What’s My School Mindset Culture?

(See [www.mindsetworks.com/assess/](http://www.mindsetworks.com/assess/) for more assessments for educators with automatic scoring & feedback)

Rate the frequency of each of the statements below with regard to your school on the following scale:

1 = Never  
2 = Rarely  
3 = Sometimes  
4 = Frequently  
5 = Usually  
6 = Always

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared leadership &amp; open communication</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership opportunities are open to all staff members, and staff members volunteer for and take on leadership roles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are invited to give critical feedback about administrative practices and how they would like additional support, and administration is responsive to the feedback.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers receive clear feedback on and ongoing support for their practice outside of formal evaluations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers, coaches, and administrators work together to design goals and plans for teacher development, and follow up with appropriate support.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty culture of collaborative learning</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers collaborate freely with colleagues, sharing or co-developing lessons, assessments, and student work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time is provided in the work day for coaching, co-planning/co-teaching, and structured professional learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are open and responsive to critical feedback from administrators and peers and use it to improve.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are equally open and supportive with all of their colleagues and get along well with one another.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High expectations &amp; focus on growth</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional expectations, standards, and evaluation protocols are made clear to teachers in advance and teachers seek the support they need to accomplish desired goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty members feel confident that they can develop their teaching skills with practice and feedback and seek out the resources to do so.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators and teachers in our school truly believe that they can help all students to meet learning goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students and parents have high expectations for student achievement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Motivation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students engage in learning activities that are not required and strive to improve their skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate with enthusiasm, volunteering comments and answers to questions and asking relevant questions about material.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students engage positively with one another and support other students’ learning through offering encouragement, helping and collaborating effectively, and seeking their help appropriately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students persist rather than give up when work is challenging.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are not upset by initial errors or difficulties—they seem confident that they can succeed with effort (rather than saying, “I can’t” or “I’m not good at this.”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now circle ratings of 3 or lower, and identify 1-2 items or categories that you would like to work on.
School Mindset Culture Feedback

Add up your responses from the survey to see which feedback section is relevant to your school. Read the appropriate feedback below and reflect: To what extent does this assessment appear to reflect the current culture at your school?

Then read the “What does this mean?” section for some description of what effect this culture may be having.

Finally, read the “Next Steps” recommendations and utilize the Moves for Leaders page to begin to take action.

75-100
At present, your school probably has many of the following characteristics of a Growth Mindset:

- Many or most staff members participate in leadership and decision-making, and all have the opportunity to do so.
- Leaders act as learners and model the growth mindset, including openness to feedback and improvement of their practice; they support their teachers as learners.
- Staff has come to see change as normal and part of the development process, rather than threatening.
- Excellent teachers share their knowledge, and all teachers have the opportunity to contribute to collective learning. The quality of instruction is consistently improving.
- Less-skilled teachers are encouraged to learn from their colleagues, and structured time is available for them to do so.
- When teachers are ineffective, they are consistently supported in the areas where they struggle, and most ultimately succeed.
- The needs of most students are being met; where they are not, teams are working deliberately to find solutions.
- There is school-wide pride in joint achievements, but no sense of complacency.

What does this mean?
A school with a growth mindset is one where all staff see themselves as learners and where they support one another in developing toward individual and common goals. Knowing that all humans can grow their intelligence influences and motivates both adult and adolescent learners. Being in a growth mindset school doesn't mean that there are no challenges, mistakes, or failures—it means that people are continually striving to overcome them. When students are in an environment that promotes growth and, hopefully, intellectual risk-taking, they excel too.

Of course, even a growth-minded school community usually has some areas in which they could develop and be more effective. When members of the school community consciously cultivate growth mindset principles and practices, they can transform their collective culture and experience into ever greater success.

Next Steps: Consider the Moves for Leaders resource which has some tips for being deliberate about creating and maintaining a growth mindset at your school. Option Three especially gives some tips for a school that is already quite growth-minded in its practices.
At present, your school probably has many of the following characteristics of a **Mixed Mindset**:

- Individual teachers grow leadership skills through their own initiative and the school provides those individuals with leadership opportunities.
- Leaders’ perceive staff as wary of change.
- Some grade-levels or departments are dynamic and collaborate, but school-wide there is not a culture of collaboration.
- There is a mismatch between expectations and opportunities for collaboration.
- Teachers are congenial, but do not go out of their way to support struggling teachers.
- When teachers are struggling, intervention efforts are made by administrators or coaches, but mediocre teaching is generally tolerated.
- Though the needs of some students are not met, there’s a sense the school is doing “just fine.”

