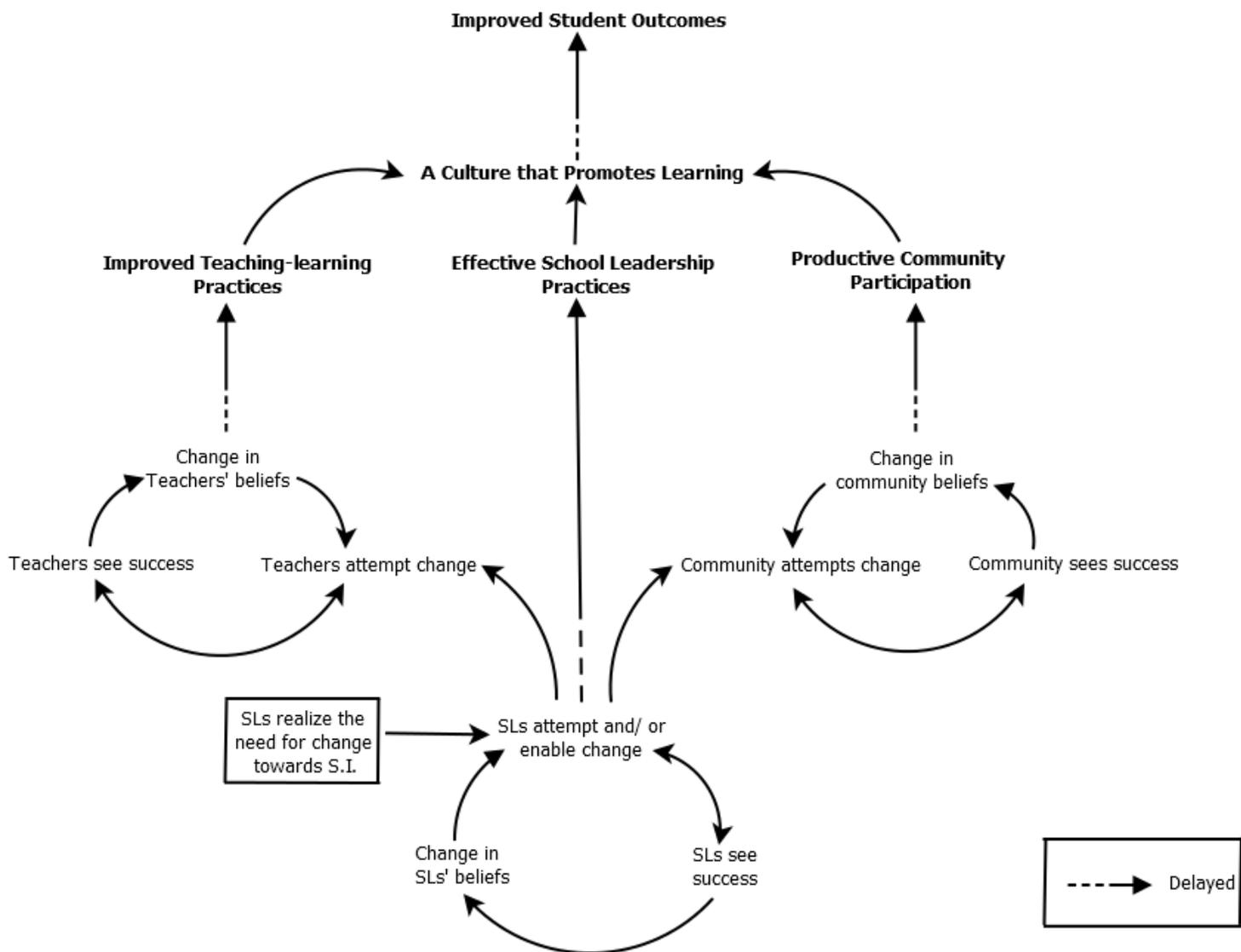


Image 3.2. STEP: Theory of Change

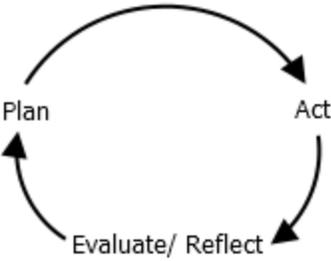
Many of the schools we work with are at Point A, which is not very great - and we want to move them to Point B, Point C, and so on - each better than the last. One way to think about school improvement is to think of getting the school from Point A to Point B. Another way of think of school improvement is enabling the school to go from point A to point B, while equipping them with the capacity to now move on their own from Point B to Point C and so on. We are defining four such 'phases' in a school improvement journey: from *Poor* to *fair* to *good* to *outstanding*. These are further detailed out in the School Assessment Framework.

When we ask ourselves what these school improvement journeys should lead to, the most common answer is student outcomes. We acknowledge that student outcomes are important, but we recognize that improvement in student outcomes *will* come about if the school is *engaged in a journey of improvement, and has built a culture of learning, and of promoting learning.*

In order to build a culture that promotes learning, *practices* of teachers, students, school leadership team, and the community need to change. Change in practices, however, take time to happen. We believe that in order for changes in practice to take place, the concerned stakeholders, say for example, teachers, will need to *attempt* a change. It may not be very successful immediately. It may not be perfect. But there is an attempt. Some attempts lead to *success*. Seeing success helps build the beliefs and confidence in teachers. Multiple iterations of this loop then lead to changes in practice.

While all the stakeholders contribute to this culture, it is the *school leadership team* that drives these changes in practices. Without the buy-in of the school leaders, any changes that teachers or the community wish to make are far less likely to be sustainable in the school. Involvement of the school leadership team is *foundational* to the school improvement journey. While the above chain of changes applies to all three improvement journeys, i.e., from poor to fair, from fair to good, and from good to outstanding; the *particular areas of improvement* will differ for each journey. Table 3.3. lists descriptions of the outcomes in Image 3.2. STEP: Theory of Change.

Table 3.3. Outcome Descriptions of STEP Theory of Change

Outcome	Description
<p>SLs realize the need for change towards school improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SLs: School Leadership team - ‘Realization’ can come through many means: self realization, realization because of data presented by external parties, realization because of teacher or community pressure, etc - ‘Towards school improvement’: could range from things like need to improve student attendance, to things like needing better strategy and vision for the school.
<p>SLs attempt and/or enable change</p> <p>Teachers attempt change</p> <p>Community attempts change</p>	<p>- Every ‘attempt’ at change looks like this cycle:</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>This involves the stakeholders planning to do something, acting on the plan, and finally reflecting on or evaluating their actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SLs ‘enable’ change by allowing certain changes to take place in the school, by helping set up required structures and procedures for the school, and so on.
<p>SLs / Teachers/ Community see success</p>	<p>In order for the stakeholders to believe in change and the improvement journey, it is important to show early success. SLs, teachers, and parents need to see the impact of the efforts they are putting in, and even see success in what others are trying.</p>

<p>Change in SLs' / Teachers'/ Community's beliefs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change in beliefs means that there is a complete shift in the stakeholders' belief about something - they have bought into the idea, and there is an intention to act on the belief. - Change in beliefs can include beliefs about particular areas like student engagement, or about school improvement in general
<p>Improved Teaching and Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Improvement' could mean betterment of something that already exists, OR even moving from teachers/students not doing anything to <i>doing something</i>. - Teaching and Learning is understood as inclusive of: teaching practices of teachers, student action and learning, as well as teachers' learning
<p>Effective School Leadership Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School leadership refers to all formal school leaders in the school - SL practices are outlined in School Evaluation Framework, and they include practices from building capacity of people, to building the school as an organization
<p>Productive Community Participation</p>	<p>Community goes beyond just the parents of the children in the school, although in the earlier phases, we may only focus on parents. This is also described in the School Evaluation Framework.</p>
<p>A Culture that Promotes Learning</p>	<p>The school culture, to put it simply, is <i>the way things are done in the school</i>. This also includes relations between and among the four primary stakeholders (teachers, students, leadership team, and community). Refer to the School Evaluation Framework for further descriptions.</p>
<p>Improved Student Outcomes</p>	<p>Improved Student Outcomes is inclusive of improvement in students' social and emotional well-being, confidence, leadership skills, <i>as well as</i> learning outcomes. Although only learning outcomes might be expected in the early phases of improvement, the other outcomes may appear later.</p>

Section 3.4. STEP: The Improvement Journey from Poor to Fair

In this handbook, we will be dealing with the first improvement journey: from a *poor* school to a *fair* school. The school improvement journey from poor to fair is probably the most difficult, and the most critical in any school improvement journey. There is a significant change of state from that of being okay with the status quo to realizing that status quo needs to change, to actually *doing* something to change the status quo. Subsequent improvement journeys are more about deepening and widening the journey that has already been set off.

For a school to move from poor to fair, there need to be some fundamental changes in the school. Upon extensive analysis of literature, we identified **twelve areas** that are critical for this journey. They are:

1. Improved Student Attendance
2. Reduced Student Misbehaviour
3. Improved Literacy and Numeracy Levels
4. Reduced Discrimination of Students
5. Improved Teaching Learning Practices
6. Improved Teacher Evaluation
7. Improved Teacher Retention and Morale
8. Improved Data-driven Decision Making
9. Widened Leadership Team
10. Increased Use of School Resources
11. Productive Community Participation
12. Improved Student Morale

These themes have been detailed out next. The chains for some themes do not start from Quarter 1, but later. This is based on our experience of which topics are easier to work on and discuss, and which topics might need some time, data, and rapport with the school leaders.

3.4.1. Improved Student Attendance

Before we begin to think about how engaged or participative children are in the class, we need to make sure that the children *are in class* in the first place. For this, the school needs to be involved in tracking of student attendance, as well as taking necessary measures to improve the attendance of children. The follow outcomes chain depicted in Image 3.4.1. is a suggested chain of what immediate and intermediate changes need to take place in order to achieve the final outcome - improved student attendance.

3.4.2. Reduced Student Misbehaviour



Research has shown that in poor schools, maximum time of the teachers and school leaders is taken up in addressing student misbehaviour. Further, if we are interested getting student *engaged* in learning, there are two prerequisites: students need to be in class (which the above theme addresses), and students should not be distracted by, or engaged in misbehaviour. This theme is about addressing student misbehaviour, and making sure that teachers are also supported by school leaders in addressing student misbehaviour. Consequently, classroom management skills of teachers need to improve in order to address this as well. Refer to Image 3.4.2. for a representation of this chain.

3.4.3. Improved Literacy and Numeracy Levels



Improvement in basic literacy and numeracy are critical before we begin to think about curricular outcomes, or higher cross-curricular skills among students. This theme, depicted

in Image 3.4.3., is primarily concerned with ensuring that student achieve basic literacy and numeracy, and through the school leaders' and teachers' change in practices. This may also include collaboration with other organizations as well. This chain starts in the 4th quarter, as some collection and analysis of student performance data is critical for belief changes on the importance of literacy and numeracy.

3.4.4. Reduced Discrimination of Students

As a first step towards differentiated teaching and learning, before active *inclusion* of children can happen, there needs to be a reduction in *discrimination* of children in the school. In the Poor to Fair journey, 'discrimination' is limited to that based on caste, class, gender, religion, background, or other social groups. Further, although all teachers may not show a shift in beliefs, the school leaders continue to drive this behaviour in their teachers. The outcomes of this theme are represented in Image 3.4.4., and start from quarter 4, as discrimination of students emerges from deep-seated beliefs which would take time to change.

3.4.5. Improved Teaching Learning Practices

At the core of every school, and at the core of every school improvement journey - is the improvement of teaching-learning practices in the school. Important components addressed were improvement in communication of teaching expectations by school leaders, as well as improvement in teaching practices through capacity building sessions. This chain,



depicted in Image 3.4.5., starts from the second quarter as it would take some time for the school leaders to get interested in, and welcoming of, effective teaching practices. Improved Teaching Learning Practices is also closely linked to improving data-driven decision making, as well as improved evaluation of teacher performance by school leaders.

