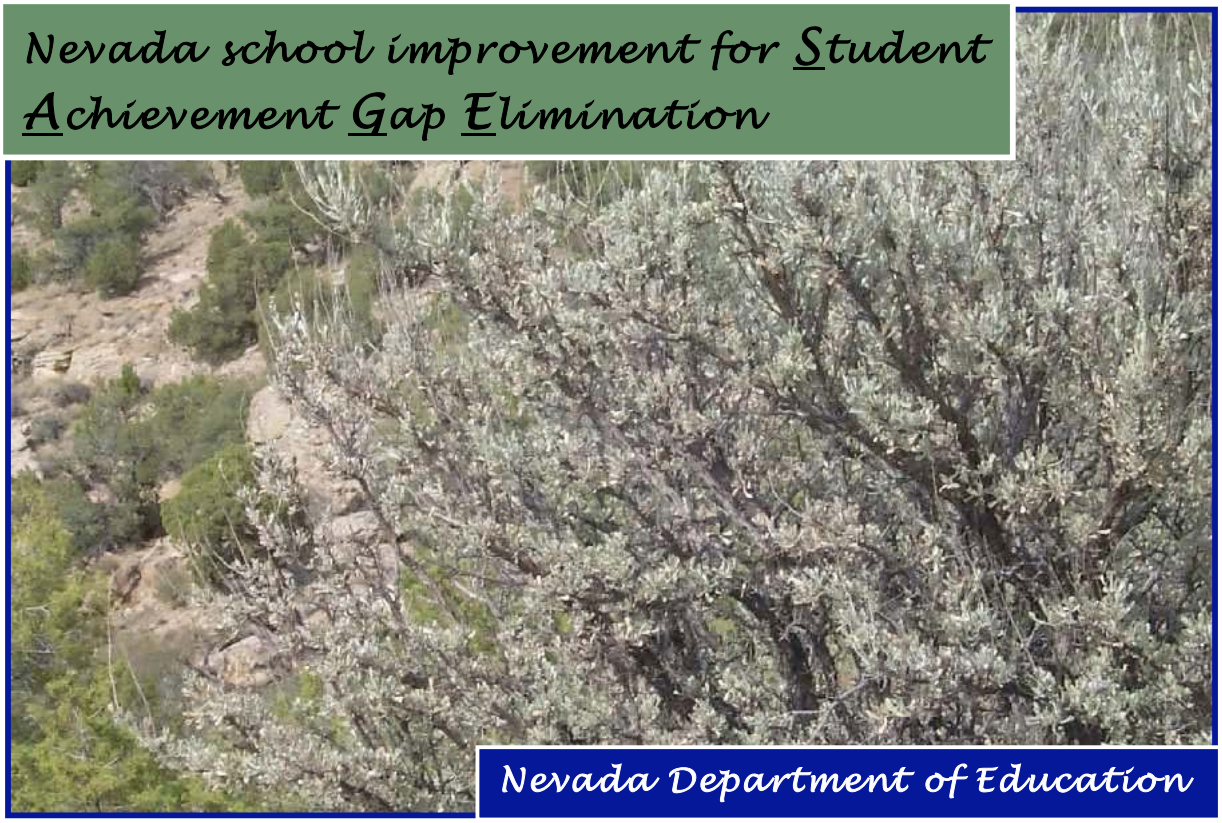
# SAGE School Improvement Guidebook

## 2007

*Nevada school improvement for Student Achievement Gap Elimination*



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# SAGE Guidebook Road Map

| Where are you in the Continuous Improvement Cycle? | | |
|---|---|---|
| ➔ If **CREATING** a new plan or **REVISING** a current plan: | | **Page #** |
| | • **Consider Site and External Planning Teams** | |
| | ° **School Improvement Plan Team** (All schools) | **11** |
| | ° **School Support Team** (In Need of Improvement Schools–Year 3 & beyond) | **A7** |
| | • **Follow process guide for the Planning Phase** | **1** |
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| | • **Review Facilitator Information** | **31** |
| | • **Check requirements of Nevada law regarding school improvement** | **A1** |
| | • **If a high school, review the Northwest Accreditation and SAGE crosswalk** | **B1** |
| | | |
| ➔ If **CARRYING OUT** the actions in the plan: | | |
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| | • **Follow guide for Implementation/Monitoring Phase** | **101** |
| | | |
| ➔ If **DETERMINING** the **EFFECTIVENESS** of the plan: | | |
| | • **Follow process guide for Evaluation Phase** | **111** |
| | • **Record recommendations for Planning Phase** | **119** |
| | | |

# Introduction

The culture behind Nevada's school improvement process embraces **high expectations for every student** and is built upon the foundation of the following beliefs:

- The work of schools is student learning;
- All children benefit from challenging and relevant curriculum;
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessments must be closely aligned to State Standards;
- Every teacher can be an expert when provided collaborative and sustained professional development focused on improved instruction;
- School culture and the learning environment can promote continuous improvement.
- Parental support and involvement are critical to improved student performance;
- Effective use of data is vital to continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

Comprehensive improvement plans take several years to implement and demonstrate improvement in the targeted areas. A continuous improvement cycle provides the opportunity for ongoing identification of effective practices and/or actions that should be continued and ineffective practices and/or actions that should be revised or eliminated.

There have been many successful school improvement efforts. The education research literature includes hundreds of examples of school improvement that have resulted in increased student learning, improved parent involvement, decreased dropout rates, and an increased percentage of students who enroll in college. The SAGE (Student Achievement Gap Elimination) school improvement process provides schools with a framework for problem solving to target the school improvement efforts best suited for them.

