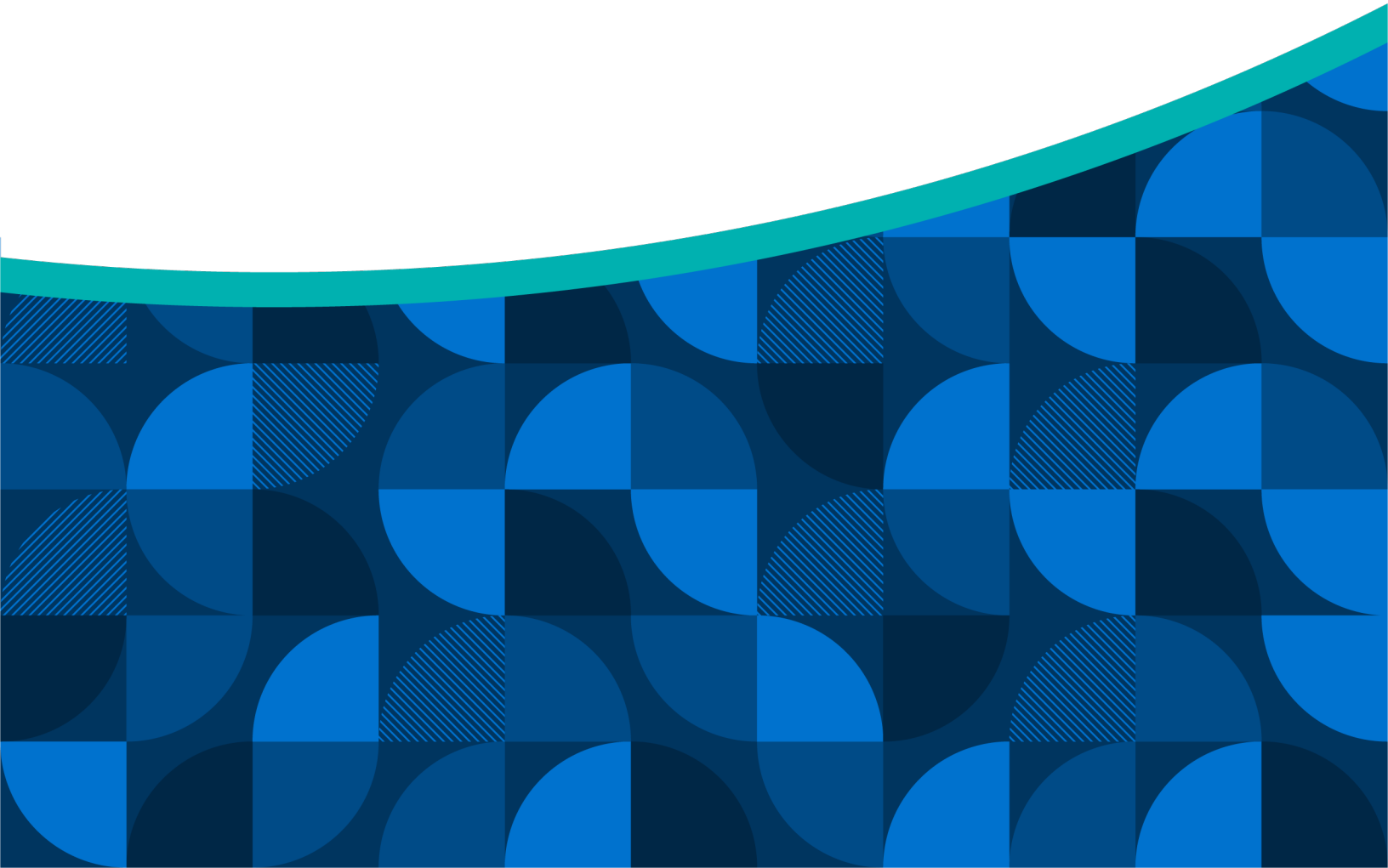




TEACHER MORALE TOOLKIT

Guide to Prioritizing Threats

Use these resources to analyze the impact and feasibility of addressing each threat and ultimately prioritize which morale threats the district will address.