3.4.6. Improved Teacher Evaluation

As mentioned above, this strand goes hand-in-hand with Improved Teaching-Learning Practices. The core of this strand is that school leaders (or certain school leaders) begin to take the role of *instructional leaders* - and this involves being more engaged in the teaching-learning practices in the school, as well as tracking teacher performance - which is the first step towards taking on the role of an *instructional coach*. An outcomes chain for this theme is represented in Image 3.4.6. The chain starts from the second quarter as:

- We would need to first build a good rapport with the school leadership team and identify which school leaders to start approaching
- We would need to get school leaders interested in how the teachers are teaching

3.4.7. Improved Teacher Retention and Morale



Schools in the Poor to Fair category tend to show high rates of teacher attrition which is often the cause of low morale of teachers. Further, low morale of teachers is often attributed to the fact that in such schools, teachers tend to be isolated and work ‘behind closed doors’. This is the crux of this strand - getting teachers to start meeting and working together - albeit for events in the beginning. Find a visual representation of the chain for

this theme in Image 3.4.7. This chain starts from the second quarter as teacher shortage, hiring of new teachers, etc are concerns and issues which we may not want to bring up as soon as we start working with the school.

3.4.8. Improved Data-driven Decision Making

Usage of data is not something which is common among school leaders - ‘some’, ‘few’, ‘many’ are often used words, which are rarely accompanied by real data. This strand, depicted in Image 3.4.8., is aimed at building capacity among school leaders to collect, analyze, and use data to inform their decision making in the school. Accordingly, the major components include knowing what data to capture, how to collect (or get it collected), taking time out to analyze data, and using data to inform decisions in the school. For a school moving from poor to fair, the collection and analysis of data is often limited to student attendance data, student assessment results, teacher attendance data, teacher punctuality, and such similar easily available data.

3.4.9. Widened Leadership Team

In the context that we work in, most of our school leaders are the founders/owners themselves. This often, but not always - means that they are excellent administrators, but their strength may not lie in instructional leadership. This theme, depicted in Image 3.4.9., tries to address that issue by helping the school expand its leadership team such that there is a balance of instructional leadership as well as managerial leadership. Widening of the leadership team starts from identifying potential leaders among teachers, to building their capacity and formalizing their positions - and since it is difficult to give away control, or parts of the control of the working of the school, this chain starts from the end of the first year, so that the next academic year can start with the new school leaders.

3.4.10. Increased Use of School Resources

With respect to resources, low-fee private schools face two major issues: a lack of resources, and inefficient use of resources if there happen to be any resources. This is why this theme addresses both challenges of *procuring* new resources for the school, as well as making sure that the school resources are *being used*



effectively. Refer to Image 3.4.10. for the outcomes chain on this theme. This chain starts from the third quarter as it would take some time to generate enough buy-in from the school leaders to invest in procuring resources for the school.

3.4.11. Productive Community Participation

For the schools moving from poor to fair, 'community' is often minimally understood as parents of the children attending the school; and 'participation' is minimally understood as regular attendance at parent-teacher meetings.



This strand, represented in Image 3.4.11., aims to build that capacity in the school - of regularly keeping in touch with the parents - which can gradually move into regularly planning with the parents and even the larger community. In the schools we work with, the parent community is generally looked at as 'illiterate' and 'backward'. Thus it might take a few months for the emergence of need to engage with the community.

3.4.12. Improved Student Morale

When asked what a good school looks like, many people answer- "Where the students are happy". We recognize this very important aspect of a great school - and on applying this to the context of a school moving from poor to fair, the target becomes exposing students to various possibilities, ensuring that the school is invested in the all-round development of the students, and in providing various forums for students to engage in personal and social development. As Image 3.4.12. shows, this involves getting the investment of school leaders and teachers in planning and organizing events and programs for students. This chain starts from the second quarter as two things might need to happen first:

- Building a good rapport with the school leadership team
- Showing the school some early successes of working with students for their personal and social development.

