High School Types

School leaders often ask, “Where do I begin?” The answer to this question depends on the current characteristics of the high school. Here are six different types of high school situations.

Fresh Start describes high schools that are new comprehensive schools, a new charter high school, or a recent conversion to small learning communities.

Movie Set describes high schools that have an excellent image and tradition. They meet all state accountability measures. However their public image is better than their true performance. They look good superficially but behind the public façade these high schools are not serving many students well.

Good to Great are high schools that have many good achievements and now want to move to the next level.

Slippery Slope describes high schools that have a history of good performance but their environments and/or communities are changing rapidly. They may be experience demographic shifts or changes in funding. Without some turnaround, they are on the downward slide toward poor performance. These schools are often unprepared to adapt to continuous change.

Excellent Education Except describes high schools that have “excellent education, except” — except they don’t meet AYP in one or more subgroups. These schools are good by traditional measures, but the AYP standards and subgroup performance has identified weaknesses.

Not for My Children describes schools for which there is unanimous agreement that they have significant problems, such as student underperformance, high attrition rates, poor attendance, low graduation rates, and often poor student behavior.

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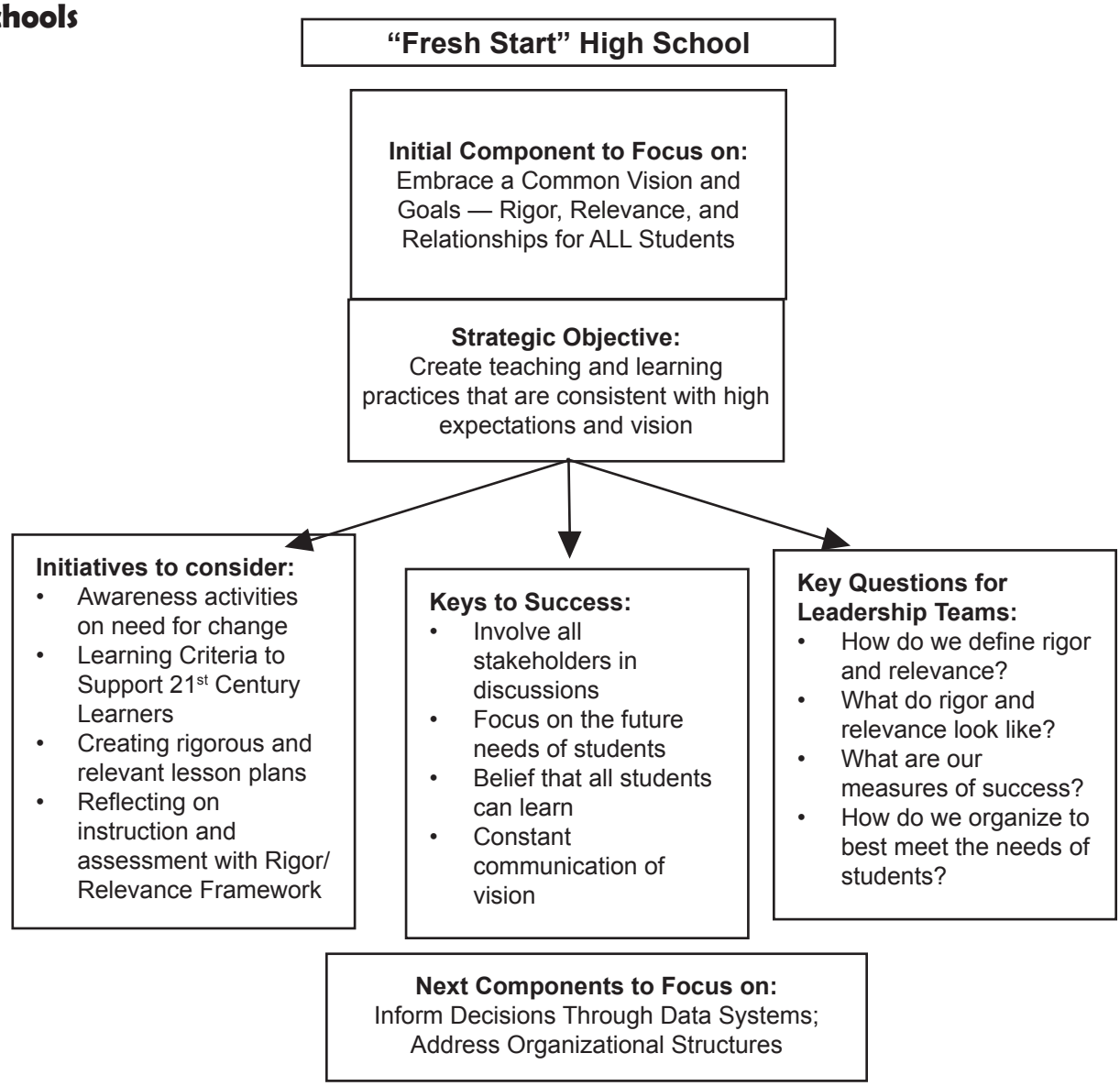
Sequence of Improvement for Different Types of High Schools

