

# inflexion SIGNATURE SERVICE

How We Partner to Build Student-Centered Schools

## YOUR LEADERS AND STUDENTS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

### Today's schools have the responsibility to prepare students for life, not just tests.

We are a nonprofit consulting group that helps educators better equip students for success—defined by students' engagement, adaptability, and what they can do with their knowledge, rather than just content mastery and testing. Inflexion partners with districts and schools to help them create learning communities with the right systems and supports, so that all students graduate truly ready for college, career, and life.

**We know what works to change schools for the better.** Our approach is grounded in more than a decade of experience researching school effectiveness and student readiness. Our unique approach to school change supports schoolwide implementation and establishes the necessary conditions for school transformation. It is producing remarkable, multi-year results for districts we've partnered with, including districts that serve socioeconomically disadvantaged and historically underserved populations.



### Secondary school change is what we know, what we research, what we are passionate about, and *what we do*.

Every day, we focus on a future where education works for ALL students. We want to be your district's creative catalyst, inspiring and equipping you to create this future—and helping link your schools with others doing the same.

Our expertise helps schools discover their strengths and rethink readiness.

"The Inflexion team is a valued thought partner in our district. They have supported our schools through the thinking, planning, and implementation of our goals. They have a unique way of quickly establishing a rapport with staff. Inflexion's professionalism, follow-up, and response to our needs has been critical to our success. I've always felt that they are truly here to help us succeed and meet our goals."

Constantino Aguilar, Assistant Superintendent  
Merced Union High School District

# Inflexion's Signature Service starts by defining two anchors that can make or break school change efforts

**Too many school improvement initiatives dive immediately into reforms of learning approaches or processes. This is skipping steps.**

Inflexion's Signature Service is a multi-year partnership, based on a sequence of engagements that are grounded in organizational change theory, ongoing research, and practical results. We start by working with school leadership teams to engage the entire community of stakeholders—teachers and other staff, families, community members, students—to clearly define desired outcomes and a unique identity for the school. We call these the two anchors. Together, they provide necessary clarity and support for other changes which may be needed to improve student outcomes.

Ours is not a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach. We work with leadership teams on a well-structured, customized sequence—schoolwide engagements, self-reflection, results analysis, progress measurement—to provide **all** of your students with the outcomes they need for success beyond high school.

## **ANCHOR ONE:** **Shared Vision for Readiness**

Inflexion guides leadership teams through a process of defining and communicating the holistic set of skills that ALL students need for success after high school. Guided by evidence-based research and extensive education experience, our team helps educators identify and prioritize the skills needed to be successful after high school. These incorporate interpersonal, intrapersonal, and metacognitive skills and go beyond simply stating desired student outcomes. Focusing on these skills also provides clarity about the role of teachers and content in achieving success.

## **ANCHOR TWO:** **School Identity**

We work with school leaders to gather input from community stakeholders and create statements that quickly and easily communicate the values and beliefs that are important to the school. They also underscore the community's shared vision for readiness. These "Life Ready Maxims" are short, memorable, distinctive, and enduring to your school, and can be graphically integrated with your logo and colors to appear in lobbies, in classrooms, and on school stationery. By identifying and reinforcing a clear sense of identity, the maxims build community and empower school leadership teams to drive the type of organizational change that ensures schools meet the interests, aspirations, and needs of ALL students.

## **ALIGN AND REVISE** **Key Systems and Structures**

Once schools establish the necessary—but often missing—anchors of a Shared Vision for Readiness and School Identity, Inflexion guides leadership teams through the latest thinking on research-based best practices and what is working in schools similar to theirs. We advise schools as they revise their key systems to support the learning environment. We help align their structures and learning practices to better meet the needs of historically underserved and marginalized students.

# Our journey together will include these activities

## At the start of year one...

**Create your road map.** We share why our research-based framework for student readiness and school identity works. We explain the Four Keys and Inflexion's approach, designed to support schoolwide implementation efforts in order to build learning communities that work for ALL students.

**Engage stakeholders and create a shared definition of readiness.** We work with leadership teams using online surveys and protocols to discover what is most important to their communities when it comes to student readiness. After summarizing what stakeholders have shared, we suggest **Life Ready Maxims** (see definition to the right) and provide guidance on how to use maxims effectively to transform school culture.

## Over the first two years...

**Align school identity with school supports and instruction.** Once maxims are established they need to be used every period, every day in order to bring coherence to all that schools do to support students. We help teams look critically at instructional efforts and student supports, suggesting resources and providing examples of how other schools are using their maxims to do this.

**Analyze the coherence of existing systems and structures.** After the first year, once maxims are integrated into daily approaches to learning, we work with teams to conduct a coherence check of key school systems and structures. This audit is repeated annually.

## Then move forward on reforms...

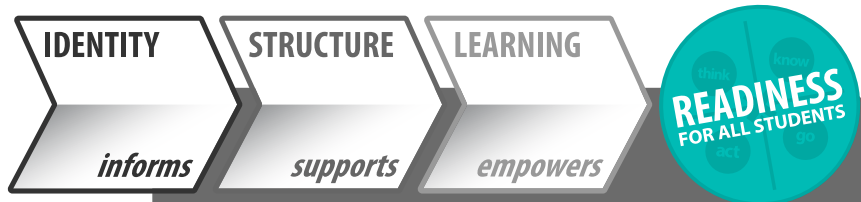
**Build and revise key systems and structures.** Based on the coherence check, we work with teams as they develop an ambitious, but realistic plan. This includes coaching clinics where leadership teams build and revise key structures to improve student support systems. The focus is on leadership, healthy relationships, and equitable access to resources.