District Leadership Forum

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Schedule Leadership Decision Meeting

Schedule a leadership decision meeting with the objective of prioritizing 1-2 threats to teacher morale to address. Use the following resources to coordinate and run an effective meeting.

STEP #1



Leadership Morale Prioritization Meeting 101

These tools will help district leaders to schedule and host a leadership meeting that will result in prioritizing 1-2 morale threats to address. The tools include a summary of the objectives and goals of this meeting, who should be included, participant invite scripting, an agenda, and after-meeting follow up scripting for participants.

TOOL

Leadership Morale Prioritization Meeting (Pre-Meeting)

Use the below information to help set a clear goal for the meeting and invite the right participants.

Meeting Objectives



Overview of Meeting

- Analyze the 3-5 lowest scoring (i.e., highest disagreement) survey questions and synthesize the survey data with qualitative input from teacher conversations.
- Assess ability to address threats to morale based on impact and feasibility.

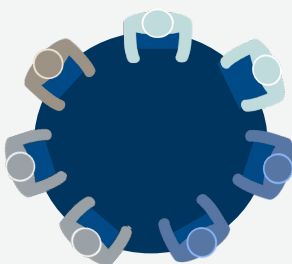


Goal of the Meeting

The goal of this meeting is to determine the 1-2 threats to morale the district will address for the next several months. The aim is to collaboratively unpack the top morale threats teachers have shared so districts can make a decision that is feasible and impactful for teachers and ultimately will improve morale.

Who Should Attend

- Superintendent
- Other district leadership
- Human Resources representative and Union leader
- Implementation leader and executive sponsor



Leadership Morale Prioritization Meeting (Pre-Meeting)

Use the below guidance to invite attendees to your morale prioritization meeting.

Setting Pework and Agenda Expectations



Morale Prioritization Meeting Invite Email Scripting

SUBJECT: Morale Prioritization Meeting

Hi District Leader,

I want to invite you to a district leadership meeting at [INSERT TIME AND DATE], with the purpose of discussing the results of the teacher morale diagnostic survey and qualitative input conversations. In this meeting, we will unpack the top morale threats teachers have shared so we can make a decision that is feasible and impactful. By the end of the meeting, our goal is to agree on the 1-2 threats to morale our district is going to address for the next several months.

For this meeting, we've already narrowed down the survey questions in which our district scored the worst, where we will focus our time. Those include: *[include 3-5 survey questions with highest disagreement responses]*.

In advance of the meeting, we ask that you take the following steps to prepare for the discussion.

1. Please review and familiarize yourself with the attached survey results and conversation notes.
2. Please consult the sub-threats in the attached Morale Threat Register for each of the survey questions listed above. Answer the reflection questions for each to assess what underlying problems our teachers face. We will use these reflections to prioritize the threats to morale that will be most feasible and impactful for the district to address.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me in advance with any questions.

Best,

Superintendent

Leadership Morale Prioritization Meeting (During Meeting)

Use the below guidance to lead a 60-minute meeting with your leadership team to unpack teacher input and prioritize 1-2 morale threats to address. Districts will vary in the level of prioritization they've already completed. Adjust time spent accordingly.

1

Introduction (5 minutes)

- ▶ Remind participants that the goal of the meeting is to unpack teacher input and decide which 1-2 morale threats to address.
- ▶ Open the floor to any initial questions about the prework and then summarize the agenda for the hour.

2

Explain feasibility, impact, and decision matrix (10 minutes)

- ▶ Use the threat register and reflection questions to break down each survey question on what might be the underlying problem. This will help assess these threats on feasibility but also will help the district better address the problem as they design strategies to improve morale.
- ▶ Refer to how the six threat areas fall in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to assess the order in which the district should address the biggest threats to morale. This will help answer the impact-related questions in the decision matrix.