Each of the following charts indicates how to use the Components of School Excellence depending on the type of school. The charts indicate the three highest priority starting points. Additional components can be addressed in later steps.



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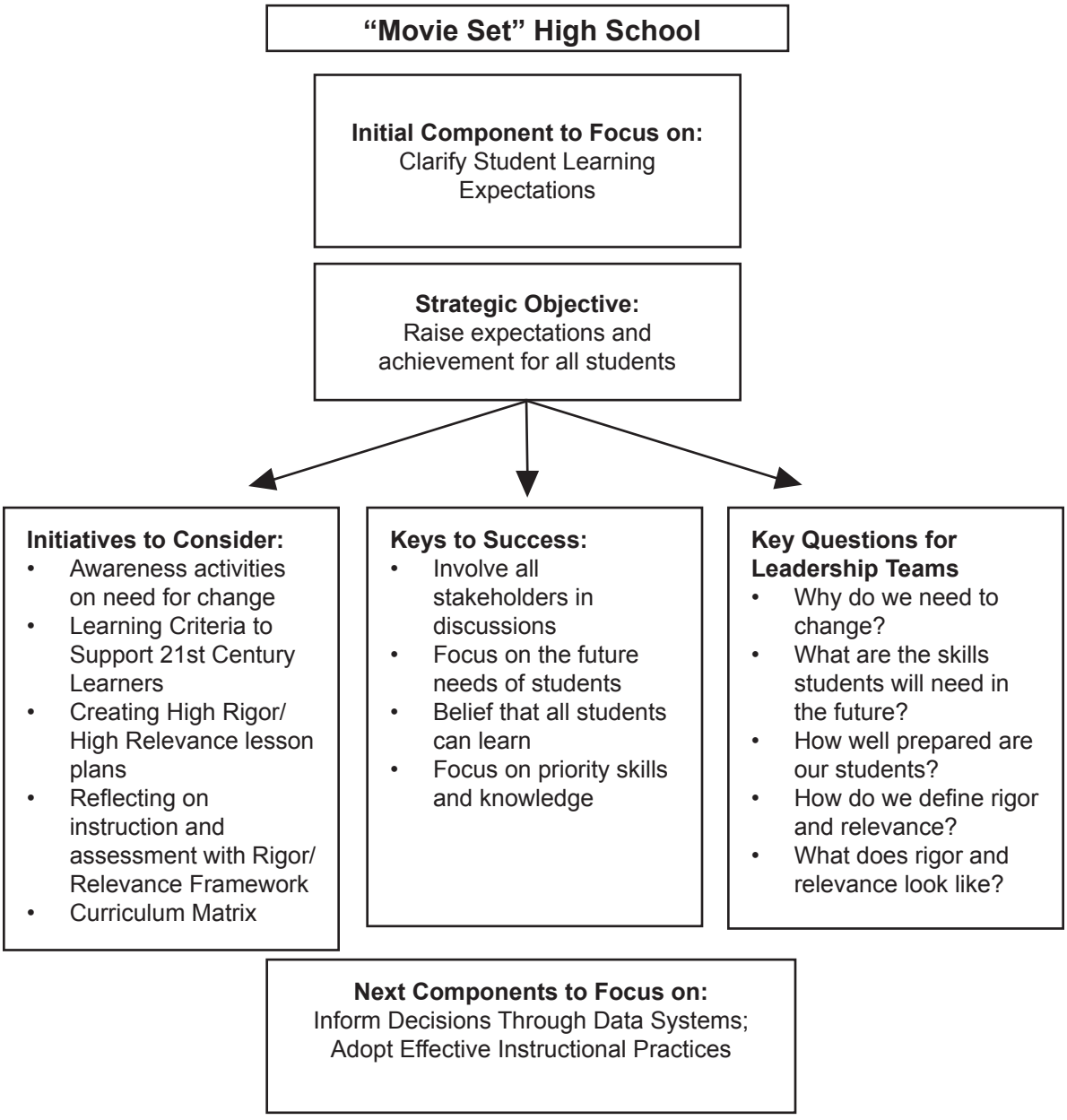

