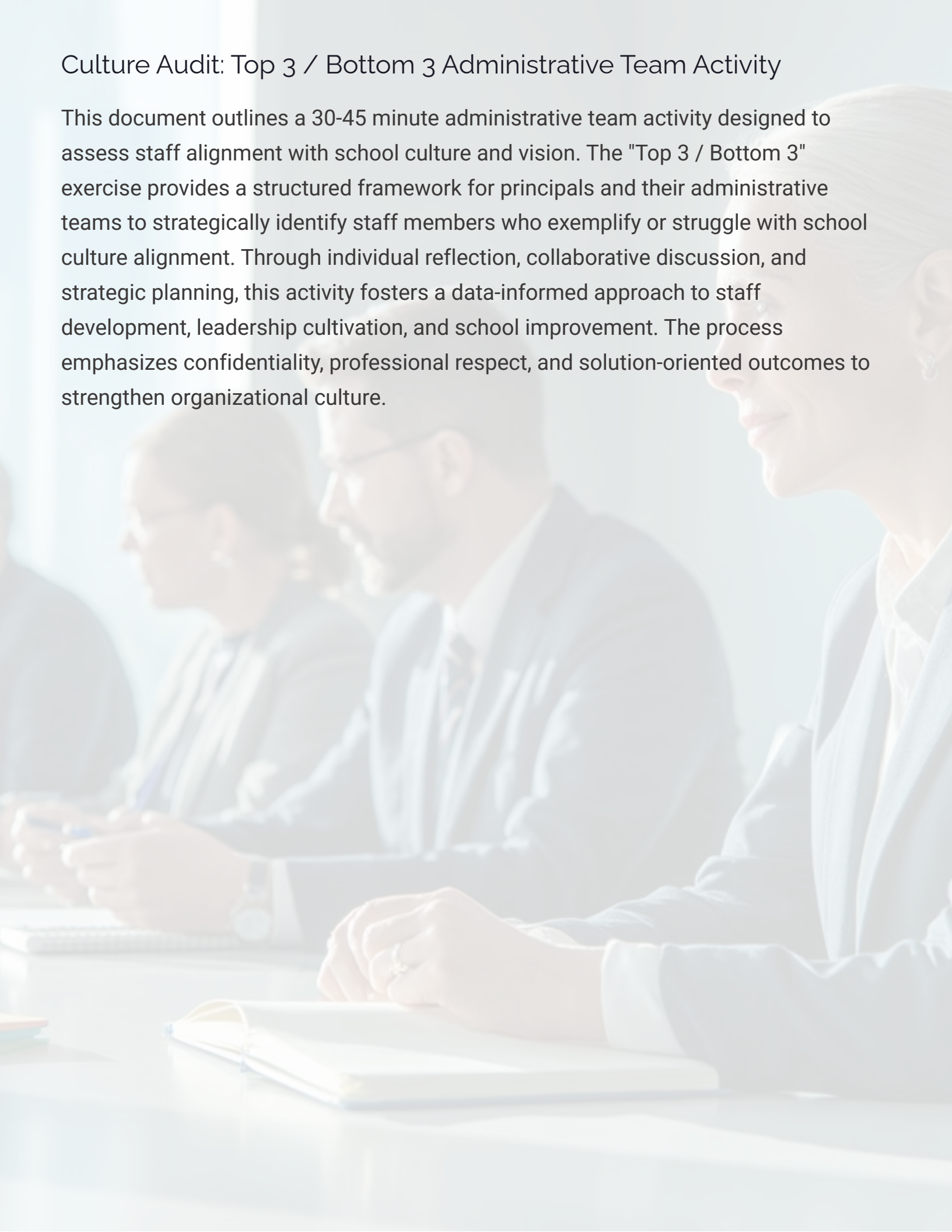


## Culture Audit: Top 3 / Bottom 3 Administrative Team Activity

This document outlines a 30-45 minute administrative team activity designed to assess staff alignment with school culture and vision. The "Top 3 / Bottom 3" exercise provides a structured framework for principals and their administrative teams to strategically identify staff members who exemplify or struggle with school culture alignment. Through individual reflection, collaborative discussion, and strategic planning, this activity fosters a data-informed approach to staff development, leadership cultivation, and school improvement. The process emphasizes confidentiality, professional respect, and solution-oriented outcomes to strengthen organizational culture.



# Setting the Foundation for Meaningful Evaluation

The Culture Audit activity serves as a critical leadership tool to systematically evaluate how effectively staff members embody and advance your school's cultural values and vision. Before diving into individual assessments, it's essential to frame this exercise properly with your administrative team.