SAGE is the required school improvement process for Title I schools in Nevada that are designated as in need of improvement. In addition, SAGE is a useful resource for all schools needing or wishing to complete a significant self-examination to improve status quo.

The purpose of SAGE is to help external facilitators, administrators, teachers, parents, and community members to participate in a continuous improvement cycle that identifies potential barriers and develops a way to move the school from where it is now to an environment in which all students can achieve to their highest potential. Many Nevada school districts and schools have used the improvement process outlined in this guidebook to improve student learning. SAGE presents school improvement as a three-phase cycle, as listed below.

1. The **planning phase** includes an inquiry process and master plan design;
2. The **implementation/monitoring phase** includes ongoing monitoring of implementation and of the impact on student learning and achievement;
3. The **evaluation phase** examines the effectiveness of the school improvement plan.

Once the plan has been developed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated, the phases are repeated, becoming a continuous improvement cycle in which the school regularly monitors and reviews the school improvement plan as needed.

There are numerous obstacles to effective school improvement. Chief among these obstacles is that even though school improvement efforts target schools, a school is a collection of individuals. To the extent that the needed changes involve the behavior of the members of the organizations, change must ultimately occur at the individual level. That is, individual teachers, administrators, and parents must in some way change what they are doing with the belief that this will change what students do (independently and in interaction with teachers) to improve student learning.

To optimize the impact of school improvement efforts, other elements of support need to be set in place. SAGE presents six essential foundations to support school improvement. Attending to these foundations helps the school leadership, the school improvement planning teams, and the school community as a whole lay the groundwork for successful improvement of student learning. The six essential foundations necessary to support school improvement include: (a) Governance Structure; (b) Decision-making Process; (c) Teacher Collaboration; (d) Team Building; (e) Communication; and (f) Managing Change (See Attachment 1P, p. 9 for descriptions of each essential foundation).

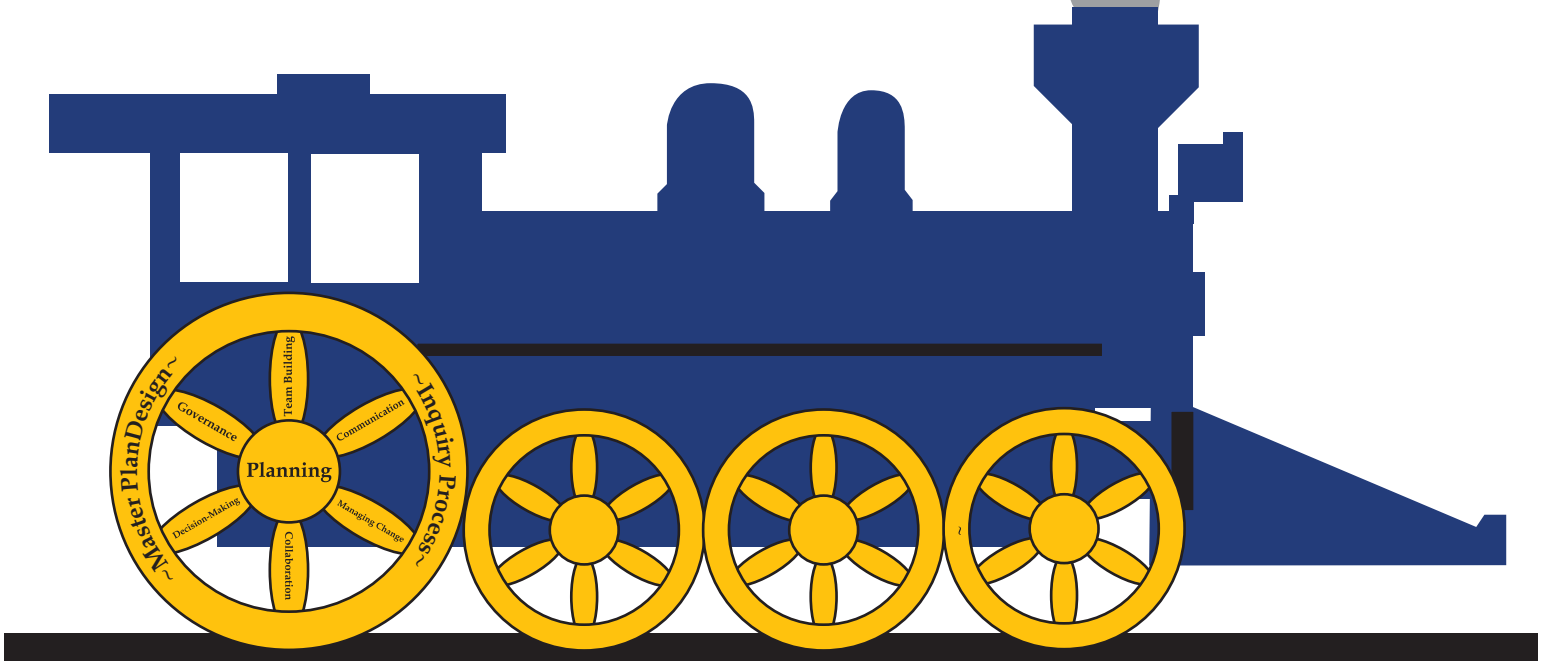
The SAGE school improvement process provides schools with the means to meet the accountability requirements that were established both by the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and Senate Bill 1 (SB 1). The Nevada Legislature in 2003 passed legislation that, regardless of AYP performance, improvement plans be developed/revised and implemented annually by all schools, school districts, and the state through its State Board of Education. Additional requirements exist for schools identified as in need of improvement. Each school identified for school improvement must, within three months after being identified, develop or revise a school plan in consultation with school staff, the local educational agency serving the school, and outside experts (See Appendix A, for state laws regarding school improvement plans).