3

Reflection time, discussion on feasibility and impact (15 minutes)

- ▶ Give each leader time to reflect on the 3-5 survey questions in focus using the morale threats register, in case they have not yet.
- ▶ Ask leaders to share thoughts on what underlying problems teachers are facing for each survey question and how that impacts the district's ability to address the problem.

4

Each leader plots survey questions on matrix (10 minutes)

- ▶ Have each leader answer the decision matrix questions and plot the survey questions on the matrix.

5

Plot survey questions on the matrix as a group (10 minutes)

- ▶ Ask leaders to share which survey questions they plotted in the top right quadrant.

6

Prioritize 1-2 threats to address (10 minutes)

- ▶ Vote which of the problems to address and discuss why.
- ▶ Share next steps (see follow up email on page 9).

Leadership Morale Prioritization Meeting (Post-Meeting)

Use this template to share the meeting's key takeaways to participants and to confirm next steps.

Next Steps Email Template

Decision Meeting Next Steps Email Template

SUBJECT: Next Steps on Teacher Morale

Hi District Leader,

Thank you for joining the morale prioritization meeting and informing our decision to address the following survey questions to improve the morale of teachers and their experiences in our district.

1. *[Insert prioritized diagnostic survey question (e.g., 'The actions of district leadership reflect the district's mission and values')]*
2. *[Insert prioritized diagnostic survey question]*

I appreciated our discussion to synthesize our teachers' input and unpack what might be causing the poor responses to these questions. Two of my key takeaways from this discussion, which will inform how we approach addressing these challenges, include:

- *[Insert comments/reflection about underlying root-cause(s) of survey question discussed during meeting (e.g., Teachers are not always made aware of district leaders' actions, and when they are, the link between those decisions and the district's mission is not always explicit)].*
- *[Insert discussion about underlying root-cause(s) of survey question discussed during meeting]*

In terms of next steps, I will circulate an email to principals to share our decision on [DATE]. Shortly after, I will send a similar message to teachers that includes the survey results, our decisions on what we will address now, and why.

That communication will also share with teachers our planned next steps—now that we've identified the problems we plan to address, we will begin to build solutions. But we know we must do that in partnership with teachers, to ensure any solutions work for and speak for teachers.

As you might know, we've been partnering with a research firm on this morale work throughout this spring and plan to continue to do so this summer. We will be in touch with you and with teachers about our plans to co-design solutions to boost morale before the start of the school year.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions and thanks again for your support in this work.

Best,

Superintendent Name



Synthesize Inputs to Assess Impact and Feasibility

Use the following tools to examine underlying threats to teacher morale and synthesize quantitative and qualitative information. This will help to better assess the feasibility and potential impact of addressing each threat.

STEP #2



Morale Threats Register

This tool breaks down each survey question into four possible underlying threats¹. District leaders should use qualitative input to consider which threats are most relevant to their teachers. Using the reflection questions, leaders can consider if addressing this threat presently will be feasible for the district.

TOOL

1) These threats are not meant to be comprehensive, but to be used as starting points and/or examples.

How to Use the Threats Register

In the following pages, there are four possible underlying sub-threats written for each diagnostic survey question across the six threat areas. Review these sub-threats for each of the 3-5 survey questions of focus. Then use the reflection questions below to assess these sub-threats and to:

1. Help leaders synthesize survey and qualitative data and better understand what might be causing teacher disagreement within a given survey question.
2. Facilitate leadership's prioritization of threats by helping leaders better understand the feasibility of addressing the potential underlying problems.

Note: These threats are not meant to be comprehensive, but to be used as starting points and/or examples.

Reflection Questions

1. Which of these sub-threats resonates most with my understanding of teachers' qualitative input?
2. What sub-threats are not included related to this survey question that reflect my teachers' input and experiences shared during qualitative conversations?
3. Based on the sub-threat(s) I think is most relevant, can I envision feasible ways my district might begin to address this problem?