IMPROVED STUDENT ATTENDANCE

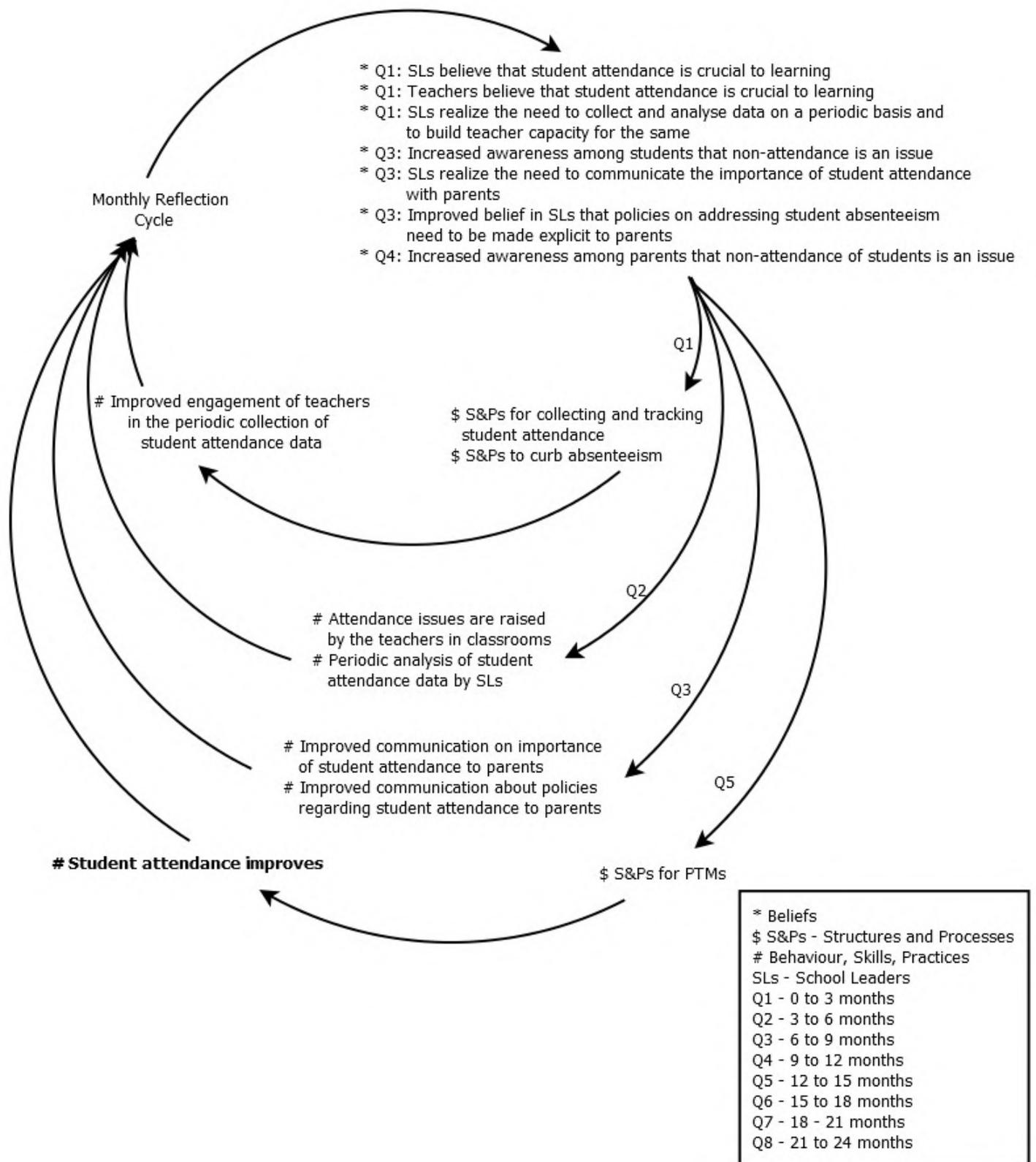


Image 3.4.1. Improved Student Attendance

REDUCED STUDENT MISBEHAVIOUR

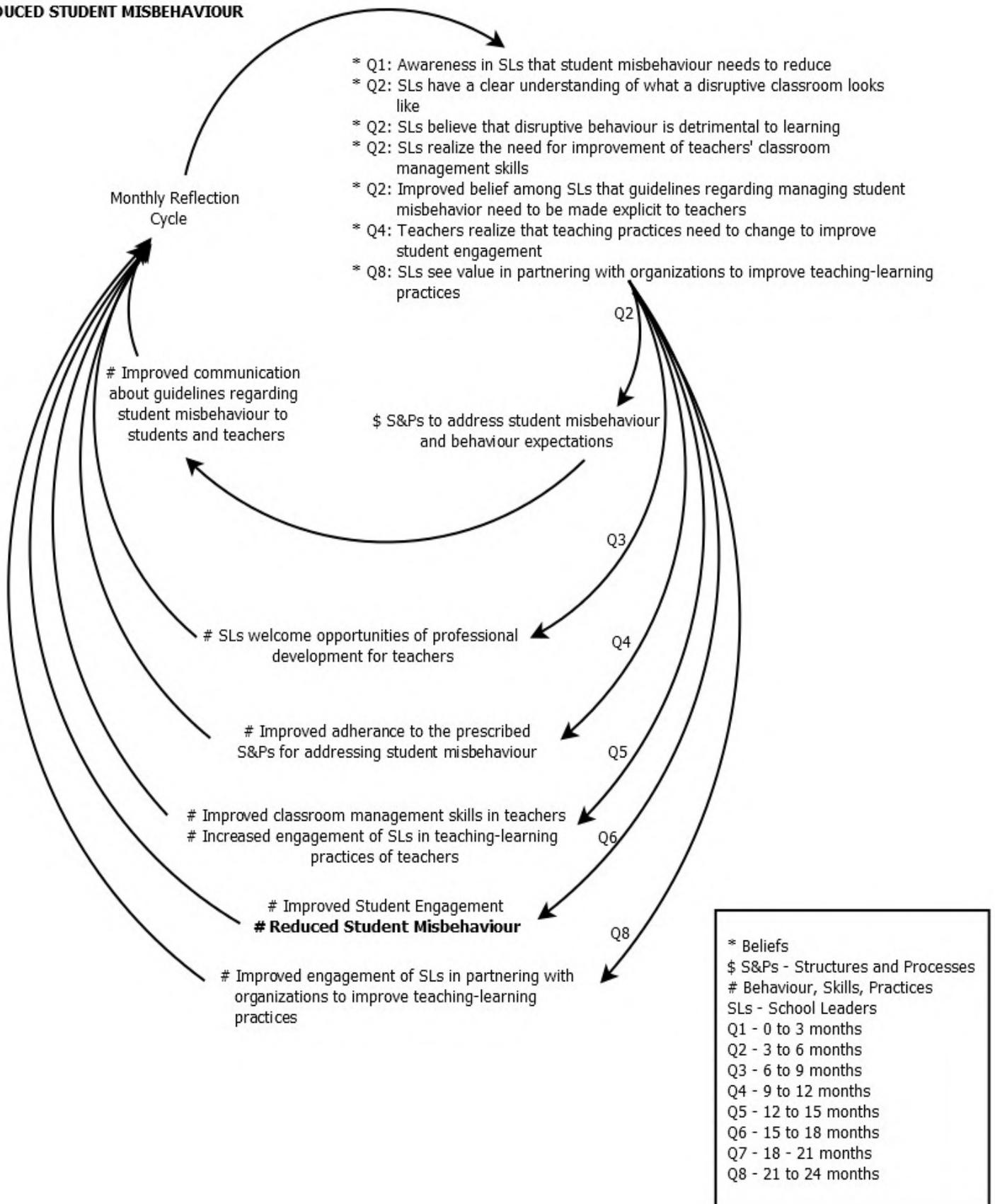


Image 3.4.2. Reduced Student Misbehaviour

IMPROVED LITERACY AND NUMERACY

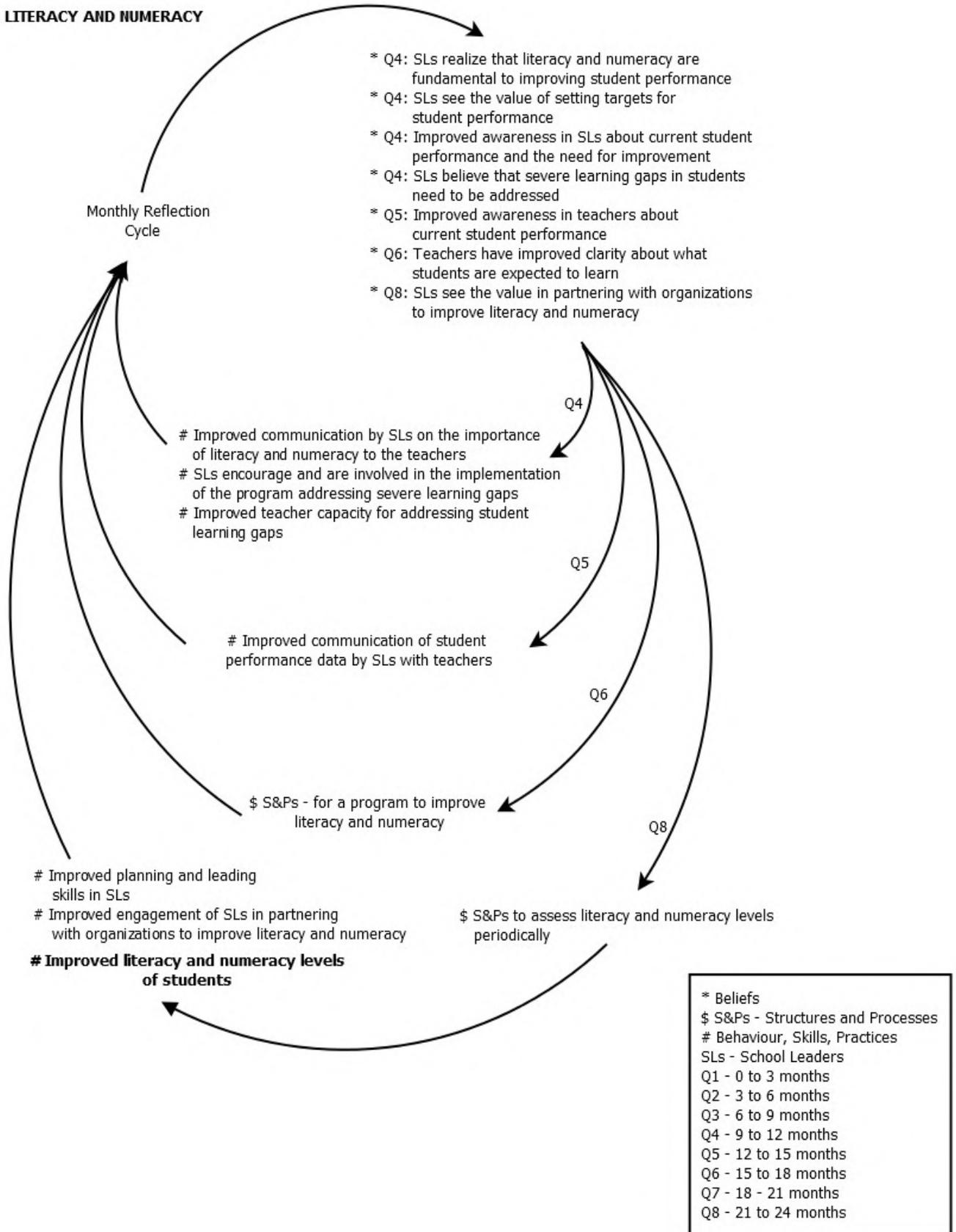


Image 3.4.3. Improved Literacy and Numeracy Levels

REDUCED DISCRIMINATION OF STUDENTS

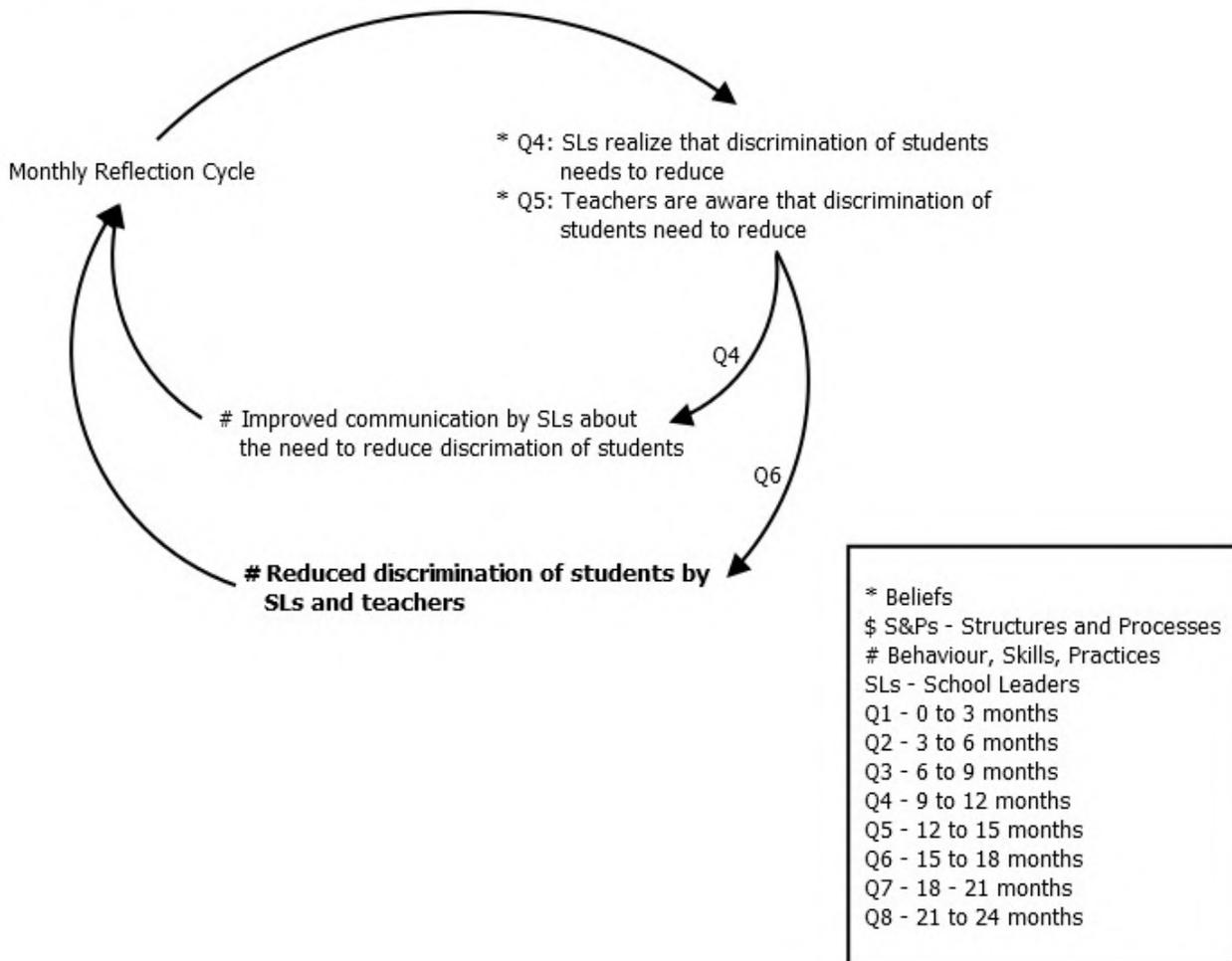


Image 3.4.4. Reduced Discrimination of Students

IMPROVED TEACHING-LEARNING PRACTICES

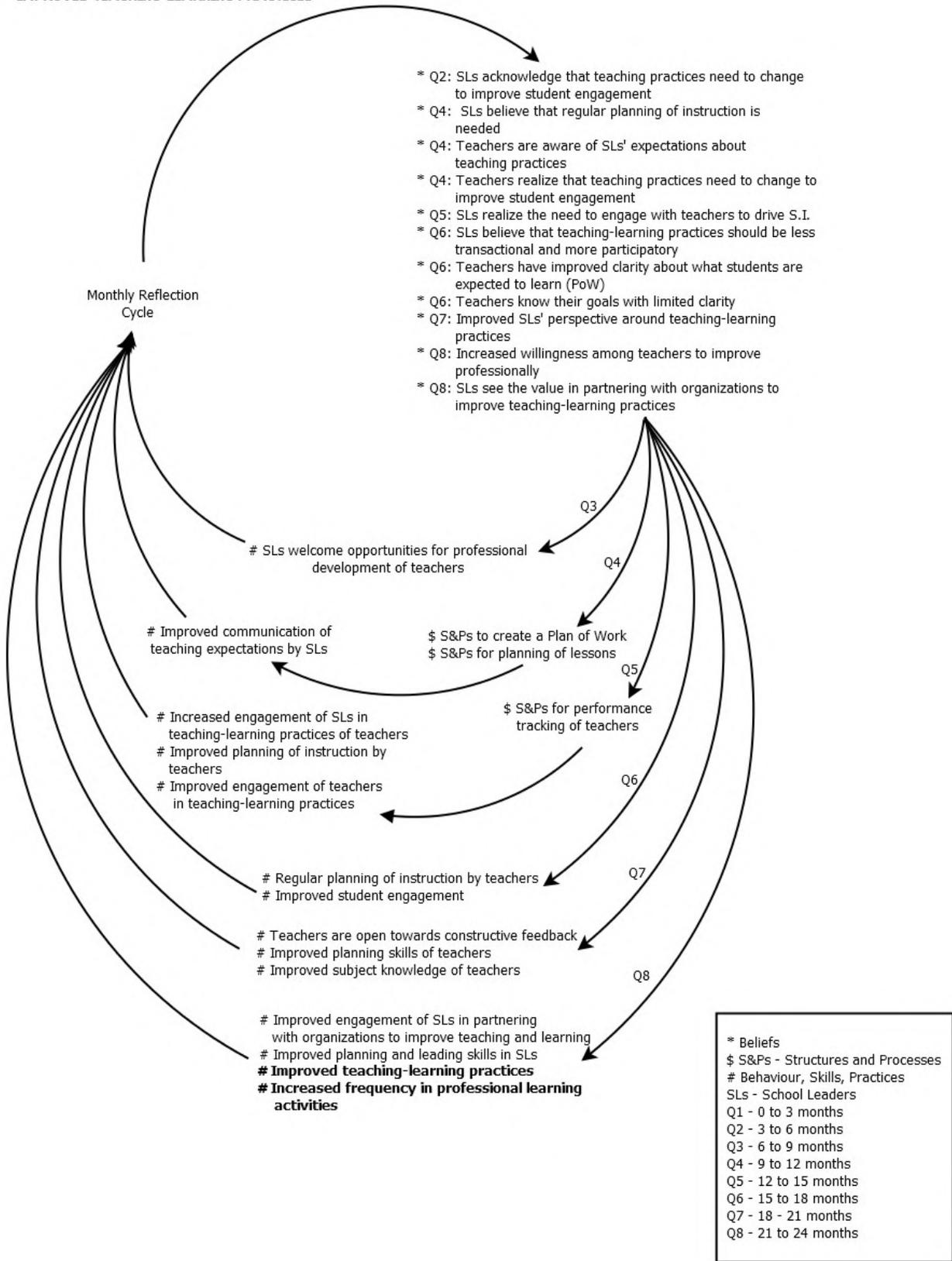


Image 3.4.5. Improved Teaching-Learning Practices

IMPROVED TEACHER EVALUATION

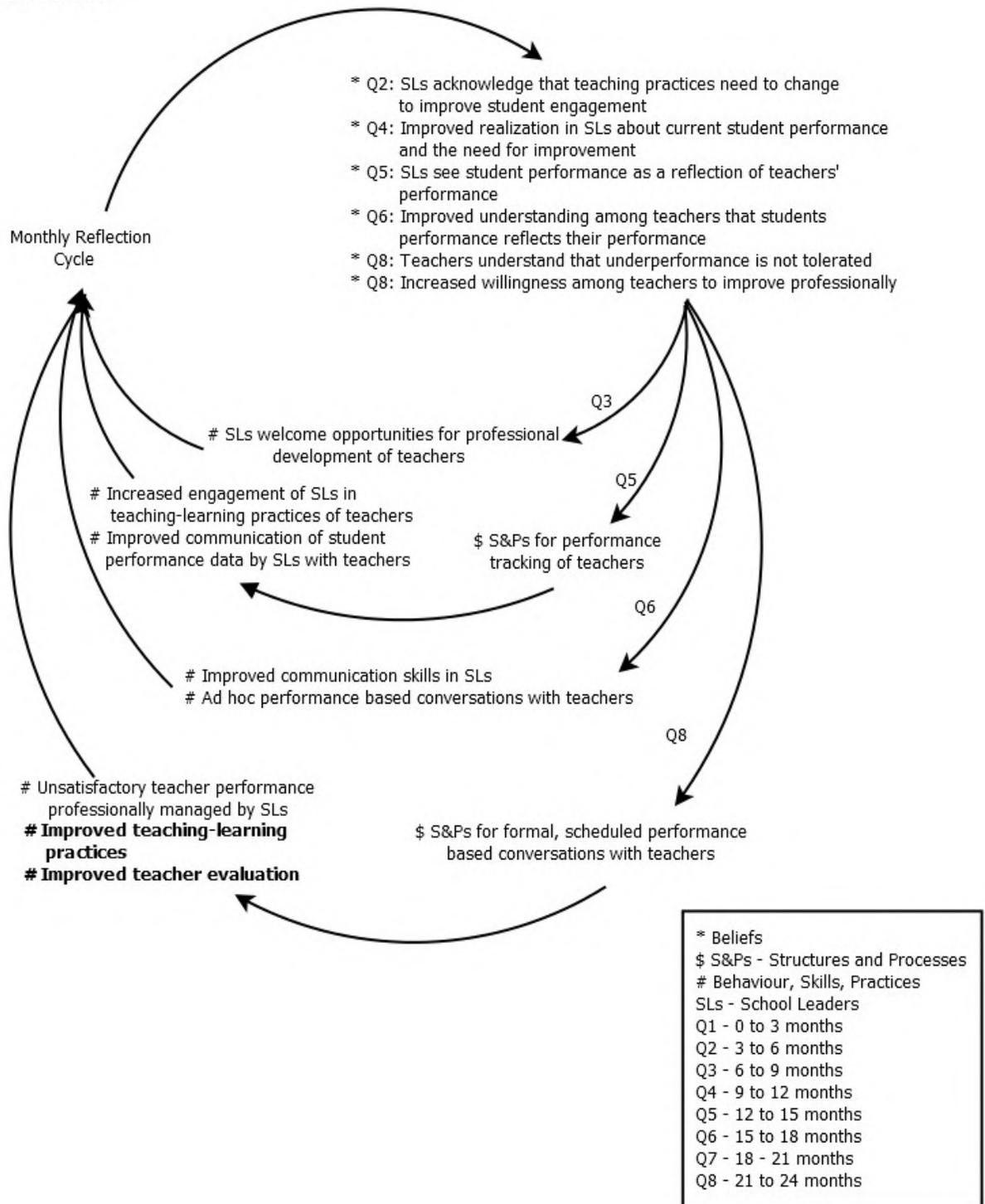


Image 3.4.6. Improved Teacher Evaluation

IMPROVED TEACHER RETENTION AND MORALE

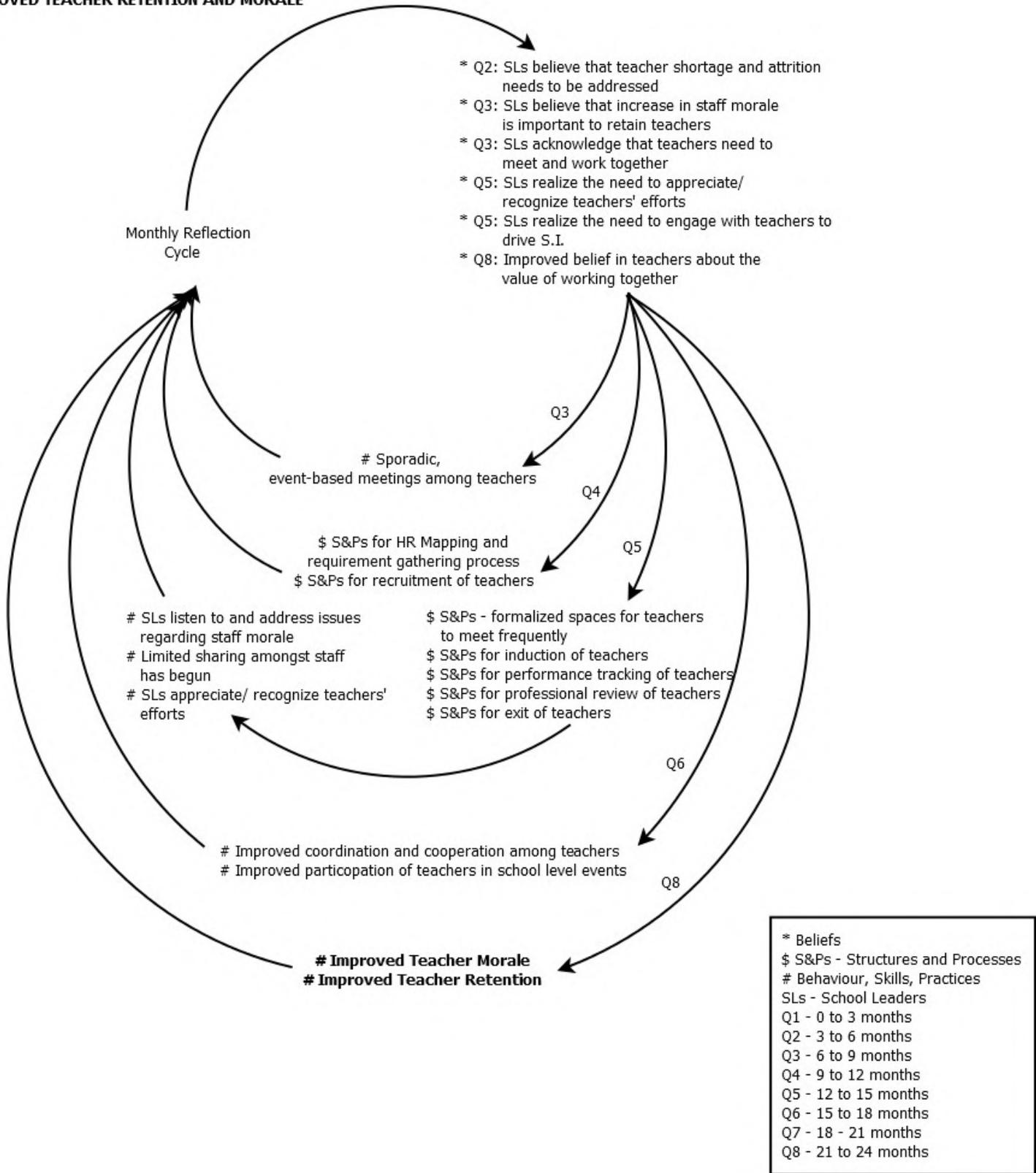


Image 3.4.7. Improved Teacher Retention and Morale

IMPROVED DATA DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

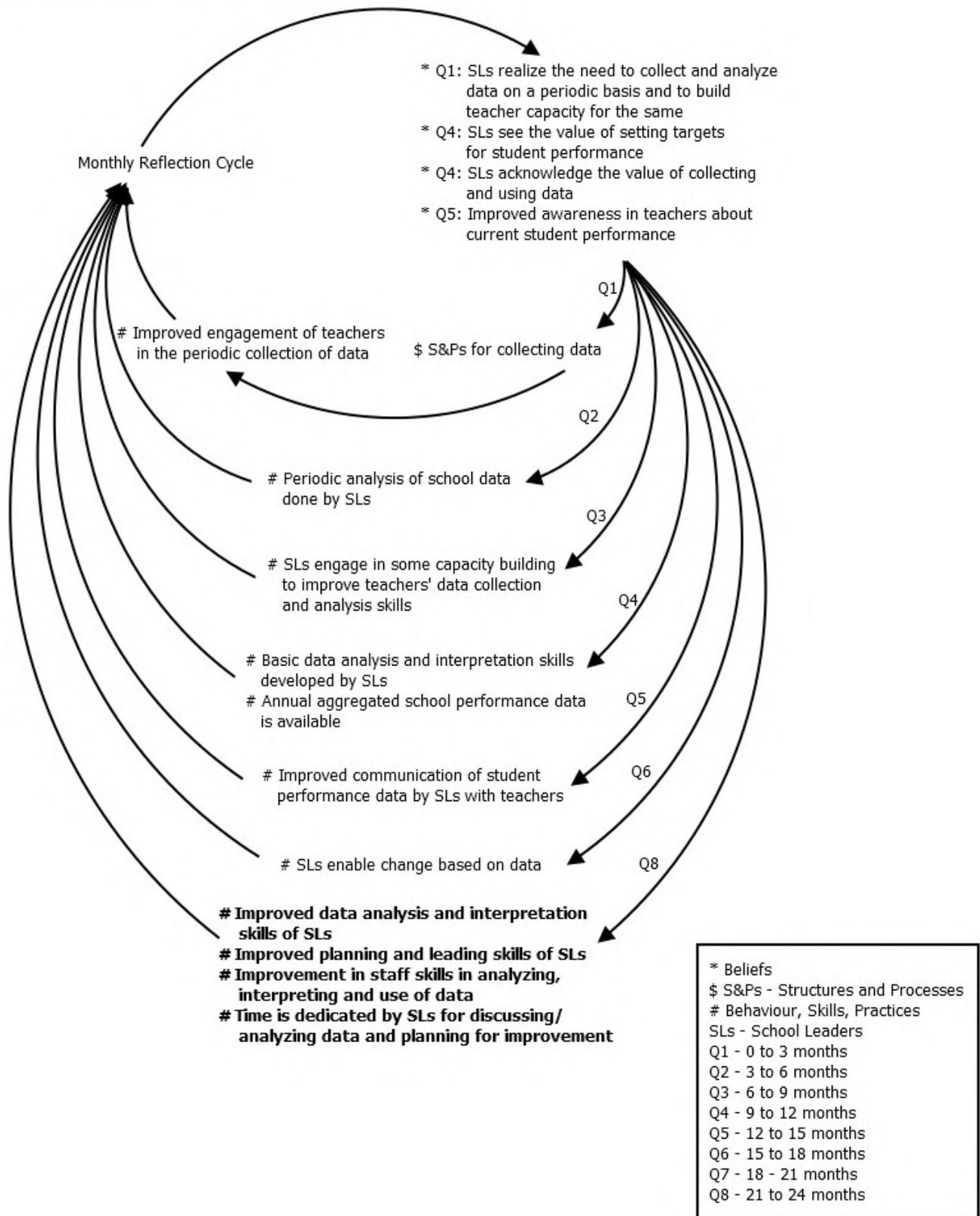


Image 3.4.8. Improved Data-driven Decision-making

WIDENED LEADERSHIP TEAM

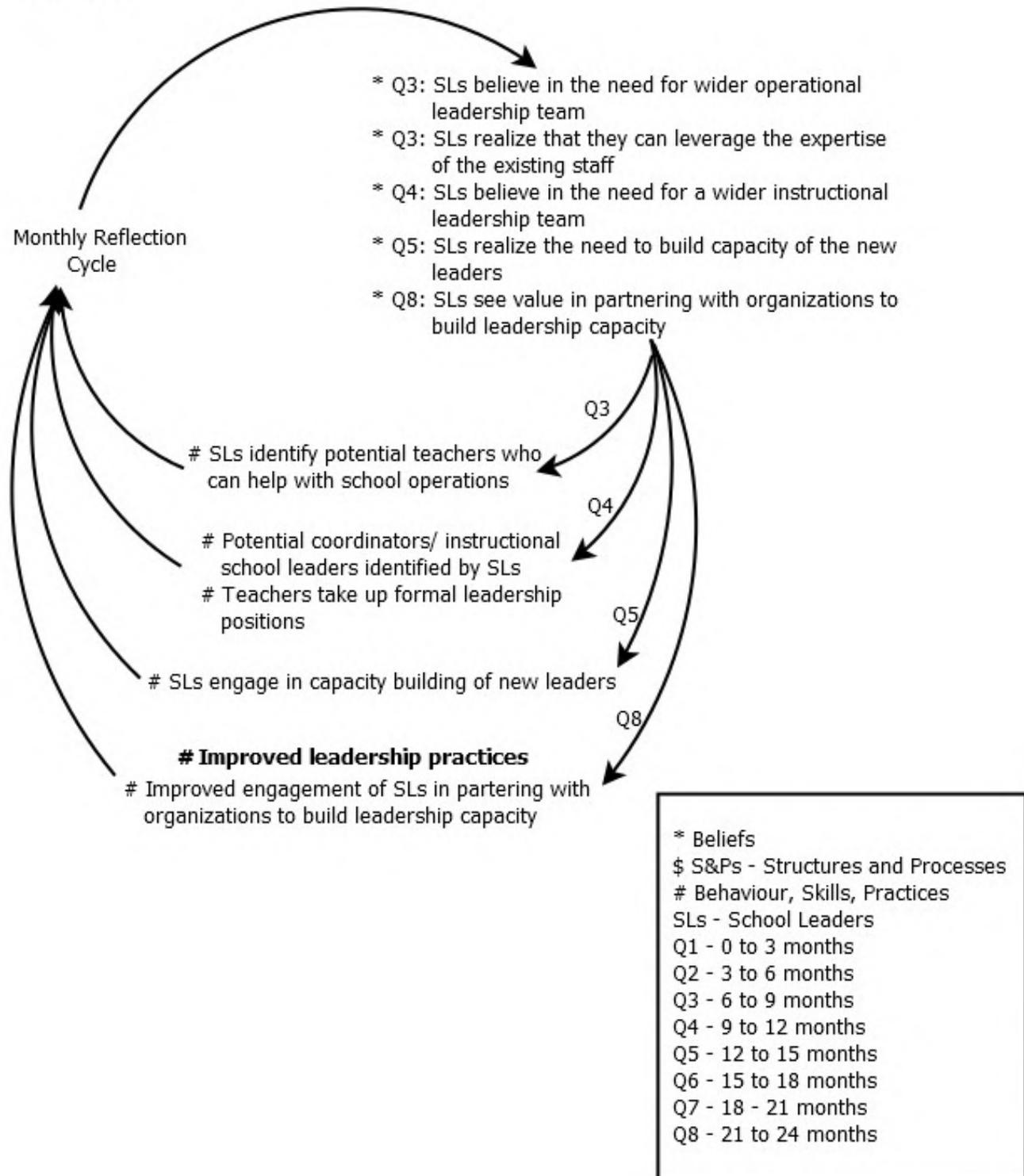


Image 3.4.9. Widened Leadership Team

INCREASED USE OF SCHOOL RESOURCES

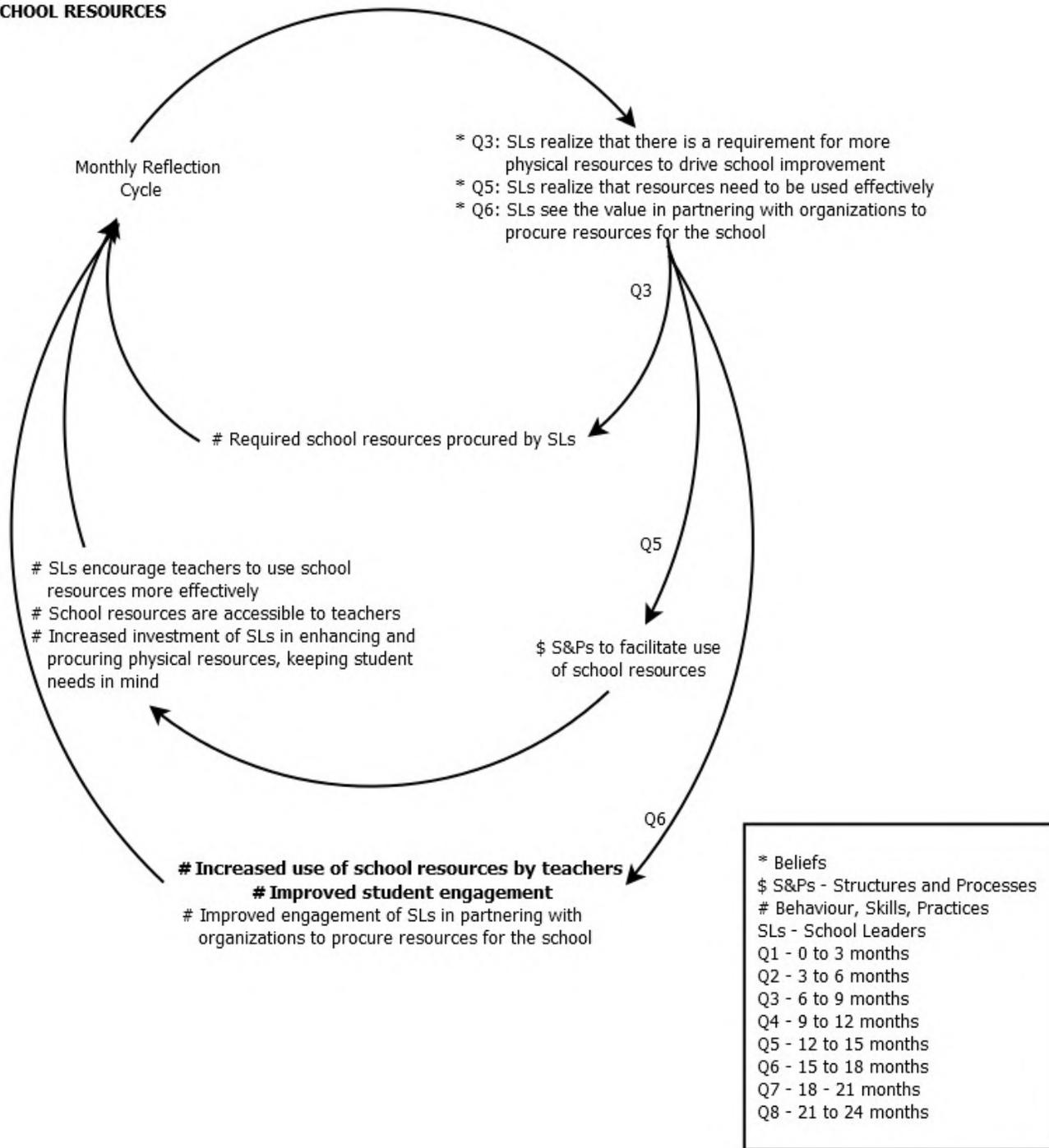


Image 3.4.10. Increased Use of School Resources

PRODUCTIVE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

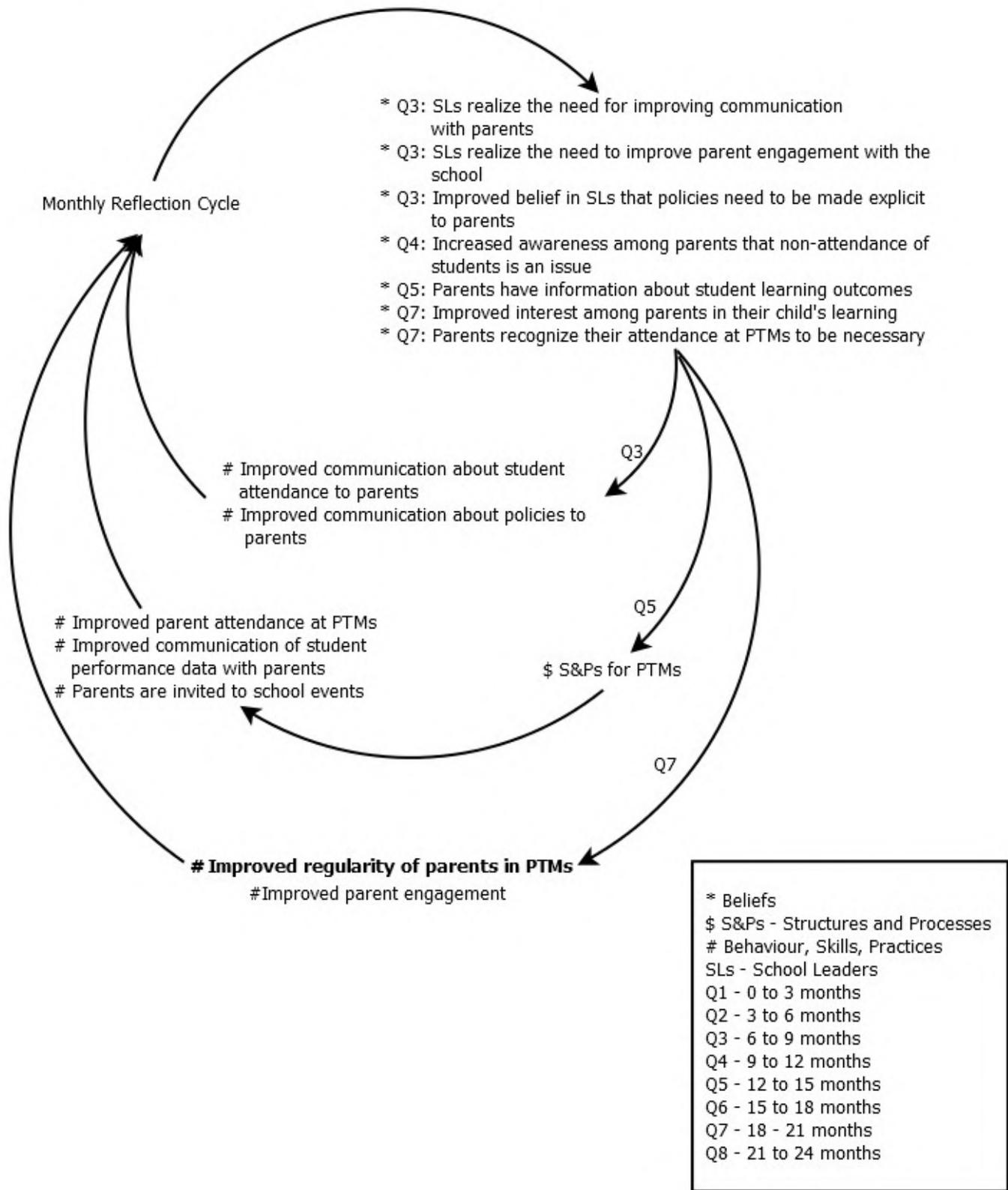


Image 3.4.11. Productive Community Participation

IMPROVED STUDENT MORALE

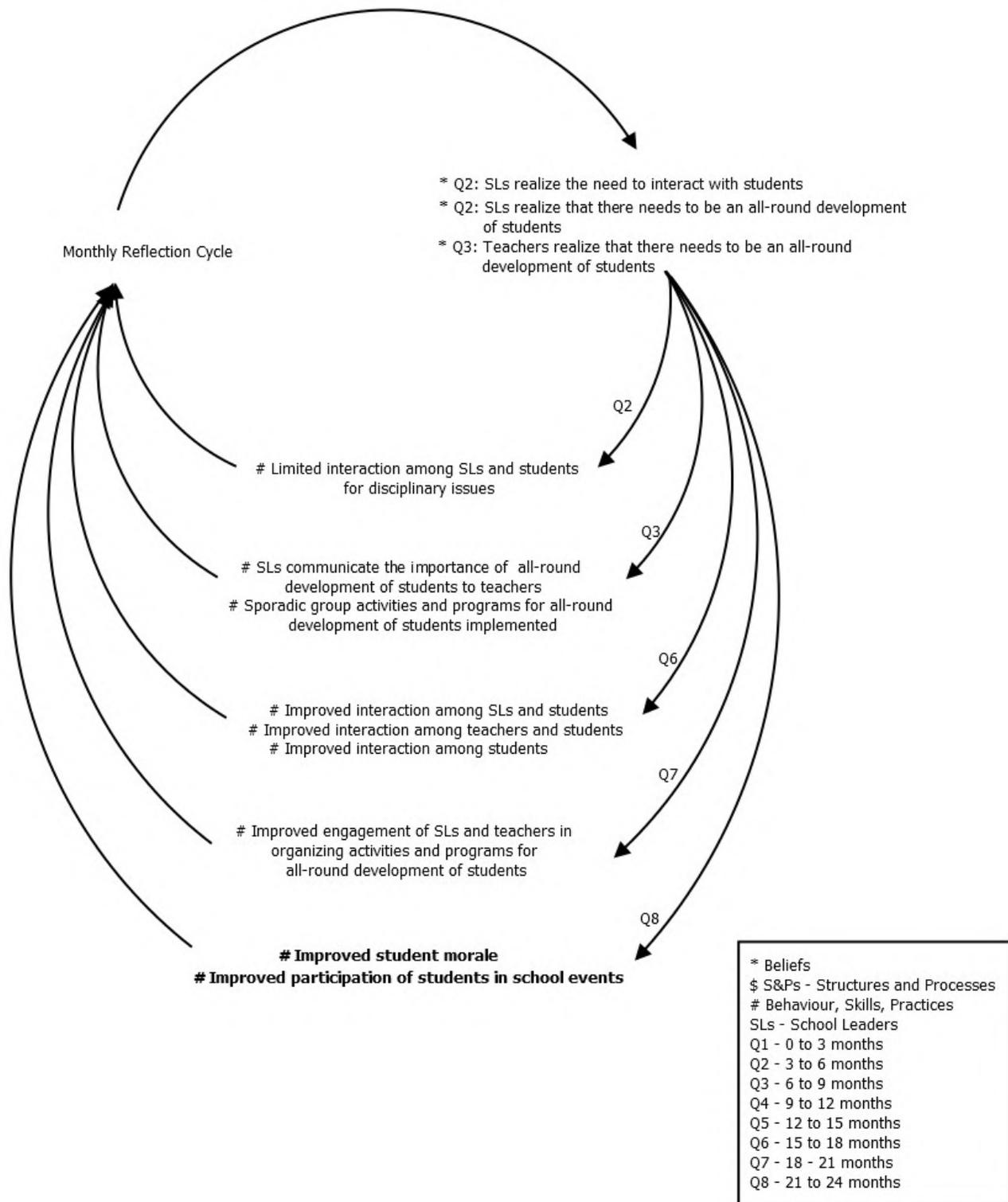


Image 3.4.12. Improved Student Morale

Section 3.5. STEP: Theory of Action

While the above outcomes chains as well as the high level theory of change give us the ‘why’s and ‘what’s of school improvement, the Program Matrices help us decide on the ‘how’s. “*But what do we do on the ground?*” is an important and oft-asked question, which this section hopes to address. A program matrix has an exhaustive list of possible activities and interventions which can be implemented to achieve the given outcomes. Anyone who has this list can then choose, based on their context and practicality, the interventions that best suit them. However, before we go into *actions*, let’s look at some of the *principles* that guide our actions.

3.5.1. Our Guiding Principles

We recognize that each school is unique, and therefore our plans for it will be unique as well. However, there are some principles which we operate with, or keep in our mind when we plan our intervention journey:

1. In the first three months, we will focus on rapport building; and will go for quick wins in order to gain the school’s trust.
2. We will involve the stakeholders in the co-creation process so that there is a sense of ownership. We will create opportunities to generate buy-ins.
3. In the first few (0-3) months, we will introduce ‘easy-to-implement’ interventions and/or strategies that do not increase workload for teachers/leaders.