You are about to embark on a difficult and time-consuming but extremely rewarding journey of school improvement. The purpose of having a school improvement plan is so that you know your students will be better prepared academically because of what the staff and students at your school do. It may be that the academic achievement of students in your school is growing as you implement your school improvement plan, but this growth may not be significant or sufficient to meet achievement targets and close achievement gaps. For this reason, the improvement process incorporates a planning/revision phase each year to ensure that the school improvement plan is on the right track. School improvement takes time. Lasting change happens slowly but it does happen.

**The SAGE School Improvement Guidebook is available online at the Nevada Department of Education website. The online version provides several formats for ease of downloading and copying purposes.**

# SAGE

## School Improvement Guidebook




# Planning Process Guide

2007 SAGE (Student Achievement Gap Elimination) School Improvement Guidebook
Prepared by: Nevada Department of Education, 700 E. Fifth Street, Carson City, NV 89701

# Planning Process Guide

The SAGE Planning Process Guide is designed to assist planning teams in a data-driven school improvement planning process. Although the steps in the planning process are presented sequentially in this guide, **they overlap in practice**. The planning process is best thought of as a cycle of overlapping phases rather than discrete steps.

Elements of support are necessary to facilitate the success of school improvement planning efforts. SAGE presents six essential foundations to support the school improvement process. Attending to these six essential foundations helps school improvement teams lay the groundwork for successful school improvement. The six essential foundations necessary to support school improvement include Governance structure; Decision-making; Teacher Collaboration; Team Building; Communication; and Managing Change (See Attachment 1P, p. 9 for descriptions and recommendations for each of the six essential foundations).

### TO BEGIN:

Begin by convening the School Improvement Plan (SIP) team. The SIP team is comprised of the principal and other administrators, as well as a representation of teachers, parents, and community members of the school community. Be sure to update the membership of the SIP team each year to ensure broad representation (see Attachment 1P for Governance Structures).

- If your school is writing a school improvement plan **for the first time**, go directly to *Inquiry Process* on page 2.
- If you are **repeating this process** to revise a current school improvement plan, continue below.

**Note:** Before beginning the planning phase, the principal, SIP team chairperson, and any external facilitators will want to review the Facilitator Information (see Attachment 2P, p. 31).

## ANNUAL REVISION OF THE SIP:

The key assumption underlying the SAGE school improvement process is that the school has been engaged in a cycle of continuous improvement (see Attachment 3P, p. 45 for graphic representations of the improvement cycle).

**Primary Assumptions**

1. The SIP is focused on a few powerful research-based strategies/solutions to improve instruction and increase student achievement based on an analysis of student and staff needs.
2. The SIP Team (or similar group of people assigned to this task) has collected data throughout the year that reveals the progress made toward the improvement goals.
3. The SIP Team (or similar group) has met several times during the year to monitor the implementation and impact of the plan.

## REVIEW OF THE EVALUATION PHASE

The current plan has been implemented, monitored, and evaluated. Thus, the first step in the planning process is to review the recommendations made during the evaluation phase.

**Questions to consider:**

1. What concerns were identified in the student achievement outcome data?
2. What recommendations for sustaining action steps were identified?
3. What recommendations for revising action steps were identified?
4. What recommendations for eliminating action steps were identified?
5. Does the current plan need major or minor revisions?

The first step in the planning phase, the Inquiry Process targets the concerns identified in the evaluation phase.

## INQUIRY PROCESS

The Inquiry Process includes three overlapping tasks: a needs assessment, an analysis to verify root causes, and a selection of solutions.

- **Comprehensive Needs Assessment**: The needs assessment is a systematic process of collecting and analyzing data about the school to identify the key strengths and priority concerns of the school. The term "needs assessment" does not mean that the school should look only for concerns or weaknesses. A more appropriate term, perhaps, might be "inventory," as the SIP team is accounting for both key strengths and priority concerns to be documented in the current status of the school.
- **Verification of Causes**: The analysis of potential causes is a creative problem-solving process that takes the SIP team through brainstorming potential causes and then validating the actual causes of the problem. When the causes have been identified, then goals for increasing student achievement are created or revised.
- **Selection of Solutions**: The identification of research-based solutions for the validated causes and goals will lead to a number of viable solutions. The SIP team continues the inquiry process to prioritize the most appropriate and promising of the solutions.

The *Five Dimensions of Successful Schools – Data Analysis Guide* (Five Dimensions-DAG) provides the direction for a targeted analysis of the potential contributing causes/factors to the underlying needs/problems.

**Note**: SIP teams will need to use and examine a variety of data sources and tools, such as school demographics; formative assessment results; classroom observations; parent, teacher, and/or student surveys; and focus groups and interviews, in order to accurately validate the concerns identified in the student achievement data.