Morale Threats Register

The below statements are possible underlying sub-threats related to each diagnostic survey question in the 'Personal Safety and Belonging' threat area to help leaders synthesize qualitative data and assess feasibility.



Threat Area: Personal Safety and Belonging

Teachers do not feel safe at school.

The school environment / buildings are unsafe (e.g., poor ventilation).

Students cause teachers to feel unsafe.

District/school staff and/or leaders make teachers feel unsafe.

Other community members make teachers feel unsafe.

Teachers disagree that the benefits provided by the district meet their needs.

Teachers consider salaries too low and not competitive with nearby districts.

Teachers consider other compensation benefits (e.g., retirement) too low and not competitive with nearby districts.

Teachers consider benefits outside of compensation (e.g., healthcare) too low.

Teachers unaware of full scope of compensation and benefits.

Teachers disagree that someone seems to care about them at school.

No one has the time or energy to care.

People have time and energy to care, but they still don't care about each other.

A person/people cares about the teacher but does not tell/show them.

A person/people tells/shows them, but the teacher does not accept/believe it.

Teachers disagree that they are treated fairly by their colleagues.

Teachers feel treated unfairly by colleagues in different roles (e.g., grade level, special ed).

Teachers feel treated unfairly by colleagues in similar roles (e.g., general ed, same grade).

Teachers feel treated unfairly based on their identity (e.g., gender, race, sexuality, etc.).

Teachers feel they do not have the communication or collaboration opportunities to treat each other fairly.

Morale Threats Register (cont.)

The below statements are possible underlying sub-threats related to each diagnostic survey question in the 'Time and Resources' threat area to help leaders synthesize qualitative data and assess feasibility.



Threat Area: Time and Resources

Teachers disagree that they have the materials and resources to do their jobs well.

The materials/resources exist, but teachers are not aware/unsure how to access them.

The materials/resources exist, but the district has not distributed them efficiently.

The district has the funds, but there is a shortage of the materials/resources (e.g., classroom supplies, staffing).

The district does not have the funds to provide the materials/resources that staff need.

Teachers disagree that they have a manageable workload most days.

Teachers feel there is too much curriculum to cover during time spent with students.

Teachers feel they have too many responsibilities and duties during non-student time.

Teachers feel they have too many tasks/responsibilities not vital to their duties.

Teachers feel they have too many tasks/responsibilities vital to their core duties.

Teachers disagree that they have training and skills needed to do their best at work.

District leaders offer useful training/skill building, but teachers don't have enough time to access it.

District leaders offer useful training/skill building, but teachers don't use it due to lack of leadership communication about its availability.

District leaders do not provide the best training/skill building opportunities because they are not sure what teachers need.

District leaders know what teachers need/want in terms of training, but don't have the resources or skills to provide the best opportunities.

Morale Threats Register (cont.)

The below statements are possible underlying sub-threats related to each diagnostic survey question in the 'Leadership Trust and Values Alignment' threat area to help leaders synthesize qualitative data and assess feasibility.



Threat Area: Leadership Trust and Values Alignment

Teachers disagree that they understand how their daily work contributes to their school district's mission.

There is a lack of communication about the connection between what teachers are asked to do daily and the district's mission/values.

Communication from leadership about the connection between the school district's mission and teachers' daily work is unclear.

Communication is clear, but teachers disagree that what they are asked to do daily actually aligns with the district's mission/values.

Communication about the connection exists, but teachers think district leaders do not understand what they actually do daily and so are unsure how it connects with the mission.

Teachers disagree that the actions of district leadership reflect the district's mission and values.

Teachers are uncertain of the district's mission and values.

District leadership's actions don't reflect mission and values.

Teachers are unaware of district leadership's actions and decisions.