4. We will continuously develop a rich understanding of the school / field to inform the intervention design.
5. We will always begin with clearly stating exit criteria for every school and then, will draw out time-bound action plan with a clear focus on *SUSTAINABILITY* of change efforts.

6. We will identify possible immediate, intermediate and long-term outcomes to chalk out a consistent and coherent school improvement plan.

7. We will integrate periodic monitoring and evaluation to keep track of the progress of the school and accordingly inform the design.

8. We will build credibility, not authority.

3.5.2. Program Matrix

Resources, Activities, Outputs

When we make an action plan, there are three main things we look at:

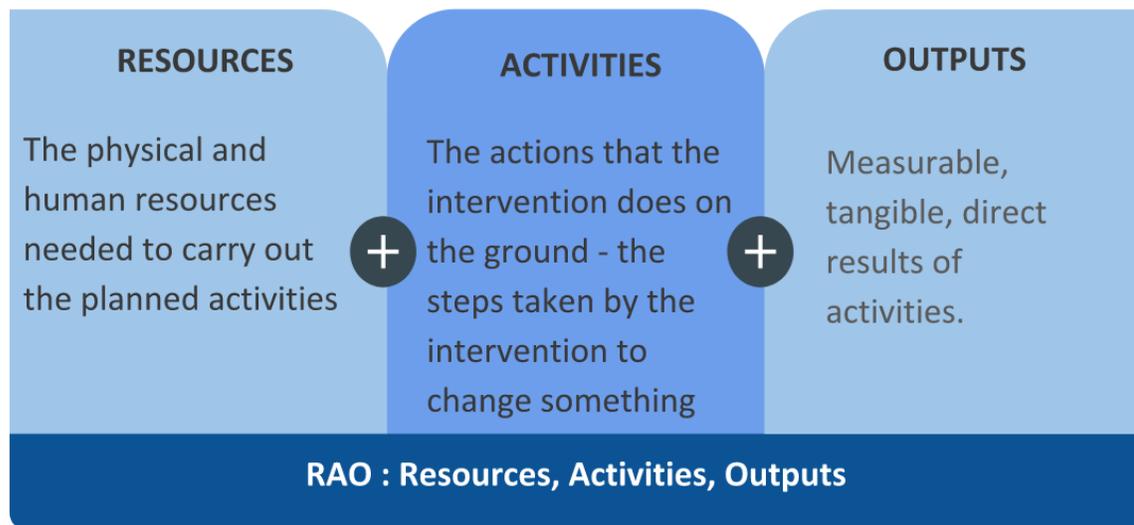


Image 3.5.2. Understanding RAO

As shown above in image 3.5.2., an RAO Matrix will detail out the resources, activities, and outputs, needed to achieve a particular outcome. Refer to Table 3.5.2. A for a sample RAO Matrix.

Success Criteria

Resources-Activities-Outputs are tied to particular outcomes - and *how* we understand or *visualize* the outcomes drives the kinds of activities as well as the way we engage in activities. For example, one way of understanding ‘Improved Student Outcomes’ is that the average marks of students go up. Another significantly different way of visualizing the success of this outcome is that the learning gap between the top scorers and least scorers reduces. Which of the definitions we choose would greatly impact the way the program will roll out. It thus becomes important for us to form a comprehensive, and shared understanding of what the ‘success’ of the outcome looks like. This is detailed out through ‘Success Criteria’ in a Program Matrix. Success Criteria have two components: Attributes (descriptions of what success looks like) and Comparisons (measurable/noticeable indicators of attributes). Refer to Table 3.5.2. B for a sample table of success criteria.

Success Factors

One conversation that you must have seen to crop up everytime outcomes are discussed is about what could possibly hinder the achievement of the outcome. This is an important conversation to consider, and is captured in the matrix through the ‘Success Factors’. These are factors that greatly impact the success of the outcome. They can be of two types: Program Factors (factors which we feel we can address), and Non-program Factors (factors which we feel are out of our locus of control). For example, when working with schools, the laws of the land that govern the school become a non-program factor, if we are not engaged in advocacy. On the other hand, having a good rapport with the school becomes a program factor, and our activities *must* address this factor to make sure that rapport is built. Table 3.5.2. C has sample success factors.