**Preparation – Resources and Tools:**

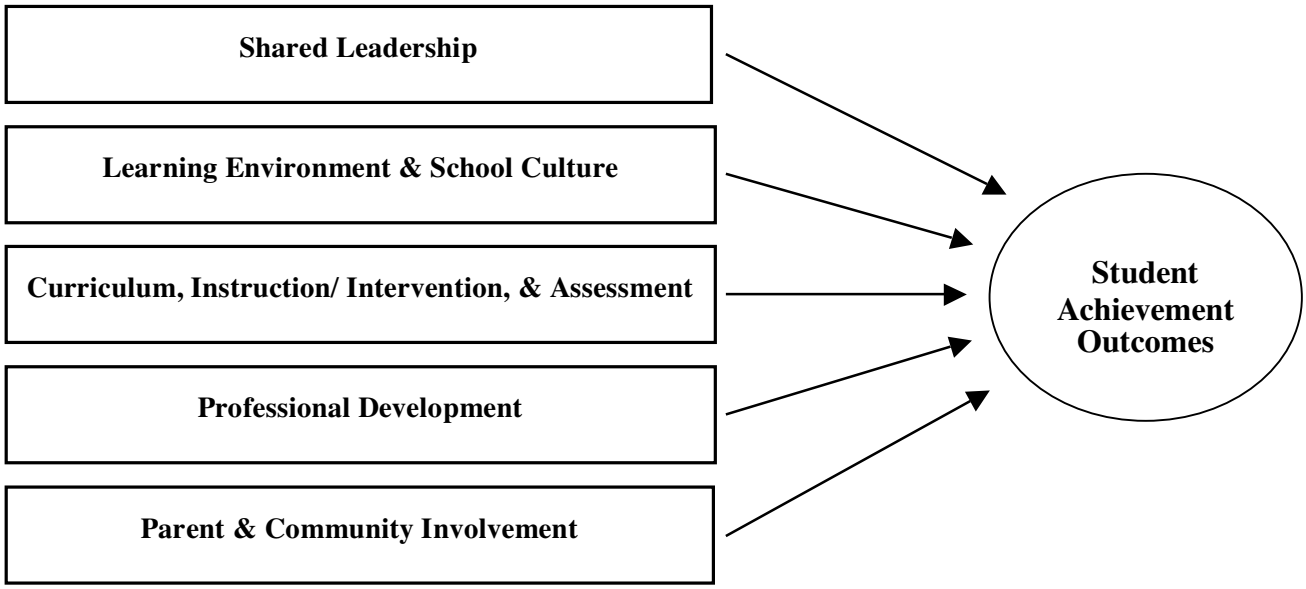
- Current School Improvement Plan
- District Improvement Plan
- High School Accreditation Plan (if applicable)
- Five Dimensions–DAG (See Attachment 4P, p. 49)
- 2007 SIP Template (See Attachment 5P, p. 61)
- Relevant data (see Attachment 6P, p. 79 – Data Types, Sources, & Tools)

## ***Comprehensive Needs Assessment***

1. Review the school's demographics (use the school accountability report and any other pertinent data). Update relevant information in the "Part VII: Other Required Elements of the SIP" page in the SIP.

2. Using the Five Dimensions-DAG (see Attachment 4P, p. 49), analyze the school's structures and practices in each of the five dimensions of school success (Shared Leadership; Learning Environment and School Culture; Curriculum, Instruction, Intervention, and Assessment; Professional Development; and Parent and Community Involvement). Follow the steps in the Five Dimensions-DAG to rate each indicator. (Figure 1 below lists the five dimensions)

**Figure 1. Five Dimensions of School Success that Support Student Achievement**




3. When all indicators in the Five Dimensions-DAG have been analyzed, review the ratings. The ratings of "**3**" and "**4**" signify strengths in the school's structures and practices. The ratings of "**1**" and "**2**" signify concerns in the school's structures and practices.

4. Select the two or three strengths that will be helpful in addressing the concerns identified in the student achievement outcome data during the evaluation phase. List these key strengths in "Part II: Inquiry Process, Comprehensive Needs Assessment" in the SIP (formerly called Part IA: Comprehensive Needs Assessment in the original SIP template).

5. Select the two or three concerns that are most relevant to the concerns identified in the student achievement outcome data. These now become your priority concerns. List these priority concerns in "Part II: Inquiry Process, Comprehensive Needs Assessment" in the SIP.

## *Verification of Root Causes*

1. Transfer the priority concerns to the "Part II: Inquiry Process, Verification of Causes" table in the SIP (formerly called Part II: Inquiry Process in the original SIP template).

2. Review the evidence used in the analysis of the five dimensions. Verify the root causes that are contributing to the problems identified in the student achievement data. Root causes are those that focus on school or classroom structures and practices that impact or impede student learning and achievement.

   For each priority concern, list the root causes that are contributing to the concern in column two of the "Part II: Inquiry Process, Verification of Causes" table in the SIP.

## *Selection of Solutions*

1. Now that the causes have been verified, effective solutions for increasing student achievement can be identified. Review the key strengths listed in "Part II: Inquiry Process, Comprehensive Needs Assessment." In addition, review the current research on best practices related to the priority concerns.

   Brainstorm solutions that sustain current key strengths and that utilitize research-based best practices in order to address the priority concerns.

   For each priority concern, propose a solution that clearly describes the structures and practices to be implemented in the classroom/school.

## *Goals Setting*

1. Establish (or revise) improvement goals that address the priority concerns (include these in "Part III: Improvement Goals and Measurable Objectives" in the SIP). The goals need to be substantive and attainable, so the fewer goals the better. All goals should be focused on student achievement.

***The goal can target a content area.***

For example: "All students at SAGE Middle School, particularly the students on IEPs, will show improvements in mathematics through increases in achievement on the district and state assessments."

***The goal can target an area of practice***

For example: "Teachers will implement differentiated instruction in math and reading to improve student achievement."

**2.** Develop measurable objectives that measure the progress in accomplishing the goals. Measurable objectives are established for each goal. Clear concise measurable objectives contain the five elements listed below.