The link between district leadership's actions and the district's mission is unclear to teachers.

Teachers disagree that they are treated fairly by district leaders.

Teachers think district leaders treat other groups of teachers (e.g., other grades, buildings, etc.) better than their group.

Teachers think district leaders treat groups outside of the district (e.g., parents, students) better than their group.

Teachers think district leaders treat leaders within the district (e.g., principals, school board) better than their group.

Teachers think district leaders treat them unfairly due to identities other than being a teacher (e.g., race, gender, SES, sexuality, etc.).

Morale Threats Register (cont.)

The below statements are possible underlying sub-threats related to each diagnostic survey question in the 'Ownership and Input' threat area to help leaders synthesize qualitative data and assess feasibility.



Threat Area: Ownership and Input

Teachers disagree that they have ownership and control over their teaching practice and classroom.

Teachers perceive that district leaders make too many decisions relating to teachers' classroom/practice.

Teachers are unclear what elements of their classroom they can decide (i.e., what is a mandate versus suggestion).

Teachers think other teachers have control over their classrooms, but they do not.

Teachers are unaware or do not take advantage of how much control and ownership they have over their classroom/practice because it is not communicated well.

Teachers disagree that they're opinions are heard and valued by district leaders.

No or few opportunities to share opinions and ideas at district level exist.

Teachers are welcome to share ideas, but infrequently hear anything back.

Teachers hear back about input, but changes are never made.

Changes are observed but misaligned with some individual teachers' ideas.

Teachers disagree that in their current role they get to do what they do best every day.

Teachers think their district's expectations of teachers do not relate enough to what teachers do best.

Teachers think their training and skills are misaligned to what great teachers need to be their best.

Teachers think there are too many responsibilities of teachers that are unrelated to what they do best (e.g., administrative tasks, classroom management).

Teachers think they do not have time to prepare to do their best.

Morale Threats Register (cont.)

The below statements are possible underlying sub-threats related to each diagnostic survey question in the 'Recognition and Value' threat area to help leaders synthesize qualitative data and assess feasibility.



Threat Area: Recognition and Value

Teachers disagree that they are recognized for excellent work by district leadership.

District leaders recognize some teachers for excellent work, but most teachers don't know about it.

District leaders recognize teachers, but not for what most teachers consider 'excellent' work.

District leaders do not recognize enough teachers for excellent work because they don't know who is doing excellent work.

District leaders recognize teachers but not in ways teachers think is sufficient (e.g., free lunch).

Teachers disagree that they feel valued for their work as a teacher.

Teachers feel undervalued by district/school leaders because those leaders miscommunicate or under communicate their value.

Teachers feel undervalued by district/school leaders because those individuals communicate that they undervalue them.

Teachers feel undervalued by others (students, parents, community members) because those individuals miscommunicate or under communicate their value.

Teachers feel undervalued by others (students, parents, community members) because those individuals communicate that they undervalue them.

Teachers disagree that they have received recognition for doing their job well (weekly).

Teachers do not receive regular recognition for doing their job well.

While teachers sometimes receive recognition for doing their job well, it happens less often than weekly.

Teachers receive recognition but they do not view it as valuable or related to their job performance.

Teachers receive recognition but not from those they are seeking recognition from (e.g., peer teachers rather than school leaders).

Morale Threats Register (cont.)

The below statements are possible underlying sub-threats related to each diagnostic survey question in the 'Professional Growth' threat area to help leaders synthesize qualitative data and assess feasibility.



Threat Area: Professional Growth

Teachers disagree that the district has provided opportunities to learn and grow as a teacher within the last year.

District provides opportunities, but they are not what teachers' want/need.

District provides opportunities, but teachers do not have the time/capacity to attend.

District provides opportunities, but teachers are not aware of them.

District does not provide opportunities.

Teachers disagree that their direct supervisor supports their career aspirations and goals.

Supervisors try to support teachers, but don't have resources or skills to do this well.

