

### Unit 4, Activity 4: Take action

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|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Purpose</b>        | To apply the research-based ideas by identifying potential strategies and actions. |
| <b>Time</b>           | 70 minutes   |
| <b>Required roles</b> | Participants; facilitator  |

#### Group discussion

Approximate time: 40 minutes

Review the research excerpt from *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning* (The Wallace Foundation, 2013), "[Improving Instruction](#)". Pay particular attention to research findings related to the "technical core of schooling" — those areas essential to improving the quality of teaching and learning: promoting and defining high expectations of quality instruction; promoting continual professional learning; and keeping a focus on teacher practice and student learning in the classroom.

1. The facilitator organizes participants into pairs or small groups so they can discuss the core areas. Then, using a talk-aloud process, or some other interactive process with the groups, the facilitator will demonstrate the first core area, "Set high expectations." Example text is written in green type on the chart below.
2. After the demonstration, participants will move in round-robin fashion to share thoughts and ideas. Focus on one area at a time, and use the chart on page 2 to record notes.
3. Upon completion, use "Considerations before taking action" on page 2 to guide further discussion.

| Area                         | Key ideas  | Relationship to school effectiveness   | Evidence in practice  |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Set high expectations</b> | To communicate high expectations for all students, teachers must become aware that they have differential expectations for students. They unintentionally behave in ways that impede student success — less interaction; call on low-expectancy students less. | Consistent research finding: teacher expectation has strong impact on student achievement. Therefore, teacher behavior must communicate that all students must meet high expectations. | Teachers interact with all students in a respectful manner. Teacher asks low-expectancy students questions at same rate as high-expectancy students, and in ways to help them succeed. Teacher asks low-expectancy students rigorous questions in ways that help them succeed — asks student to explain, rephrases questions or breaks down questions into simpler parts. |

| Area                            | Key ideas | Relationship to school effectiveness | Evidence in practice |
|---------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Set high expectations           |           |                                      |                      |
| Engage in professional learning |           |                                      |                      |
| Monitor instruction             |           |                                      |                      |

### Considerations before taking action

Approximate time: 30 minutes

1. What is essential for principals to know about student and staff learning needs before taking steps to improve instruction? In the film clips what examples did you see of Tresa and Kerry's expectations for professional learning in improving teaching and learning?
2. In the film about improving instruction, what strategy did you identify that was most effective in helping staff members see the difference between current and ideal practices? Discuss how you could adopt or adapt for your school.
3. Tresa and Kerry are principals in low-performing schools. What strategies did they use to improve instruction and turn around their schools? In your experience, how do school system leaders help teachers and principals at these schools improve instruction?