

## A Tool for Leaders

*After reading the interview with Angus McBeath and the excerpt from the research report by Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, we suggest you use the following activity to engage members from your central office staff and site leadership in a conversation about improving districts and how these ideas can impact the work in your own district in supporting school improvement.*

### Building Capacity in District Office Staff Activity Guide

#### Objectives:

1. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on the variety of experiences and lessons learned in improving districts.
2. Participants will synthesize and integrate the varied lessons learned into overriding themes.
3. Participants will evaluate these themes by comparing them to current work and practices in their own setting and begin to think about possible next steps.

#### Steps:

1. Facilitator will give an overview of the activity.
2. The facilitator asks participants to read the interview with Angus McBeath and the excerpt from the research report by Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform.
3. After everyone has had an opportunity to read the interview and the excerpt, the facilitator will ask participants to form triads. The goal of each triad is to synthesize the ideas presented in these readings into five “big ideas.” These are the big ideas about the lessons learned in improving districts. They should think about the following question:

*What connection do you see between the ideas presented by Angus McBeath in his interview and the excerpt from the research report by Cross City Campaign on improving districts?*

4. Based on the size of the group, the facilitator creates an opportunity for each team of three to share and discuss their five big ideas.
5. Facilitator introduces the reflection guide as another version of a synthesis of the articles.
6. Participants are given time to se
7. Facilitator brings closure to the activity and recaps the work completed this morning.

**Self Reflection Planner – District Level**

	In our district, this is a:			
<i><u>Superintendent &amp; Cabinet</u></i>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>Developing Strength</u>	<u>Challenge</u>	<u>Not Sure At This Time</u>
? Articulate a concrete focus on the improvement of teaching and learning as the districts’ top priority				
? Demonstrate this focus in their words, actions and deeds				
? Use student data and student academic needs to develop a focused district improvement plan				
? Ensure schools’ needs related to instruction to drive district policy, practices and resources and align with the district focus				
? Have provided schools with clear expectations for implementation of the district improvement plan				
? Widely communicate district strategies to improve student learning and measurable student learning goals in multiple settings				

**Self Reflection Planner – District Level**

	<b>In our district, this is a:</b>			
<b><u>Mid-Level Central Office</u></b>	<b><u>Strength</u></b>	<b><u>Developing Strength</u></b>	<b><u>Challenge</u></b>	<b><u>Not Sure At This Time</u></b>
? View their roles generally as service providers, not compliance officers				
? Are provided ongoing professional development so that they can learn how to more effectively support schools				
? Have had their work re-organized so that they can spend more time in schools coaching, soliciting feedback and monitoring student progress				
? Provide targeted professional development opportunities to schools with realistic timelines and sufficient resources to build staff capacity				
? Are evaluated based on their ability to lead and support schools in the district improvement effort				
? Have evaluated demands they may place on schools and worked to reduce these demands to allow schools maximum time to focus on instructional improvement				