Complete Program Matrix

All the three components: RAO, success criteria, and success factors come together to form a program matrix. Table 3.5.2. D outlines the template of a program matrix.

Section 4 - How will we stay on track?

So far, we have answered the questions of what we do, and how we do what we do. The next important question to ask is 'how do we know that we are going in the right direction?'. This is exactly the question that our Monitoring and Evaluation Framework helps us answer.

There are two ways we can keep track of whether we are going in the right direction or not: conversations among our peers to have a 'heightened awareness' of what is happening in our schools; and the other way is to systematically keep track of whether and which outcomes have been achieved. A variety of sources can contribute to developing a monitoring and evaluation framework. One important source is our Program Matrix. If we refer back to our Program Matrix, there are two components which can contribute greatly to a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework:

- a) The comparisons components of our success criteria
- b) The outputs of the activities
- c) Key outcomes that need to be achieved (useful to track short-term outcomes)

We then need to select which performance measures are important among these, and what else we see as important to keep track of. This will form the basis of what we would like to monitor. Depending on the results that emerge, we might choose to dive deeper and evaluate *why* something is happening the way it is happening. Eg. If we want to understand why something did not work the way we imagined it, or if we want to validate our assumption about why something worked the way we imagined it to, and so on.

This forms the last part of program design of a school improvement journey from poor to fair. We hope this document was useful in bringing up both questions and clarifications about our approach to school transformation. We will be happy to hear about both!

Table 3.5.2. A - Sample RAO Matrix

Improved Teacher Retention and Morale					
Resources	SL Focused Activities	Outputs	Teacher Focused Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
	Collect the timetable, no. of teachers, no. of classes taught by each teacher, and collate this. Share this data with SLs and lead discussion around teachers being stretched, overburdened, and how this is detrimental to the school.	Data collected			SLs believe that teacher shortage needs to be addressed
	Depending on type of personality, present different reasons: 1. Parents will see the school as a good school because each class always has a teacher 2. Other schools in the neighbourhood have x no. of teachers 3. PTR needs to be maintained as per RTE	# of conversations about need for more teachers			
