



BurnBright Advisory

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INSIGHT INTELLIGENCE

School Operating Model Canvas™

An Interactive Planning Canvas for Mapping How Your School Really Runs

Prepared for:	[Client / School Name]
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INSIGHT LAYER

Executive Summary

The School Operating Model Canvas™ is a single-page (when printed at A3, or used across the grid below) planning tool that maps how a school actually runs today — across vision, leadership, teaching, culture, operations, governance, communication and continuous improvement — so that gaps and misalignments become visible before they cause a crisis.

Estimated completion time: 60–90 minutes, ideally completed by the senior team together rather than by one leader alone.

Why It Matters

Most schools have never mapped their own operating model explicitly — it exists only as tacit knowledge spread across the senior team. This creates blind spots: two leaders can hold different, unstated assumptions about who owns a decision, what the culture actually rewards, or how communication is meant to flow. The canvas makes these assumptions explicit and comparable across the team in a single sitting.

Use this after, not instead of, the Leadership Workload Audit™

This canvas answers “why does pressure exist?” (the Insight layer question). It works best once you've already used an Exposure-layer resource to confirm pressure exists — the canvas then helps locate its structural source.

Leadership Intelligence Model

The canvas is organised around eight interlocking blocks. Map each one independently first, then look across the grid for contradictions — these contradictions are usually where pressure originates.

- ◆ Vision — where are we trying to go, and who can currently articulate it accurately?
- ◆ Leadership — who actually makes which decisions, regardless of the org chart?
- ◆ Teaching — what does “good teaching” mean here in practice, not in policy?
- ◆ Culture — what behaviour does this school actually reward and tolerate?
- ◆ Operations — what are the load-bearing processes that, if they failed, would stop the school functioning?

- ◆ Governance — how does oversight actually function day to day, not just at board meetings?
- ◆ Communication — how does information really travel, and where does it get stuck?
- ◆ Continuous Improvement — how does this school learn from what just happened?

Interactive Elements: The Canvas

Fill each cell briefly — a few words or a short phrase per line is enough. Resist writing full sentences; the goal is a map you can see at a glance, not an essay.

1. Vision <i>Where is the school trying to go?</i> 	2. Leadership <i>Who actually makes which decisions?</i> 	3. Teaching <i>What does good teaching mean here?</i> 	4. Culture <i>What gets rewarded and tolerated?</i>
5. Operations <i>What are the load-bearing processes?</i> 	6. Governance <i>How does oversight really function?</i> 	7. Communication <i>How does information actually travel?</i> 	8. Continuous Improvement <i>How does this school learn?</i>

Implementation Guide

Quick wins (this week)

- ◆ Complete the canvas individually, then compare with one trusted colleague before the full team session

30-day plan

- ◆ Run a 90-minute senior team session to complete the canvas together, block by block

- ◆ Circle every block where two or more leaders gave meaningfully different answers

90-day roadmap

- ◆ Select the single highest-contradiction block and run it through the Decision Bottleneck Diagnostic™ or Accountability Mapping Tool™

Annual integration

- ◆ Re-run the canvas at the start of each academic year as a standing leadership ritual

Dashboard Metrics

This canvas primarily informs two platform-wide metrics:

- ◆ Decision Intelligence — inferred from the consistency of answers in the Leadership and Governance blocks
- ◆ Adaptability — inferred from the depth and honesty of the Continuous Improvement block

AI Coach Integration

Reflection prompt

“Here are my completed canvas blocks: [paste]. Which two blocks show the most contradiction with each other, and what underlying issue might explain that?”

Action recommendation prompt

“Given these contradictions, suggest one structural change — not a communication fix — that would resolve the gap.”

Workshop recommendation

Pairs with the BurnBright Advisory “Aligning the Senior Team” half-day workshop, designed to be delivered immediately after this canvas is completed.

Related Resources — Learning Pathway

← Previous: Leadership Workload Audit™ (confirms pressure exists)

→ Next: Accountability Mapping Tool™ (drills into the Leadership/Governance contradiction)

Also related: Decision Bottleneck Diagnostic™, School Systems Mapping Guide™

— End of School Operating Model Canvas™ —