**What does this mean?**

A school with a mixed mindset is not meeting its full potential. While some staff members are focusing on how they can do better, others are preoccupied with trying to maintain the status quo and avoid the risk of blame or new demands. Like an individual with a mixed mindset, a mixed mindset school culture creates vulnerabilities and weak points where people are striving for a positive judgment or to maintain comfort, rather than to continuously improve. Many middle or high-performing schools fall into this category—content to rest on a positive achievement record, but missing the opportunity to accelerate students’ achievement or to serve the needs of all students at a high level. While there may be a feeling that the site is doing well and there are no glaring issues, a closer look might reveal some areas that are real cause for concern. Unless the school has a system and a culture for supporting growth, those small areas will never resolve themselves.

But school culture CAN be changed! Just as a person can develop a growth mindset, when members of the school community consciously cultivate growth mindset principles and practices, they can transform their collective culture and experience much greater success.

**Next Steps:**

I. Consider the [Moves for Leaders](https://www.mindsetworks.com/moves-for-leaders) resource which has some tips for being deliberate about creating and maintaining a growth mindset at your school. [Move Option Two](https://www.mindsetworks.com/moves-for-leaders) might be a good place for a school in this category (mixed mindset).

II. Identify Growth Mindset Champions in your building who can be allies in this culture change. Peer relations can be quite influential and positive, growth-minded behavior is very contagious. Share portions of this LeaderKit with your champions and enlist their support.

III. Utilize the [Mindset Works® EducatorKit](https://www.mindsetworks.com/educatorkit) teacher training program. In addition to a solid foundation in both mindset research and theory and brain plasticity and learning, the EducatorKit provides your teachers with instructional strategies to support a growth mindset in students in everyday teaching, along with additional tools and resources to put them into practice.
At present, your school probably has many of the following characteristics of a **Fixed Mindset**:

- Administrators and perhaps a few key leaders make most decisions for a site.
- Some staff members are frustrated by decisions and may challenge administration each time there is a change on campus.
- Leaders perceive staff to be entrenched and resistant to change.
- While there are pockets of excellence, the quality of instruction is quite inconsistent.
- Many teachers work in relative isolation and less-skilled teachers have little chance to learn from their colleagues.
- Teachers who are ineffective may not understand why or what do to about it.
- When teachers are unsuccessful, they are generally either gotten rid of, or ignored and worked around.
- The needs of many students are not being effectively met and no one is sure what to do about it.

**What does this mean?**

A fixed mindset school community is one in which people lack confidence in their ability to grow and develop together in a positive direction. When a community is working with a primarily fixed mindset orientation, most of its members are focused on preserving their status and avoiding negative judgments. Like an individual with a fixed mindset, a fixed mindset school culture keeps people anxious, striving to either look good or guard against looking bad, rather than working to get better. These conditions can undermine the motivation and morale of everyone in the building—administrators, teachers, and students.

Even high-performing schools can exhibit these belief-based dynamics, limiting their potential to engage everyone to their utmost.

But school culture CAN be changed! Just as a person can develop a growth mindset, when members of the school community consciously cultivate growth mindset principles and practices, they too can transform their collective culture and experience much greater success.

**Next Steps:**

I. Consider the [Moves for Leaders](#) resource which has some tips for being deliberate about creating and maintaining a growth mindset at your school. [Move Option One](#) might be a good place for a school in this category (fixed mindset).

II. Identify Growth Mindset Champions in your building who can be allies in this culture change. Peer relations can be quite influential and positive; growth-minded behavior is very contagious. Share portions of this LeaderKit with your champions and enlist their support.

III. Talk with students and ask them about their perceptions of the mindset in the school. Capture comments and think about how to share the students’ perspective to influence staff to learn more about growth and fixed mindsets and how we can change them.