Resources which show impact of teachers who stay in the school for long periods	Explain to the SLs the impact of teacher attrition on overall school improvement by sharing a resource (Research, ppt, video etc) - Impact of how a teacher who has stayed for more than 2 years with the same school improves student performance and teacher morale	# of resources shared			
	Share the details of the reason for teacher attrition with the SL	List of reasons shared # of conversations around the reason	Talk to teachers and list down reasons for teacher attrition in their school/ any school	List of reasons for teacher attrition	SLs believe that increase in staff morale is important to retain teachers
Survey/FGD tools	Share the data from the survey/questionnaire about what teachers feel about the school with the SL	Data of how teacher feel about the school shared # of conversations around the data collected	Carry out a survey/Focused group discussion/ share a questionnaire to find out how teachers feel about the school	# of survey/questionnaire responses Compiled list of how teachers feel	

Table 3.5.2. B - Success Criteria

Improved Teacher Retention and Morale	
Success Criteria	
Attributes	Comparisons
Improved Teacher Retention: Teachers stay in the school because they feel a sense of belonging to the school	More teachers are found to say that the school is like their family/express a sense of belonging to the school Net promoter scale
Reduced teacher attrition because of school-related issues	% reduction in teacher attrition
Improved Teacher Morale: Teachers feel happy to come to school and recommend others to join the school	Change in direction from teachers complaining about work to not complaining Net promoter scale % reduction in teachers taking uninformed/extra leaves
Teachers interact more with each other	Teachers know more about each other than before Teachers are seen to approach others for advice/ help more often
Teachers collaborate and work together more often	# of classes/events/programs planned together by teachers # of times resources were shared
Teacher morale is also reflective of SLs being more engaged with teachers	% increase in time spent with teachers Meetings allow for/ have space for bringing up issues that the staff is facing # of times SLs have addressed issues of staff morale
Teacher morale is promoted through structures and processes for collaboration	# of team/ teacher meetings scheduled # of teacher meetings centered around event planning

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- Table 3.5.2. C - Sample Program Matrix
- Annexure 1 - STEP School Assessment Framework

List of abbreviations:

- SL: School Leaders
- SI: School Improvement
- QCT: Quality Circle Time

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Annexure 1 - STEP School Assessment Framework by MANTRA