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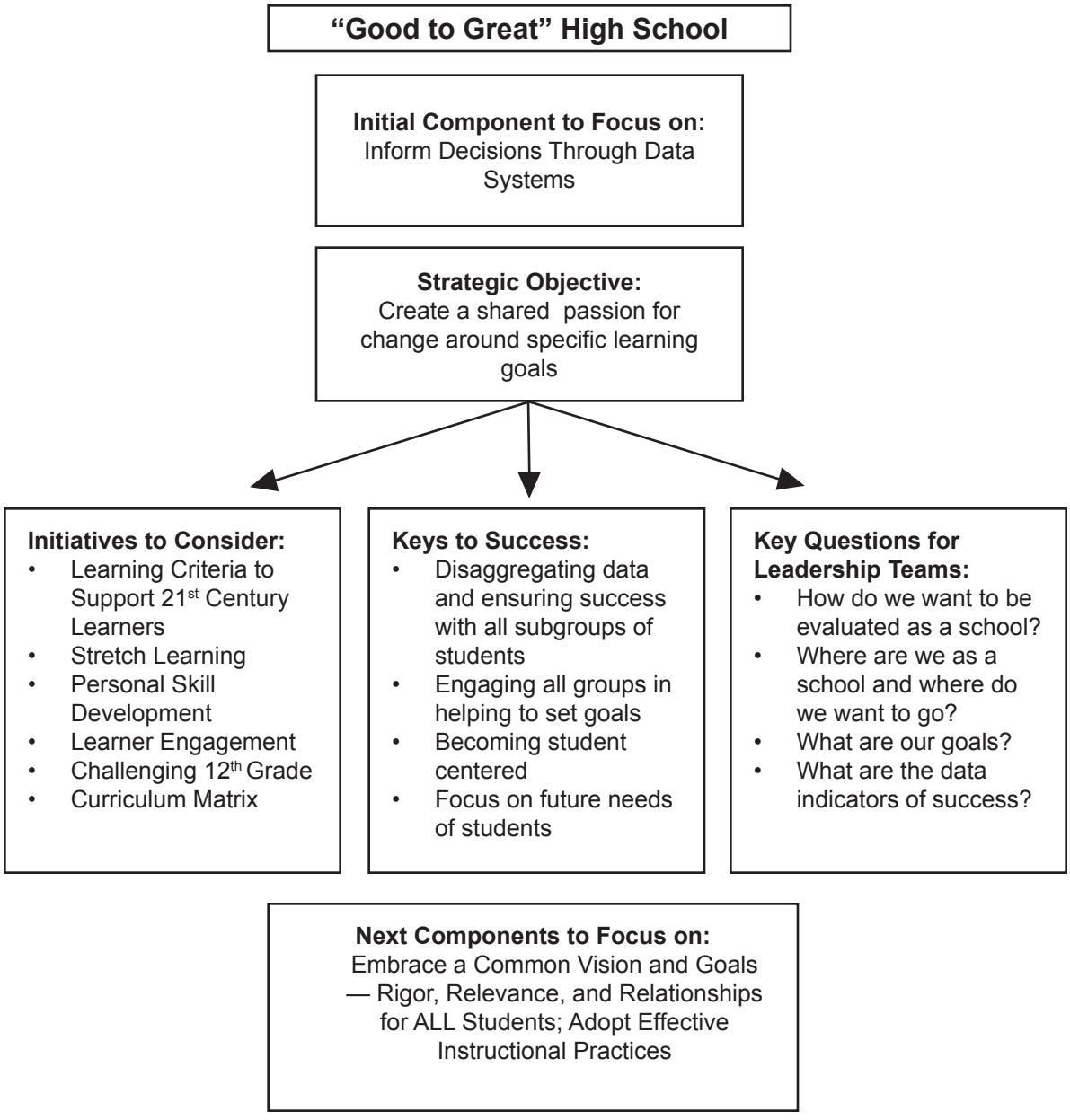