1. Restating of Goal: A descriptive statement of what needs to happen.
2. Outcome Indicator: The assessment instrument used to measure success.
3. Baseline: The current level of performance on the outcome indicator.
4. Expected Performance Level: The expected level of performance on the outcome indicator.
5. Timeline: The timeline for when the standard or performance level will be reached.

Spending time developing appropriate, realistic, and measurable objectives for each school improvement goal helps to more clearly articulate what the school hopes to achieve through the school improvement plan.

For example: The improvement goal: "All students will improve their reading comprehension."

A measurable objective might be -

Students in grades 6-8 will show an increase in reading comprehension [goal] as measured by the State Criterion-Referenced Test in Reading (CRT) [outcome indicator]. Current results indicate that 50 percent of our students are proficient or above [baseline]. At the end of year [timeline], 55 percent of students will be proficient or above [standard or performance level].

Since all schools in the state must demonstrate proficiency based on statewide assessments, it makes sense that the measurable objectives include these assessments as measures of student progress. However, this does not mean that district level or even school assessments cannot be used to measure student achievement.

## *Missions & Beliefs*

Upon completion of the inquiry process, the school is encouraged to review and analyze its mission and beliefs in light of any changes in the school improvement goals (see Missions and Beliefs in Attachment 2P, p. 31 for Facilitator Information). Additionally, changes to the school community may have occurred from the time when the mission/vision was originally written.

**Note**: It is important in the review of the mission and shared beliefs to include members of the whole school community. Utilizing a collaborative process to define the beliefs and mission statement helps build support for a shared vision of the school.

# MASTER PLAN DESIGN

The final step in the planning phase, Master Plan Design is the "nuts and bolts" phase of the planning process. It articulates what the staff hopes to achieve through the SIP and how they will achieve it. During this phase, the SIP team outlines how the school will implement the solutions selected during the inquiry process.

**Preparation – Resources and Tools:**

- Current School Improvement Plan
- 2007 SIP Template (See Attachment 5P, p. 61)

## *Action Plan*

1. Plan the action steps for how the solutions (from the "Part II: Inquiry Process, Verification of Causes" table in the SIP) will be implemented to accomplish each goal.

   Each action step needs to be specific about what will occur. For each action step, the SIP team will identify and insert in the template (in "Part IV: School Improvement Master Plan" in the SIP):

   - Focused descriptive action steps for a solution(s);
   - The timeframe for when the action steps will be fully implemented;
   - The resources required to fully implement the action steps; and
   - Those persons who will be responsible in overseeing and/or carrying out the action steps.

   **Note:** The key to developing a good action plan is to provide enough detail so the staff knows the key events and their responsibilities, but not so much detail that the plan is cumbersome.

2. Just as the goals needed to be substantive and attainable, likewise the action steps need to be limited to those that are vital and doable in carrying out the solutions to accomplish the goals.

**The following examples represent the same action step shown in two different ways.** The first example lacks the detail needed to single out the vital and doable components necessary to carry out the solution. The second example includes the specific details that focus and direct action.

**Example #1: Implementation Step From Actual School Plan**

Teachers will align curriculum, instruction, assessment, and standards to identify gaps and overlaps. Materials to fill gaps will be provided. Training in curriculum mapping will take place.

**Persons Responsible:** Principal, Teachers, District Office

**Resources:** District Release Day (1/month), Budget ($16,300)

**Timeline:** Summer and ongoing

Adapted from *Developing an Effective School Plan* (2006 WestEd)

**Example #2: Revision of Example #1**

All teachers, K-5, will spend 6 hours/month for 6 months developing a curriculum and assessment plan that is linked to standards. Teachers will be grouped in cross-grade teams for the first phase, and in grade-level teams for the second and third phases.

**Persons Responsible:** The School Leadership Team will organize the work, and the principal will ensure that it is completed.

**Resources:** *Succeeding With Standards* (Carr & Harris) will be the model for the process. All staff will read this prior to the first planning session. Budget – *Succeeding With Standards*, 20 copies @$25/ea = $500. Leadership Team stipends for planning, 30 hours, 6 staff @ $30/hr = $5,400. Copies of standards and other district/school documents = $200.

**Timeline:** The first phase (Oct. – Nov., 12 hours) will be used to align content strands across the grade levels. The second phase (Dec. – Jan., 12 hours) will be used to decide the targets that will be assessed at each grade level. The third phase (Feb.–Mar., 12 hours) will be used to decide performance levels for the selected assessments.

Adapted from *Developing an Effective School Plan* (2006 WestEd)

## ***Monitoring Plan***

After each action step, the SIP team identifies the monitoring components that will be used to check the progress of implementation and impact on student achievement. For each action step, the SIP team will identify and insert in the template (in "Part IV: School Improvement Master Plan" in the SIP):

- The timeframe for when the monitoring will take place;
- The data sources that will be used to monitor the implementation of the action steps; and
- Those persons who will be responsible in overseeing and/or carrying out the progress monitoring of the implementation and impact on student achievement.

## ***Evaluation Plan***

Create a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the SIP and its impact on improvement goals and student achievement in "Part VI: Evaluation of the SIP" in the SIP (formerly called "IIIC – Plan to Evaluate Goals" in the original SIP template). For each goal, specify the data to collect (the outcome indicator and the monitoring data), when to collect the data, and the person responsible for data collection.

## ***Additional Requirements***

Complete the additional required elements for the SIP.