## Primary Objectives

This activity aims to identify patterns of cultural alignment across your staff, enabling targeted support and strategic leadership development. Rather than serving as a performance evaluation, it functions as a cultural assessment tool to strengthen organizational health and mission fulfillment.

## Guiding Principles

Approach this exercise with an improvement mindset rather than a deficit perspective. Focus discussions on observable behaviors and contributions, not personality traits or subjective impressions. Maintain absolute confidentiality about individual assessments beyond the administrative team.

## Strategic Context

Connect this activity explicitly to your school improvement goals, professional development plans, and leadership pipeline development. This isn't an isolated exercise but part of your comprehensive approach to cultivating a thriving school culture.

Begin the session by clearly articulating your school's core cultural values and vision elements. This ensures all administrators are using consistent criteria for their assessments. Consider displaying these prominently during the activity or providing a reference sheet with key cultural indicators (e.g., "embraces innovation," "demonstrates student-centered decision making," "contributes positively to staff morale").

Address potential concerns about the evaluative nature of this exercise by emphasizing its formative purpose. Explicitly state that the goal is not to create "favorites" or "problem lists," but rather to identify patterns that inform strategic leadership decisions and support systems. Establish ground rules that reinforce professional respect and growth-oriented discussions.

Finally, provide a brief overview of the activity structure, timeframes, and expected outcomes to set clear expectations for the administrative team's participation.

# Individual Reflection (10 minutes)

# Personal Assessment Process

During this critical first phase, each administrator works independently to identify staff members who demonstrate the strongest alignment with school culture and vision (Top 3) and those who may need additional support or guidance (Bottom 3). This individual reflection time creates space for thoughtful analysis before group discussion.

Provide each team member with a structured worksheet divided into two sections: "Cultural Champions" and "Cultural Growth Opportunities." In each section, administrators should identify three staff members and document specific observed behaviors, contributions, or challenges that inform their assessment.

Emphasize that selections should be based on consistent patterns rather than isolated incidents. A single difficult interaction or exemplary moment should not determine placement on either list. Instead, encourage administrators to consider sustained behaviors and contributions over time.



## Reflection Prompts

Consider providing these specific prompts on the worksheet to guide deeper reflection:

- What specific behaviors or actions demonstrate this staff member's alignment (or misalignment) with our core values?
- How has this person influenced colleagues' perception of school culture?
- What measurable impact has this person had on school initiatives or climate?

# Evidence-Based Identification

Guide administrators to ground their selections in concrete evidence rather than general impressions or personal preferences. Provide examples of the types of data points they might consider:



## Quantitative Indicators

- Participation rates in voluntary professional development or school initiatives
- Implementation metrics for school-wide strategies
- Attendance and engagement in team meetings or collaborative planning
- Student achievement data that reflects pedagogical alignment with school vision