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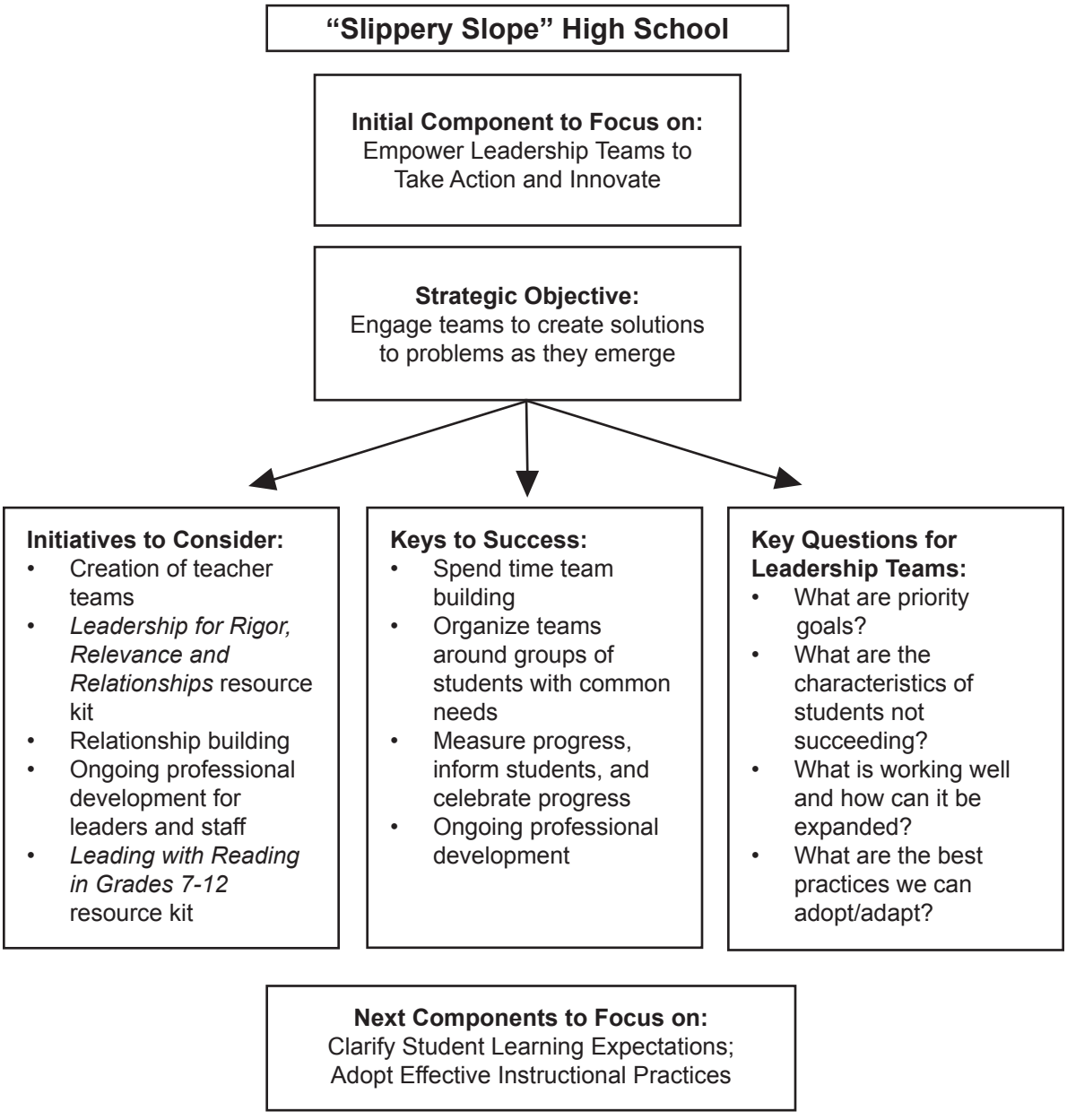