- **All Schools:** Complete "Part VII: Other Required Elements of the SIP."
- **Title I Schools:** Complete "Part VIII: Required Elements for Title I Schools."
- **Non-Title I Schools:** Complete "Part IX: Required Elements for Non-Title I Schools."

Distribute a draft of the new or revised school improvement plan to the rest of the school staff for review. This step will help ensure that the planning team has developed a SIP that effectively communicates the solutions and the key activities supported by the entire school community. Title I schools in need of improvement also need to submit their plans to the school district on or before November 1st for peer review.

As you begin the implementation/monitoring phase, you will use ongoing data collection and analysis to drive decisions about student achievement, instruction, professional development, and changes or adjustments to the SIP. You will keep a focus on your goals. Through ongoing, committed improvement efforts, you will make a difference!

# ATTACHMENT 1P

# Essential Foundations

Successful School Improvement for Student Achievement
Team Building
Communication
Managing Change
Collaboration
Decision-Making
Governance

# Attachment 1P: Six Essential Foundations

The cycle of school improvement outlined in SAGE involves three phases: Planning, Implementation/Monitoring, and Evaluation. All three phases are critical to school improvement. However, it is not enough for school planning teams to faithfully implement these phases. School improvement is much much more. To develop and implement a quality school improvement plan, schools must attend to six essential foundations that support school improvement. These six foundations are briefly defined below and then more fully described in the following sections immediately following.

1. ***Establish a Governance Structure for School Improvement: Create a School Improvement Plan (SIP) Team at the School Site***

The governance structure for a school improvement effort is the group of individuals who manage the school improvement effort by first planning it and then monitoring its implementation. Research has found that the most common management change is to increase collaboration and accountability among teachers. A committee that includes teachers, parents, and administrators most successfully manages school improvement efforts.

2. ***Agree to a Decision-Making Process for School Improvement***

The SIP team must establish a system or process for how it will make decisions about the school's improvement efforts. There are many ways to make decisions, whether by consensus, majority, or two-thirds vote—to name a few. The particular way is less important, but everyone must understand and be comfortable with the way that is agreed upon.

3. ***Teacher Collaboration: Establish a Regular Time for Planning, Monitoring, and Professional Development***

No later than the 2004-2005 school year, all schools falling into the category of needing improvement must submit their school improvement plans by November 1 to districts and by December 15 to the Nevada Department of Education. Therefore, in the beginning, planning teams must devote a significant amount of time to conduct the comprehensive needs assessment, explore and select the most appropriate solutions for the school, and create their master plan. However, the real business of school improvement takes far more time and ongoing effort. It will be crucial to the success of the school improvement efforts for schools to build in time to monitor implementation, train teachers in new instructional strategies, and create ways to support

ongoing professional development. All of these initiatives require that the school establish regular meeting time for staff to make sure school improvement activities occur in a timely, meaningful manner.

### *4. Encourage Team Building*

Team building plays an important role in the success of school improvement planning. The internal task of team building is as important as the group's external task of making improvements. Nevertheless, teams and schools often underestimate the need to develop and sustain themselves as teams and the work required to do so. When a team runs smoothly, members can concentrate on their primary goal of improving student learning.

### *5. Plan for and Manage Change*

Initial resistance to change in schools is predictable. It is also manageable. The emphasis must not be on simply overcoming the resistance to change but instead on getting the school staff to undertake the journey as a team. An important task for the planning team is to overcome resistance by planning for change. Schools that do not plan for change by helping staff make the transition may easily get bogged down in staff resistance.

### *6. Communicate to Staff and the School Community about School Improvement*

Communication is central to school improvement efforts. Open communication encourages team building; helps prepare people for change; informs staff, parents, and the community about the school improvement effort and how it will be implemented; and identifies people's roles in these efforts. The SIP team must develop a system to keep the entire staff informed and involved throughout the entire process.

## Governance for School Improvement

Research shows that a key feature of successful school improvement efforts is the type of management or governance structure used to oversee school improvement.[1] Most governance structures in successful school improvement efforts increase teacher accountability and management responsibilities, and are often referred to as participatory governance structures. These governance structures are based on the premise that decisions about student learning (which is the focus of school improvement efforts) must be made by people closest to the learner—including input from students, teachers, parents, and the community. A committee, the School Improvement Planning (SIP) team, comprised of the principal and other administrators, teachers, parents, and community members manages almost all successful school improvement plans.

Participatory governance structures can facilitate the development of a successful school improvement plan by:

- Dividing the work (e.g., needs assessment, research on effective solutions) among planning team and other staff members;
- Promoting stakeholder buy-in to school improvement efforts;
- Encouraging the implementation of innovative ideas; and
- Ensuring a comprehensive data profile of the school is developed.

Many districts in Nevada have already established or are in the process of investigating changes in school governance structures, similar to the governance structure outlined here for school improvement, as part of systemic education reform. The most common change in school governance is the introduction of site-based management through site-based councils. For schools that have already established site-based management, these councils provide an appropriate governance structure for developing and implementing school improvement.

Schools developing improvement plans should use the governance structure required by their district's education reform efforts. However, in the absence of such efforts, the school might select one of the methods of participatory school governance described on the following pages to manage the school's improvement efforts.

[1] The Guidebook differentiates between school improvement governance and school governance. School improvement governance refers only to decisions about the school improvement efforts whereas school governance includes other decisions.