Sl. No.	Domain	Poor	Fair	Good	Outstanding
1. Effective School Leadership Practices					
1.1. Setting Directions					
1.1.1.	Developing a Shared Vision for the School	No vision	School leaders have a broad vision for the school, although it may not be articulated well	School leaders articulate a clear vision for the school and it is also communicated to the school staff	School leaders develop a vision for the school, along with teachers and frequently revisit this vision
1.1.2.	Developing a Shared Improvement Agenda	No goals or plans set by school leaders	Rudimentary or basic targets and plans for improvement based on some collection of data are set by school leaders and shared with teachers	School Leaders involve teachers in setting clear, time-bound targets for improvement, but progress is monitored ad-hoc	The agenda is collectively developed by school leaders and teachers, is expressed in terms of specific improvements and targets sought in the school, and includes a plan for monitoring progress
1.2. Developing People					
1.2.1	High Performance Expectations	Performance expectations are either absent or limited to a few staff members	School leaders have performance expectations from all staff, although they may not be explicit or consistent	School leaders are explicit and consistent about their high performance expectations from staff members and they drive staff members to reach these expectations	School leaders and staff collectively drive each other to perform better and hold each other accountable for achieving high performance expectations
1.2.2.	Providing Individualized Support and Consideration	Interactions between School Leaders and staff are absent or sporadic. Conversations are limited to issues/problems and events.	School Leaders realize the need to develop staff capacity, but frequent feedback is provided only to point out what went wrong and what could improve	School Leaders provide a regular, standardized support including constructive feedback to all staff members for their professional development	School Leaders proactively reach out to staff and provide individualized support, encouragement and motivation with an aim to develop staff personally and professionally.
1.2.3.	Analysis and Discussion of Staff Performance Data	There is little or no evidence of school leaders' practical use of staff performance data.	School Leaders analyze staff attendance data and periodically discuss the same with staff	School Leaders regularly analyze a range of staff performance data to highlight specific areas of improvement to staff	Analysis and discussion of staff performance data is transparent, collaborative, and used to inform support plans
1.2.4.	Modeling Behaviour	School leaders do not model behaviour	School leaders sometimes model behaviour	School leaders model behaviour most of the times	School leaders always model the behaviour they wish to see in their staff
1.3. Improving the Teaching and Learning Program					
1.3.1.	Opportunities for Professional Development	School leaders do not consider professional development of teachers as their concern.	School leaders welcome opportunities for professional development, although they may not proactively organize opportunities	There is evidence that the school leaders see the development of staff into an expert and school-wide teaching team as central to improving outcomes for all students	School leaders place a high priority on the ongoing professional learning of all staff. They even participate in professional learning opportunities, and celebrate professional success

Annexure 1 - STEP School Assessment Framework by MANTRA

Sl. No.	Domain	Poor	Fair	Good	Outstanding
1.3.2.	Instructional Evaluation and Feedback	School leaders are not involved in evaluating day-to-day instruction and giving feedback to teachers	School leaders regularly give feedback to teachers, although they may not have clarity on effective teaching practices	School leaders give regular feedback to teachers and their feedback is based on a good understanding of effective teaching	School leaders give regular, effective feedback and encourage teachers to give feedback to each other. Feedback is also regularly sought from students
1.3.3.	Use of Teachers' Expertise	School leaders are not involved in making the best use of available teachers' expertise or time	School leaders use teachers' expertise and time based on their understanding, although they may not have clarity on the same	School leaders engage in systematic analysis of students' needs, and map teachers accordingly to make use of their expertise and time.	School leaders and teachers collectively analyze students' needs, and implement a range of strategies to make more effective use of available expertise and time to enhance teaching and learning
1.3.4.	Promoting Instructional Focused Collaboration	School leaders do not view teacher isolation as a problem	School leaders realize that teachers need to collaborate and hence create opportunities for regular meetings among teachers, although these may not be focused on instruction	School leaders promote and participate in regular, instructional focused discussions among teachers	School leaders promote and actively participate in instructional focused collaboration through a variety of initiatives. They also provide required time and resources
1.3.5.	Coordinating the Curriculum	School leaders do not believe in the need of a documented plan, but may produce a rudimentary plan as a compliance need.	School leaders ensure that there are annual and term wise documented plans for curriculum delivery.	School leaders ensure that the school's curriculum delivery plan identifies curriculum, teaching and learning priorities and requirements.	School leaders ensure that the school has a clearly documented whole-school plan for curriculum delivery, which is aligned to the national or other approved curriculum and which makes explicit how teaching learning should happen.
1.3.6.	Understanding of Curricular Expectations	School leaders have limited familiarity with curricular expectations as described in national or state level curricular frameworks.	School leaders recognize the importance of literacy and numeracy, although they see them as the responsibility of English and Math teachers respectively	School leaders have clarity on curricular expectations for all subjects and about fundamental cross-curricular skills such as literacy, numeracy, and higher order thinking, but school-wide strategies are not in place to drive a consistent approach	School leaders show clear understanding of curricular expectations. They drive school-wide strategies to address all learning areas and to embed fundamental skills of literacy, numeracy, and higher order thinking in all school subjects
1.3.7.	Analysis and Discussion of Student Performance Data	There is little or no evidence of school leaders' practical use of school-wide student performance data.	School Leaders pay close attention to student attendance and assessment data and share targets for improvement with teachers	School Leaders regularly discuss a range of student performance data with teachers and its implications on classroom practices	School leaders encourage teachers to routinely use student performance data to identify gaps and monitor progress over time

Annexure 1 - STEP School Assessment Framework by MANTRA

Sl. No.	Domain	Poor	Fair	Good	Outstanding
1.3.8.	Boosting Student Self-esteem	School leaders do not interact with students or interact only when dealing with inappropriate student behaviour	School leaders talk to and listen to students occasionally. Most interaction is still around dealing with misbehaviour	School leaders interact with students on a regular basis and celebrate achievements	School leaders proactively undertake a range of initiatives to boost student self-esteem
1.4. Developing the Organization					
1.4.1	Pupil-Teacher Ratio: Pre-primary = 25:1 Primary (G1-G5) = 30:1 Middle and Secondary (G6-G12) = 40:1	School does not meet PTR requirements for any section of the school.	School meets PTR requirements only for one section of the school	School meets PTR requirements for all sections of the school	School maintains its PTR below the required ratio.
1.4.2	Students' Behaviour Policies	The school does not have policies relating to student behaviour	The school has some rudimentary policies relating to student behaviour, all of which may not be implemented effectively	The school effectively implements its well-documented policies relating to student behaviour	Students are involved in and are responsible for making sure there are no instances of misbehaviour.
1.4.3	Staff Behaviour Policies	The school does not have policies relating to staff behaviour	The school has some rudimentary policies relating to staff behaviour, all of which may not be implemented effectively	The school effectively implements its well-documented policies relating to staff behaviour	The school effectively implements and regularly revisits its policies relating to staff behaviour by seeking input from staff
1.4.4	S&Ps for Professional Development	No professional learning opportunities, or professional learning opportunities undertaken for compliance	Schools undertake professional learning activities, though they may not focus on development of required knowledge and skills - there may not be a documented learning plan for the same	There is a documented professional learning plan which is broadly mapped to teachers' subject and grade requirements, and a focus on effective teaching strategies	School leaders and teachers collaboratively develop a plan for the professional development of teachers, and individual teachers' strengths and needs are taken into consideration
1.4.5	Coordinating Assessments	There is no plan to conduct periodic assessments, or they are conducted in compliance mode	Assessments are conducted regularly, with an annual plan.	There is a documented school plan and timetable for the annual collection of data on student achievement and well-being, including literacy and numeracy, collected through a variety of assessment methods	There is a documented plan and timetable for the annual collection of data on literacy, numeracy, science, and well-being, collected through a variety of assessment methods
1.4.6	Distributing Leadership	School has one or two leaders who undertake a majority of the decision making in the school	The school has a second tier of leadership which is given clear roles and responsibilities	The school provides opportunities to teachers to take on leadership roles outside the classroom, in addition to the second tier of leadership	The school has a leadership team which works on a rotational basis
1.4.7	S&Ps for Building a Collaborative Culture	No structures to promote collaboration among teachers	There are formalized spaces for regular meetings though these may be mostly focused on planning events, etc	There are formalized spaces for regular meetings for discussions ranging from teaching learning practices to school improvement	The school implements a variety of initiatives to encourage and promote collaboration and sharing among teachers

Annexure 1 - STEP School Assessment Framework by MANTRA

Sl. No.	Domain	Poor	Fair	Good	Outstanding
1.4.8	S&P for Open Communication	There are no systems and processes for communication in the school.	There are some rudimentary systems of communication in the school (eg. through whatsapp, memos) which may not be periodic and regular	Teachers and school leaders have regular meetings, which are generally led by the school leaders	Teachers and school leaders have regular meetings, which focus on open communication, are teacher led, and have space for open communication
1.4.9	S&P for HR Management	There is little evidence that school leaders are proactive in the recruitment, induction, exit, and review of staff	There are rudimentary, but formal recruitment, induction, and exit, and professional review processes in place	There are well developed, documented recruitment, induction, exit, and professional review processes in place	Recruitment, induction, exit, and professional review processes are revisited and inputs are taken from teachers
1.4.10	S&P for Teacher Support	No support systems. Teachers work mostly in isolation	Rudimentary / ad-hoc approach to support. Teachers reach out to other teachers as and when required.	There is are team and group structures for problem solving and support which may not be mapped to teacher groups / needs	There are team and group structures for support which are mapped to teacher needs
1.4.11	S&P for Decision Making	There are no processes for decision making. It is solely in the hands of the top management / principal	Decision making is restricted to the school leaders, including the second tier of leadership	Teachers are occassionally involved in decision making processes	Decision making is a collective and democratic process, inclusive of all teachers
1.4.12.	S&P for Analysis and Discussion of Data	There are no processes for analysis and discussion of data	There are rudimentary structures and processes for analysis and discussion of limited school performance data	There is a documented plan for the periodic analysis and discussion of school performance data	Data analysis and discussion is a participatory, transparent process, aimed at school evaluation and improvement
1.4.13.	Purposeful Partnerships	There is little evidence that the school is looking to external sources to aid school improvement	There are external partnerships, but tend to be ad-hoc, and may not have clear agenda and outcomes	The school has established one or more partnerships with families, local businesses and/or community organizations with the purpose of improving the school, based on analysis of need	There is a range of currently operating impactful partnerships, planned and designed to improve the school, based on analysis of need. Planning includes effective communication and monitoring strategies
1.5. Developing Self					
1.5.1.	Leader as a Reflective Practitioner	School leaders do not appear to be reflective of their practices	School leaders realize that they need to change but may not show strong commitment to personal change	School leaders occassionally reflect on their practices, but not as a habit or in a regular manner	School leaders regularly reflect on their practices and proactively seek feedback from staff
1.5.2.	Professional Development	School leaders do not engage in professional learning opportunities	School leaders engage in professional learning opportunities in ad-hoc fashion based on their interest and availability	School leaders engage in regular professional learning opportunities aimed at their professional development	School leaders plan and proactively seek opportunities to develop themselves professionally as well as personally
2. Effective Pedagogical Practices					
2.1.	Subject Knowledge	Teachers make content-related errors	Teachers make content related errors only occassionally	Teachers have a grasp over textbook content	Teachers have subject knowledge that goes beyond the textbook