Supervisors have the skills but avoid this because they think the only option is encouraging teachers to leave the classroom.

Supervisors are asked/expected to dedicate time to this, but still do not.

Supervisors are not asked or expected to dedicate time to this.

Teachers disagree that there is a path forward for professional growth in their district.

A path for professional growth exists, but teachers are not aware of it.

A path for professional growth exists, but it requires teachers to leave the classroom.

A path exists, but teachers are not supported nor encouraged to pursue it.

Opportunities for professional growth, either inside or outside of the classroom, do not exist or are extremely limited.



Applying Maslow's Hierarchy to Morale Threats

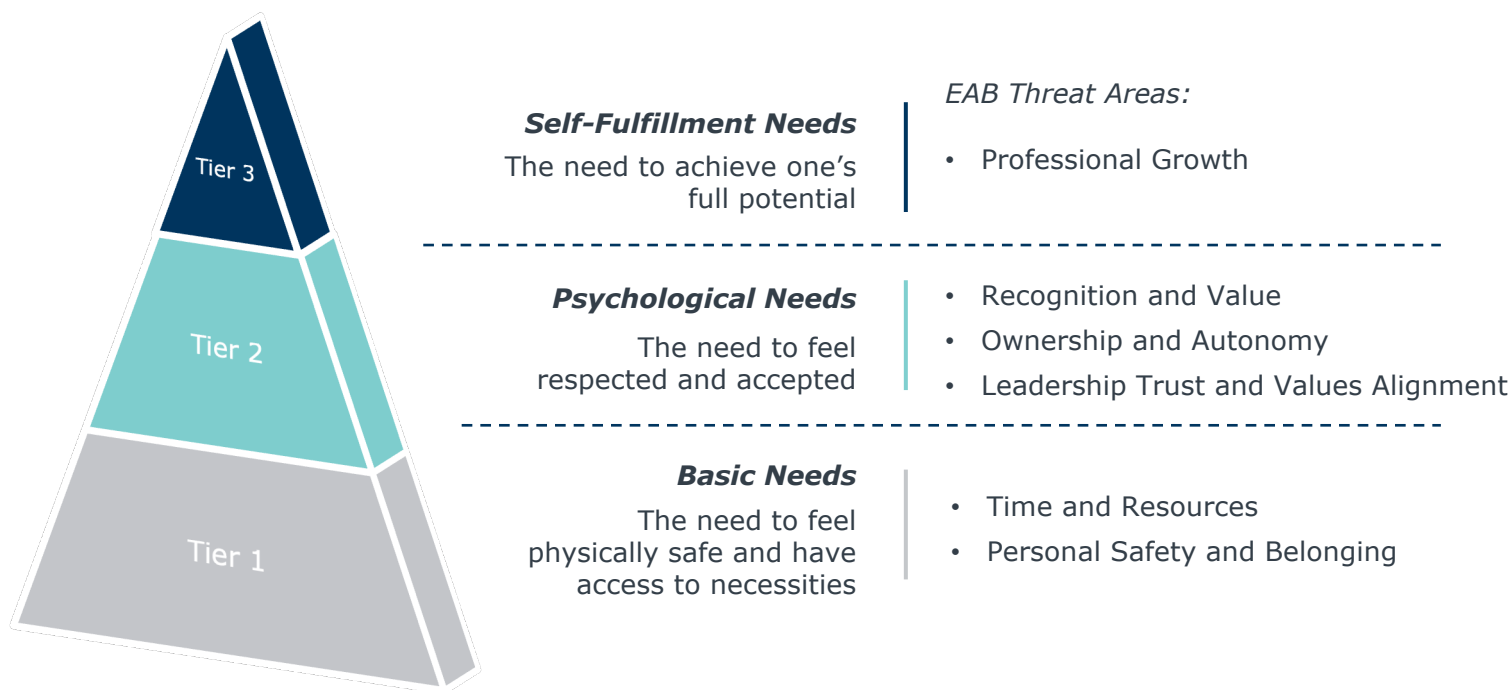
Use this tool to understand where each of the six threat areas fall in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and accordingly gain a better understanding of the impact of addressing certain threats over others.