**Plan and monitor school change efforts.** We help school teams examine what they're delivering, and align it to a holistic definition of student readiness. This includes identifying and committing to priorities for future years and tracking the progress made.

**Develop a system for monitoring and adjusting coherence, alignment, and communication strategies.** Imagine us as the Fitbit® for complex systems change. We help monitor progress over time with the objective of keeping goals clearly in mind, while still juggling the demands of the day-to-day.

## What are the Four Keys?

The Four Keys to College and Career Readiness is a research-based, holistic framework that defines the skills and dispositions students need for life after high school. To simplify, we refer to the Four Keys as Think, Know, Act, Go. Success beyond high school requires critical thinking and problem solving (Think), content knowledge (Know), ownership of learning and self-management (Act), and the ability to navigate life transitions (Go). A narrow definition of readiness or a singular focus on content knowledge undermines students' opportunity for success. The Four Keys gives schools and districts a common language and actionable model to align resources, initiatives, and classroom instruction.



## What is the Inflexion Approach?

The Inflexion Approach is an organizational framework designed to support schoolwide implementation efforts and to build learning communities that work for ALL students. It is a way to develop coherence in systems often described as being disjointed, disorganized, and chaotic. The Inflexion Approach establishes a firm school identity, a shared holistic vision for readiness, and structures and learning approaches aligned to both.

## What are Life Ready Maxims?

It's a statement that acts as a school's core driver to equip and empower every student to pursue their passions, interests, and aspirations. It is used to highlight the areas of hidden strength already within a school. It can also be used as an aspirational statement to reinforce the promises your school makes to the community. Maxims should be displayed widely and built into the daily curriculum, as a whole or in part, to familiarize your students and staff with them and embed them into school culture.

# Creating a student-centered culture through structural alignment

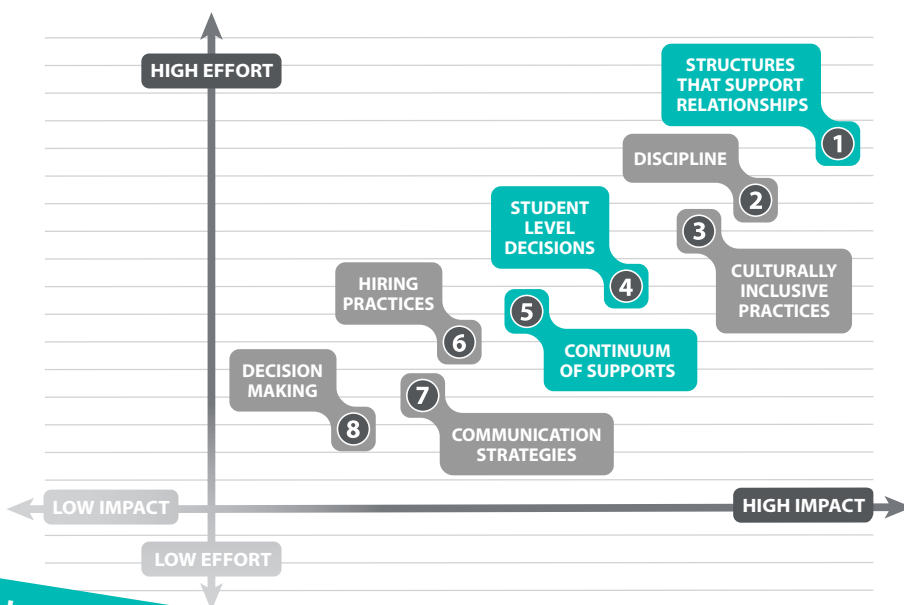
Once the anchors of a Shared Vision for Readiness and School Identity are established, schools can move to revising key systems and structures to create a student-centered culture. Aligning structures so they reinforce these anchors creates a learning environment where students, families, and educators can thrive. We support leadership teams in year three and beyond as they build and revise structures such as the following:

- 1 STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT RELATIONSHIPS** (teaming/house structures, advisory models, scheduling strategies, etc.)
- 2** Compassionate and empathetic student management and **DISCIPLINE PRACTICES**
- 3 CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE** and identity-specific practices
- 4 STUDENT-LEVEL DECISIONS** that are known, used, and regularly refined to ensure students receive what they need, when they need it, how they need it
- 5 CONTINUUM OF SUPPORTS** that addresses a holistic set of outcomes/skills and needs (academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and physical)
- 6** Equitable talent pipeline, **HIRING PRACTICES**, and onboarding and evaluation systems
- 7** Effective, identity-infused **COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**
- 8** Inclusive, collaborative **DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES** and continuous improvement

These structures, once aligned, have great impact. They also take time and energy to change.

We work with leadership teams to determine how and when they should revise these structures as they build a sustainable, student-centered culture in their school communities.

The end result: **STUDENT EXPERIENCE** is placed at the center of decisions and students are systematically empowered through structures that reflect their voice. They develop a sense of agency as well as a sense of belonging and acceptance.



FOR MORE INFORMATION: [schoolpartnerships@inflexion.org](mailto:schoolpartnerships@inflexion.org) • [www.inflexion.org](http://www.inflexion.org)