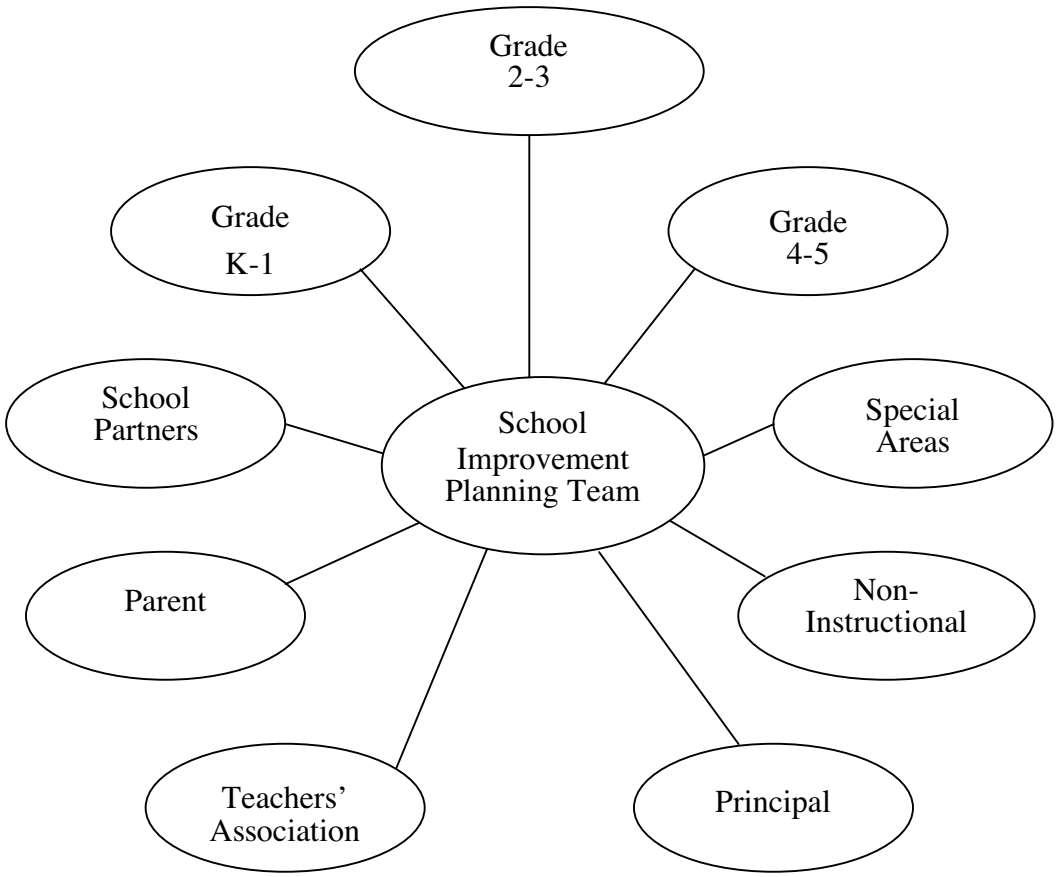
**Models of Participatory Governance for School Improvement**

In general, participatory governance models for school improvement can be classified into two general types: *representational* and *at-large*. Both increase teachers' and parents' roles in accountability and decision-making and would be consistent with the type of management structure found in successful school improvement efforts. Combinations of the two are also possible.

Regardless of which governance model is selected, the school must be the focus for improvement—not the grade, group, or the functional role that "elected" the members of the SIP team. Regardless of the constituency represented by the members of the SIP team, focus must remain on decisions that are best for the school as a whole. The team exists to plan and manage school improvement. Its members must, at times, make decisions that may not be the best for one group, but are best for the school as a whole.

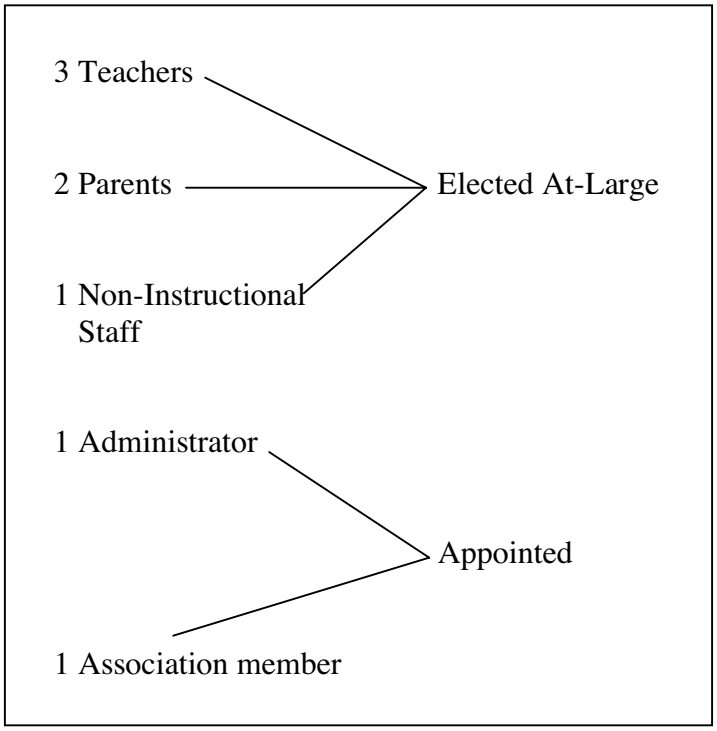
***Representational*** models of governance have teams, such as site councils, elected by (or volunteers from) an identified constituency.

**Figure 2.** Representational Model of Governance



***At-large*** models have teams elected (or volunteered) to represent the school without identification of a specific constituency.