Annexure 1 - STEP School Assessment Framework by MANTRA

Sl. No.	Domain	Poor	Fair	Good	Outstanding
2.2.	Curricular Knowledge	Teachers do not have knowledge of interlinkages among, and progression of subjects	Teachers have knowlegde of the progression of their own subjects	Teachers have knowledge of interlinkages among, and progression of subjects, but this does not inform instruction	Teachers have knowledge of interlinkages among, and progression of subjects which feeds into their planning and instruction
2.3.	Planning for Instruction	Teachers do not engage in lesson planning	Teachers engage in rudimentary and sporadic lesson planning	Teachers engage in consistent planning for lessons but might not implement perfectly	There is evidence of detailed planning and execution of, and continuity between consecutive lessons
2.4.	Use of Strategies	Use of strategies by teachers do not enable student engagement	Use of strategies by teachers enable minimal student engagement	Use of strategies by teachers enable engagement of a large percentage (around 75%) of students	Use of strategies by teachers enable all students to be engaged in the class
2.5.	Use of Resources	No use of resources by teachers	Teachers use a few basic resources (eg. chart paper, globes, etc)	Teachers use multiple resources regularly, and students are often given an opportunity to use them	Students use a wide range of materials. They are often used innovatively
2.6.	Classroom Management	No positive classroom management, teachers always use methods like shouting, beating, etc	Teachers attempt to use positive classroom management techniques but there are still instances of teachers using methods like shouting, beating, etc	There is a consistent implementation of positive classroom management techniques but teachers have to reinforce student expectations in the classroom	Norms and expectations are followed thoroughly in the classroom and there are rare or no instances of student disruption
2.7.	Inclusiveness of Instruction	Teachers use the background of students as an excuse for poor learning outcomes	Teachers may not discriminate actively but neither do they try to actively include all students	Teachers attempt to make instruction inclusive, and believe that all students can learn	There is differentiated instruction to cater to all kinds of students and all students are treated equally
2.8.	Checking for Understanding	Teachers do not check for understanding or when used, is not meaningful	Teachers engage in infrequent checking for understanding which does not inform the lesson flow	Teachers engage in consistent checking for understanding which is sometimes used to inform lesson flow	Checking for understanding is done frequently by teachers, through various means (observation, questioning, filling out sheets, etc) and is used to inform lesson flow
2.9.	Design of Assessments	By the textbook / already practiced questions	Attempts to include new questions but these may not be informed by understanding of how to assess students	Teacher attempts to design scaffolded assessments keeping different learning styles and skills in mind	Assessments are designed keeping in mind different learning styles and abilities of students. Assessments are rigorous, creative and push the student to apply learnt concepts.
2.10.	Use of Assessments	Student assessment is limited to school requirements, and these do not inform instruction	Student assessment is limited to school requirements, and occasionally informs instruction	Student assessment is not limited to school requirements, and teachers often use assessments to inform instruction	Assessment results are always inform instruction

Sl. No.	Domain	Poor	Fair	Good	Outstanding
2.11.	Engagement with School-level Decision Making	Teachers never voice their opinions / no engagement or participation	Teachers tend to go with the majority even if they have a differing opinion OR give their opinion when it is less likely to have consequences for them (eg. anonymous suggestions or votes)	Teachers takes an active role in school level decision making, but may not take responsibility or ownership for the same	Teachers take an active role in school-level decision making, give rationale for their choices, and take ownership for the same
2.12.	Willingness to Learn	Teachers are extremely resistant to learning, and are defensive about feedback	Teachers attend learning opportunities but as a passive listeners, tend to accept only positive feedback, and feedback rarely informs practice	Teachers are sometimes active, and attempt to implement learning Teachers actively seek feedback but are less likely to inform practice	Teachers actively participate, implement learning, and try to engage colleagues Teachers proactively seek feedback and look at feedback as an opportunity to grow and inform practice
3. Students' Progress, Attainment and Development					
3.1.	Student Attendance	Non attendance is an issue for a significant proportion of students	Non attendance is an issue for a small minority of students Parents and students are notified and called for discussion if there are attendance issues	Very high rates of school attendance	
3.2.	Student Engagement and Participation	Behavioural problems and disengagement are issues for a significant proportion of students and classrooms have the appearance of 'busy work'	There is some evidence of student disengagement, but most students are engaged, even if passively	Class 'busy work' is kept to a minimum, and an attempt is made to ensure that all students are engaged in challenging, meaningful learning and there are few obvious engagement problems	High levels of engagement of all students in challenging and meaningful learning
3.3.	Students' Personal and Social Development	Little or no focus on students' personal and social development	School organizes few, sporadic group activities and programs for the "all-round development" of students but not through a well thought out plan / understanding of students' personal and social development	Teachers regularly organize group activities, and school regularly organizes programs with a view to develop personal and social skills in students	School integrates personal and social development with day-to-day classroom transactions and school events through a variety of resources
3.4.	Students' Attainment	Very few students attain curricular expectations (knowledge and skills) in every grade as measured	Some students attain most of the curricular expectations (knowledge and skills) in every grade while most remain marginally below grade level expectations	Most students' attainment is at par/ above expected grade level across the school	All students' attainment is at par/above expected grade level

Sl. No.	Domain	Poor	Fair	Good	Outstanding
4. Culture that Promotes Learning					
4.1.	Commitment to School Improvement	Expectations for significant school improvement are low or absent, staff tend to defend current situation in terms of socioeconomic backgrounds and/or geographical location.	Although there is an expressed commitment to improvement, this is not reflected in a high level of enthusiasm for personal change on the part of staff	There is evidence of a school-wide commitment to improvement. Staff attempts change and celebrates success	There is a strong belief and optimistic commitment by all staff towards the continuous improvement of the school
4.2.	Staff Morale	Staff morale is low and causes high turnover	Staff morale is satisfactory.	Staff morale is generally high	Staff morale is sustained at a high level and there is a strong sense of belonging
4.3.	Trusting and Supportive Relations between School Leadership and Staff	School leaders and staff are openly hostile about / untrusting of each other	Staff is respectful towards school leaders, who are seen as authority figures	Staff and school leaders share a respectful relationship	Staff and school leaders share a trusting and caring relationship
4.4	Positive Relationships among Staff	Staff work in isolation. There may also be incidents of open hostility	Sporadic, event-based conversations and meetings take place among staff. Some groupism among staff exists	A cordial relationship exists among all staff	Staff treat each other as equals and share a trusting and caring relationship
4.5	Positive Relationship between Staff and Students	Students are often afraid of, or disrespectful of school staff	Students seem to be respectful towards staff out of a sense of discipline	Most staff is approachable in general, and students and staff have a formal, respectful relationship	Staff and students have respectful and caring relationship. They seek and value each others' opinions
4.6.	Collegial Culture among Teachers	Teachers work in isolation and are mostly untrusting of each other	There is sporadic instructional focused collaboration among teachers outside classrooms.	Teachers visit each other's classrooms and welcome opportunities to have school leaders observe and discuss their work with them	Teachers regularly invite school leaders and colleagues to visit their classrooms to observe their teaching. Teachers collaboratively plan, deliver, and review the effectiveness of lessons
4.7.	Inclusive Learning Environment	Students are actively discriminated against, based on their background, and physical or learning capabilities	Students are not discriminated against, although there may not be active attempts to have an inclusive learning environment	School leaders and teachers make an active attempt to have an inclusive learning environment	There is a strong focus on the creation of a culture in which all students are expected to learn successfully, in their own ways and at their own pace
4.8.	Student Morale	Students' morale is low, and they generally seem disengaged, resulting in high level of student misbehaviour	Student morale is satisfactory, resulting is passive participation in school.	Student morale is generally high and they feel free to express themselves.	Students feel proud and have a sense of belonging to the school
5. Productive Community Participation					

Annexure 1 - STEP School Assessment Framework by MANTRA

Sl. No.	Domain	Poor	Fair	Good	Outstanding
5.1.	Parent Engagement	Attendance at PTMs is low, reflecting poor parent engagement	Most parents take an obvious interest in their child's learning, and attendance at PTMs is high	Parent engagement is not limited to PTMs, and parents share opinions and feedback on improving student performance	Parent are found to frequently visit the school and proactively offer support - ideas and resources for the improvement of school and student performance
5.2.	Linking to Learning	PTMs are organized only once a term or less, and are only about giving report cards to parents	PTMs are organized every term or more, and include time to talk to the teachers	PTMs are organized in such a way that parents can have a meaningful interaction with teachers about their child's progress	School has structures beyond PTMs for parents to engage with the school, and even observe classes
5.3.	Building Relationships	School leaders and teachers consider most parents as 'uneducated' and hence incapable of engaging with the school and its complex processes	School leaders and teachers tend to engage with parents in a limited manner, generally through PTMs	School leaders and teachers recognize the need to engage with the community and take up welfare initiatives in the community	School offers a range of initiatives to develop parents and community as well as to engage them in the school processes
6. Enabling Resources of the School					
6.1.	Attractive and Stimulating School Premises	Physical environment is dull	Well-maintained and attractive but used only for specific school events	The physical environment is print rich with designated spaces to support and encourage learning	The school uses the existing school architecture innovately and makes it resourceful with higher educational value in a student friendly manner.
6.2.	Playground and Sports Equipments	Students do not have access to a playground and sports equipments	Playground of inadequate size is available; adequate material and equipment available only for a few games	Playground of adequate size is available within school premises; adequate sports equipment and material also available for a variety of games	Students participate in a variety of games/ sports in a planned manner; facility for training/ coaching for sports is available
6.3.	Classrooms	Classrooms are crowded. Furniture is available but not sufficient	A few classrooms are crowded; furniture is adequate as per requirements of the school	Majority of classrooms have good ventilation, natural light and fans (where needed); furniture is comfortable	Every classroom has good ventilation, light; furniture is age-appropriate and friendly for differently-abled students
6.4	Staffrooms	There is no staffroom	A common room for teachers is available but it is inadequate	Adequate common rooms for teachers, equipped with basic resources are available	Common rooms are equipped with a variety of resources that are available to the teachers
6.5	Library	No library	Library is available with insufficient number of books, and is used sporadically	Library is available with a sufficient number of books, is well-managed, and used regularly during library classes	Teachers and school leaders actively promote the use of a well-resourced, and well-managed library
6.6	Laboratory	No laboratory	Laboratories have minimal equipments which are occasionally used by teachers to conduct prescribed experiments as per the syllabus	Laboratories are well-equipped, and students regularly use the laboratory to conduct prescribed experiments	Teachers and students regularly use the laboratory to conduct experiments while discussing the relevant topic in the class

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Sl. No.	Domain	Poor	Fair	Good	Outstanding
6.7	Computers and Digital Learning Resources	Computers and digital learning resources are not available for students	Insufficient number of computers with some software and digital learning resources are available and occasionally used by students as per syllabus requirements	Sufficient number of computers with software and digital learning resources are regularly used by students in allocated periods	Every student gets an opportunity to use the computer as well as digital learning resources on their own in addition to teacher-led engagements
6.8	Inclusive Physical Environment	The school has no provisions for being CWSN friendly	The school has minimal provisions for CWSN which are not maintained regularly	All the school's physical facilities are CWSN friendly and regularly maintained	
6.9	Drinking Water	Drinking water facilities are unavailable or unfit for drinking	Insufficient supply of drinking water which may not have undergone quality check	School ensures regular supply of purified drinking water; cleanliness is maintained around drinking water facilities	School ensures regular supply of purified drinking water; both equipments as well as premises are regularly maintained
6.10.	Handwash Facilities	Insufficient supply of water and inadequate number of hand-wash outlets/ stations; no provision for soap	There is sufficient number of hand-wash stations with regular supply of water but no/insufficient soap	There is sufficient supply of water and soap, stations are cleaned regularly, and teachers communicate the importance of hand-washing	Hand-wash stations are cleaned daily, school leaders and teachers monitor and actively promote students' personal hygiene through a variety of initiatives
6.11.	Toilets	Toilets are unavailable or unusable	Separate toilets for boys and girls are available, but are insufficient and poorly maintained.	School has sufficient number of toilets (60:1) for girls and boys. Toilets are well maintained with regular supply of water, and regularly cleaned, at least twice a day.	All the toilets are functional and maintained at all times; cleaning of toilets is undertaken regularly; CWSN friendly toilets available.
6.12.	First-aid Boxes	First aid boxes are unavailable or unusable	First aid boxes are available but lack few requirements and are insufficient in number	First aid boxes are available in sufficient number	Multiple first aid boxes are kept in different areas of the school; they are fully stocked and maintained; all staff are aware of how to use first-aid boxes

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Sl. No.	Domain	Poor	Fair	Good	Outstanding
<p>Notes: 1. S&Ps refers to structures and processes 2. Personal and social development: creative and critical thinking, problem solving and decision making, communication and interpersonal skills</p> <p>References: Day, C., Sammons, P., Leithwood, K., Hopkins, D., Gu, Q., Brown, E. and Ahtaridou, E. (2011). Successful school leadership. Berkshire, England: McGraw Hill.</p> <p>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2012). National School Improvement Tool. State of Queensland.</p> <p>Henderson, Mapp, Johnson & Davies (2007). Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships.</p> <p>National University of Educational Planning and Administration. Shaala Sidhi School Standards And Evaluation Framework. Registrar, National University Of Educational Planning And Administration (NUEPA), New Delhi, 2015,.</p>					