## Qualitative Indicators

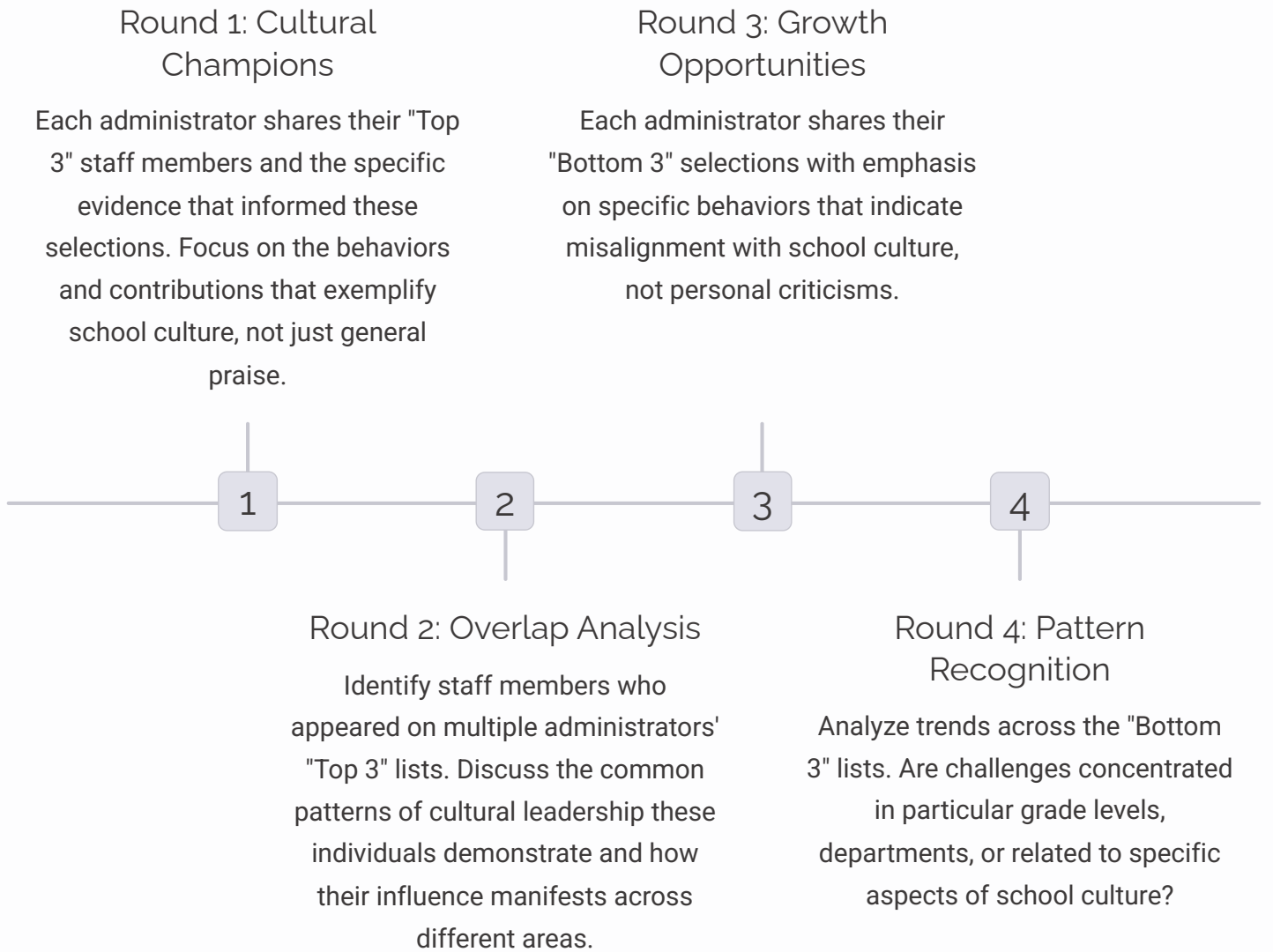
- Observable interactions with students, parents, and colleagues
- Communication patterns in professional settings
- Response to feedback and adaptation to school initiatives
- Contributions to problem-solving and innovation efforts

Remind administrators that this exercise is about cultural alignment, not technical competence alone. A highly skilled teacher who undermines school culture may warrant inclusion in the "Bottom 3," while someone still developing technical skills but who exemplifies cultural values might appear in the "Top 3." The focus remains on how staff members advance or inhibit the collective pursuit of the school's vision and values.

# Team Discussion (15-20 minutes)

# Structured Sharing Protocol

After individual reflection, transition to a facilitated discussion where administrators share their assessments and rationales. This collaborative analysis helps identify patterns across the organization and mitigates individual biases in perception. The discussion phase should balance candid conversation with professional respect.



# Facilitation Techniques

As the principal, your facilitation of this discussion is crucial to its effectiveness. Consider these strategies to enhance the quality of discourse:

Technique	Implementation Approach
Perspective Taking	When discussing staff members in the "Bottom 3," prompt administrators to consider contextual factors or challenges these individuals might be facing.
Evidence Checking	When assertions seem subjective, ask "What specific behaviors or outcomes lead you to that conclusion?" to refocus on observable data.
Bias Awareness	Periodically pause to reflect: "Are we overlooking certain types of cultural contributions? Are our assessments influenced by personal work styles or preferences?"
Confidentiality Reminders	Regularly emphasize that discussions remain within the administrative team and will inform supportive, not punitive, actions.

Document key insights that emerge during discussion, particularly patterns that suggest systemic issues or opportunities. Create a consolidated list of staff members who appeared frequently in either category, noting the specific cultural behaviors that led to their inclusion. This documentation will serve as the foundation for your strategic planning in the next phase.



# Actionable Implications

The culmination of your Culture Audit should be a concrete strategic plan that leverages insights to strengthen school culture. This final phase transforms observation into action by developing tailored approaches for both cultural champions and those needing additional support.



## Recognize & Leverage Champions

Develop specific strategies to acknowledge and amplify the influence of cultural exemplars. Consider formal recognition programs, leadership opportunities, or mentorship roles that position these staff members as cultural ambassadors.



## Bridge Cultural Gaps

Create individualized support plans for staff members who demonstrate misalignment with school culture. Focus on specific behaviors rather than general improvement, and identify concrete resources or mentoring relationships to facilitate growth.



## Strengthen Systems

Address any systemic issues revealed by pattern analysis. If cultural misalignment clusters in certain areas, consider targeted professional development, clarified expectations, or revised onboarding processes.



### Implementation Timeline

Establish a clear timeline for implementing strategies identified during this activity. Schedule a follow-up meeting within 4-6 weeks to assess progress and refine approaches based on emerging data.