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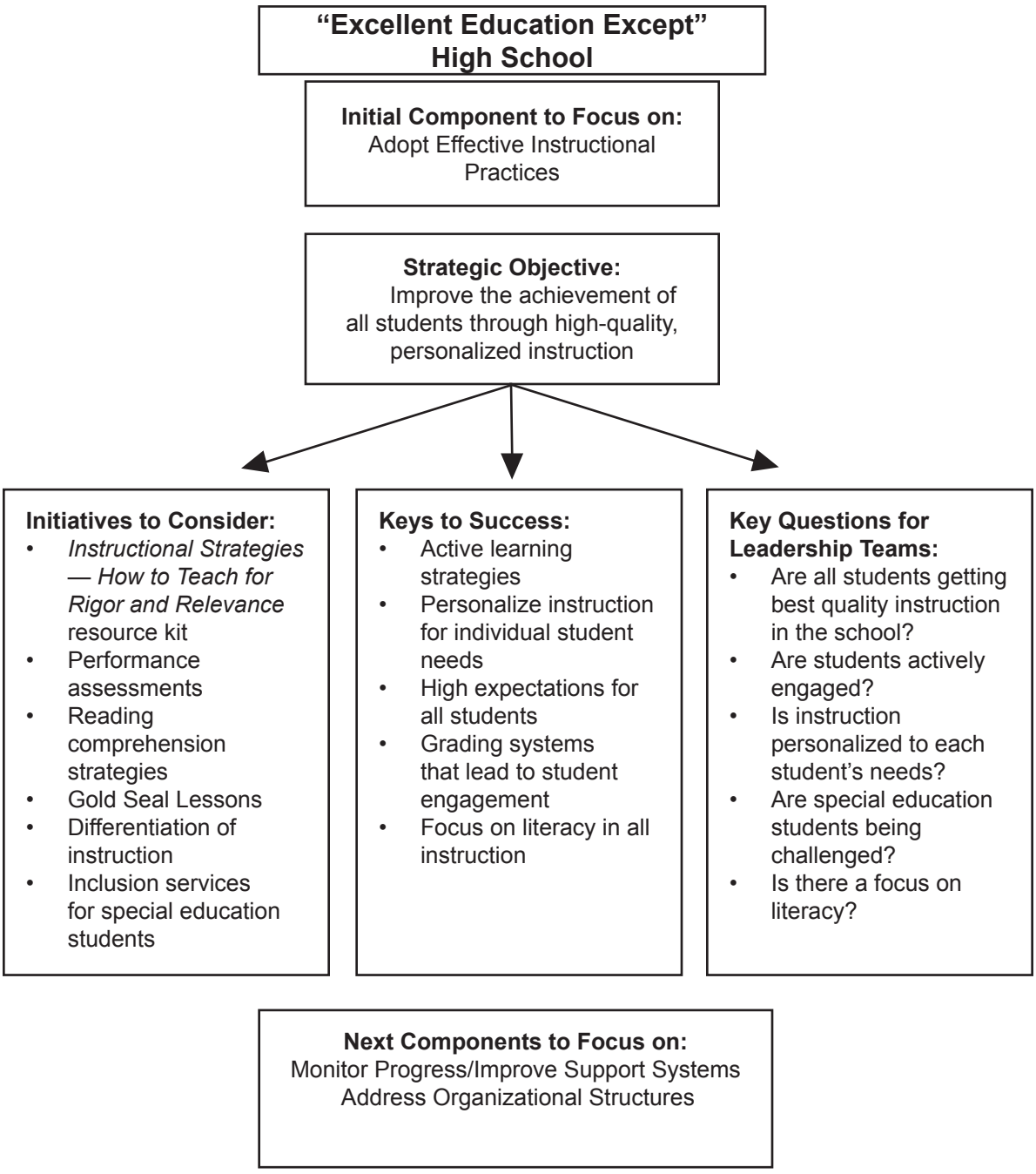