TOOL

Maslow's Needs Hierarchy Cheat Sheet

Use this chart to guide your understanding and assessment of the potential impact of each threat to teacher morale. Refer to this chart when using the decision matrix (pages 24-25).

How EAB's Six Threats Fit Into Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



To prioritize threats to teacher morale effectively, district leaders need to consider potential impact in addition to feasibility and teacher input. A key to understanding impact is to understand that there is a hierarchy to the six morale threat areas.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a well-known theory that proposes there is a hierarchy, or an order, of how specific needs must be fulfilled for individuals to be their best. According to this model, all humans have basic and psychological needs that must be met before they can grow professionally and reach their full potential (i.e., self-fulfillment).

EAB has applied this theory to the six threat areas to help district leaders better assess and understand the potential impact of addressing these threats and to prioritize which threats to tackle.

(Continued on the next page)

Maslow's Needs Hierarchy Cheat Sheet (cont.)

Use this information to guide your understanding and assessment of the potential impact of each threat to teacher morale. Refer to this when using the decision matrix (pages 24-25).

Districts often jump to morale-boosting strategies that are too 'advanced' in this hierarchy. A district might start with a higher order threat area like recognition and value by using teacher appreciation strategies. However, this assumes that teachers' baseline needs (e.g., personal safety) are already met. For some districts, that most certainly will be the case, but for many districts, some of the biggest threats surfaced while diagnosing causes of low morale will be more foundational and so should be addressed first. EAB's prioritization matrix (starting on page 24) will help you assess where your district's largest threats to morale fall on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.



Prioritize 1-2 Morale Threats to Address

Use the following tools and guidance to select 1-2 morale threats for the district leadership team to aim to address for now.

STEP #3





Threat Prioritization Decision Matrix

Use this matrix to rank survey questions and threats to morale based on feasibility and impact. This should inform which threats district leaders prioritize to address.

TOOL


Morale Threat Prioritization Decision Matrix

Answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge. Repeat this assessment for each of the 3-5 survey questions in focus. Use the 3-point rating scale to answer the five questions below. For each question, add up the points in each section to get your impact and feasibility score. On the next page, plot those scores on the threat decision matrix.