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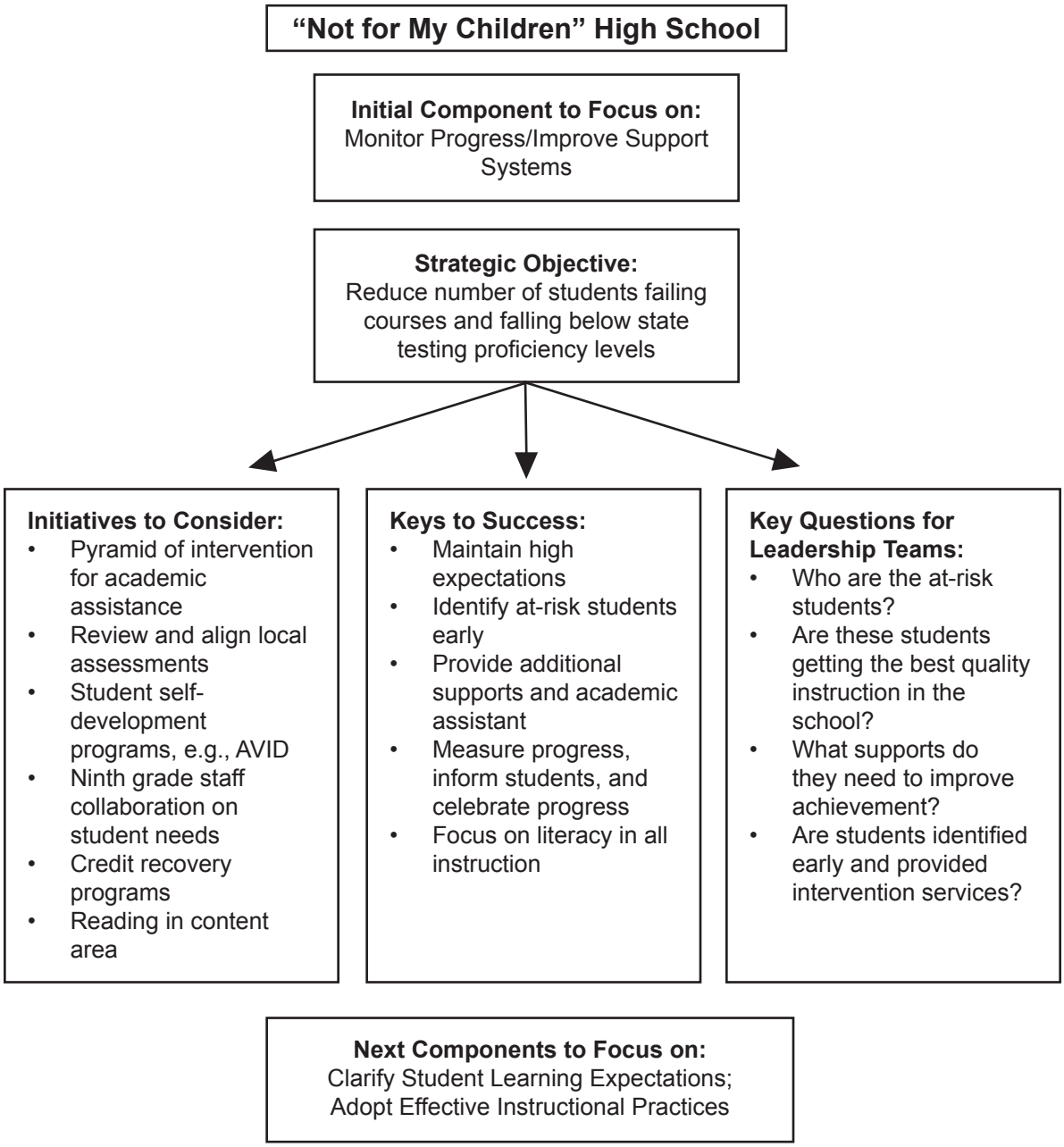

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