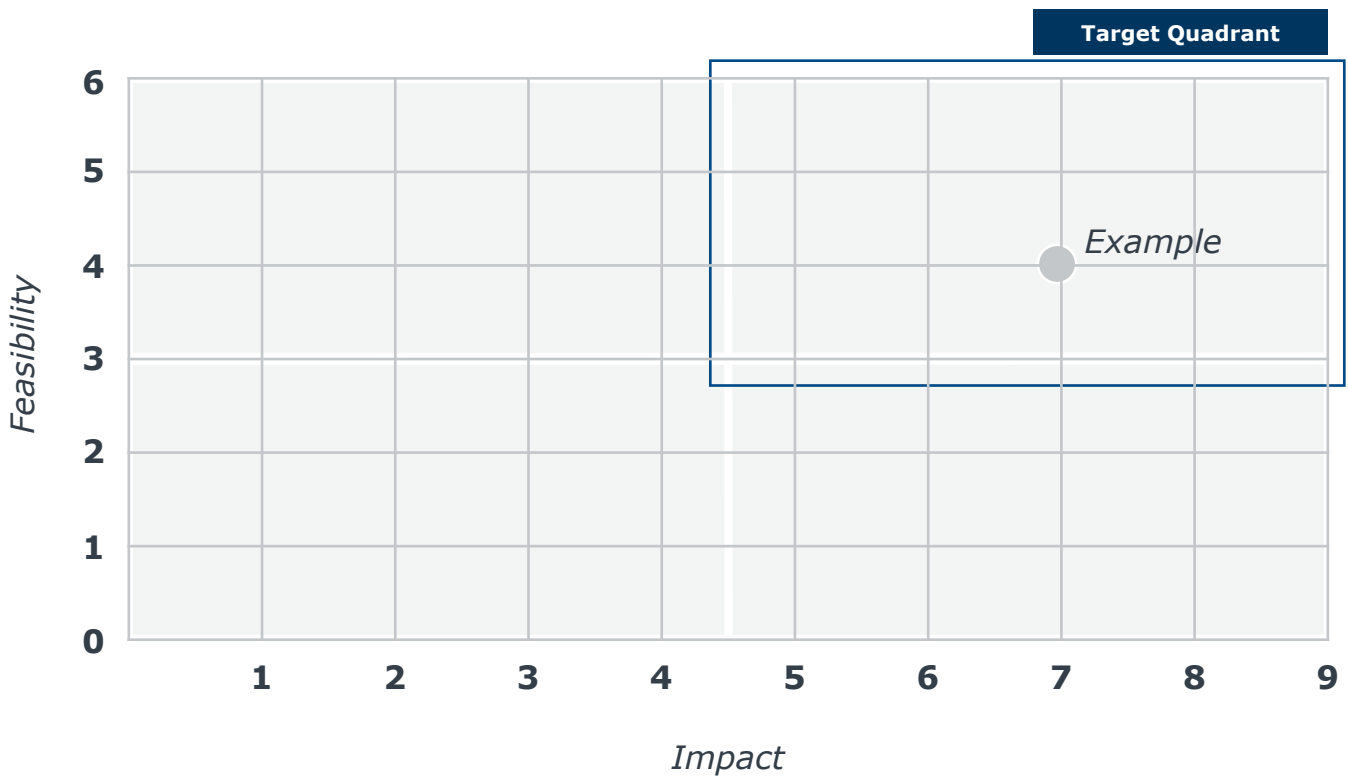
 Impact	1 point	2 points	3 points	Point Count
1. To which tier in Marlow's Hierarchy does this survey question's threat area belong (see page 20)?	<i>Self-Fulfillment</i>	<i>Psychological Needs</i>	<i>Basic Needs</i>	_____
2. How does this survey question rank in disagreement overall (percent disagree + strongly disagree)?	<i>Below Top 5 Disagreed Upon Questions</i>	<i>Top 5 Most Disagreed Upon Question</i>	<i>Top 2 Most Disagreed Upon Question</i>	_____
3. How does this survey question's threat area (e.g., time and resources) rank in average disagreement overall?	<i>Threat area ranked 5th or 6th</i>	<i>Threat Area ranked 3rd or 4th</i>	<i>Threat Area Ranked 1st or 2nd</i>	_____
Sum of Impact Score				_____
 Feasibility				
4. I can envision feasible ways my district might begin to address this survey question's underlying threat(s) (see Morale Threats Register, pages 11-18)	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	_____
5. How much staff, staff time, and financial investment will be required to address this threat?	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Minimal</i>	_____
Sum of Feasibility Score				_____

Morale Threat Prioritization Decision Matrix

Write the impact and feasibility scores for each survey question in focus on the lines below. Then plot those scores on the matrix below. For example, the grey dot in the grid represents a question with an Impact score of 7 and a Feasibility score of 4.

 **Survey Question Scores**

	Question #1	Question #2	Question #3	Question #4	Question #5
Sum of Impact Score (X-Axis)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sum of Feasibility Score (Y-Axis)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____



Select 1-2 of the threats plotted in (or closest to) the top right quadrant to address to improve teacher morale. These are the survey questions with the scores highest in feasibility and highest in potential impact. District leaders should continue to apply the underlying threats they discussed during this meeting and synthesized qualitative feedback as they begin to address the prioritized morale concerns.