**Figure 3.** At-Large Model of Governance




Both models, representative and at-large, should adhere to several key elements:

- Limit size to around eight members;
- Have teacher majority;
- Ensure principal is part of the team;
- Ensure parents/community that represent student subgroups are included;
- Ensure meetings are open to all members of the school community;
- Rotate chair or have the team chaired by a member other than the principal; and
- Establish procedures for meetings, including
  - developing an agenda and selecting appropriate meeting schedules,
  - defining roles,
  - establishing input and appeal procedures,
  - providing direct input through staff and committee meetings with all staff, as well as sharing written minutes, and
  - delineating clearly what the team decides and what it does not decide.

The new governance structure for school improvement should be used in planning, implementation, and evaluation. The governance structure can play an important role in the comprehensive needs assessment and inquiry process. For example, teams of staff members, led by members of the governance structure, can be assigned to collect and summarize data about different dimensions of the school profile or be assigned to research possible solutions as part of the inquiry process. During implementation, the same governance structure could be used to manage, monitor, and evaluate the SIP.

## School Improvement Decision-Making

Another essential foundation of school improvement is the process the school uses to make decisions about school improvement—such as what solutions are implemented or how best to refine the solutions. A team's decision-making procedure is partly determined by the school's governance structure.

The planning team must answer two key questions about school improvement decision-making:

1. Who will make the decisions for school improvement?
2. What is the method for making these decisions?

**Who Decides?**

The question of "who makes the decisions" is important because it can set the tone for school improvement. Many planning teams have assumed the responsibility for determining the decision-making process for school improvement since they have been given the responsibility for developing the SIP. In most cases, this is not a problem, especially when **all** staff have input into the selection of the planning team. However, planning teams that decide they are the decision-making body may need to take steps to guard against alienating staff before the school gets to the point of selecting solutions.

Many planning teams decide that all teachers will be involved in decision-making. These teams will want to plan a consistent way of distributing information to the whole staff and of collecting input back from the whole staff. Some suggestions are whole staff meetings, prep period or department meetings, memos or fact sheets, or a combination of a pre-meeting memo followed by a brief face-to-face meeting. This last suggestion is good for quick voting or limited discussion and brainstorming on a particular issue.

**What is the Decision-Making Method?**

The school has many options in selecting the decision-making method for school improvement. Some of the more common options for decision-making include consensus (see next page), two-thirds majority, a simple majority, or even a combination of these depending on the importance of the decision. Some school reform models require that a certain percentage of instructional staff (e.g., 80 percent) must agree to implement the program before the program developers agree to work with a school. The degree of the staff's commitment to the program is critical for successful implementation.

The planning team (or school) may want to consider several other elements when selecting their decision-making method for school improvement.

***Building Consensus.***[2] Consensus is an important vehicle for making decisions that will strongly affect the entire staff and school. However, many people confuse "consensus" with "unanimity." Waiting for every person to support a proposal can in reality stymie the whole decision-making process. A more functional definition of consensus can be described as follows: We have reached consensus when all points of view have been heard, and the will of the group is evident - even to those who most oppose it.

One practical way of approaching consensus is by using a "Fist to Five" approach.

- Clarify the proposal before voting
- Vote using "Fist to Five" (Members hold up fingers according to their support of the proposal)
    - 5 – I'll champion
    - 4 – Strongly agree
    - 3 – Agree
    - 2 – Reservations
    - 1 – Oppose
    - Fist – Veto
- Invite anyone showing fewer than 3 fingers to propose an amendment or express concerns
    - Acknowledge that some "cons" cannot be changed or minimized
    - Research may be needed by a faculty committee
- Suggest proposal or revised proposal for consensus

While building consensus, assume good intentions of the people in the group and focus on behavior, not attitude. Sometimes critical thinkers sound as though they have a negative attitude but are really only offering critical observations. Their behavior, in other words their actual support, may be on the positive side.

Use these four questions to check that you have maintained a solid consensus process:

- Did we build shared knowledge regarding best practice?
- Did we honestly assess our current reality (using data)?
- Did we ensure all points of view were heard?
- Was the will of the group evident even to those who opposed it?

***Past History of the School.*** The school may already have an engrained and widely accepted decision-making process. Unless the decision-making process has constrained previous school improvement efforts, the school may decide to use the existing process.

***The Kind of School Climate***. The school might consider the school climate when selecting a decision-making method. Some school climates lend themselves to certain types of decision-

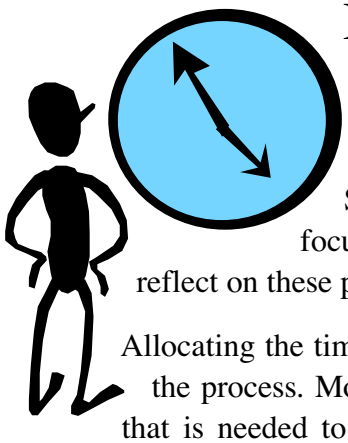
[2] Adapted from Du Four, Richard, *Building Consensus and Responding to Resisters,* Professional Learning Communities Institutes: 2003. National Education Service.

making. A school where trust is an issue may opt for a consensus approach to decision-making. A school where teachers are already of a like mind may find a two-thirds majority as an acceptable decision-making process.

***The Kind of Task.*** The school or planning team may decide that different types of decisions require different levels of decision-making. For example, some decisions may need input from all school staff, such as which reading program and strategies will be adopted school wide. Other decisions may be best left to smaller groups, such as planning the type of activities that will support the school literacy program.

***Amount of Time Available.*** The amount of time that the school has available may help determine the decision-making process. A consensus decision-making process typically takes more time to achieve than other options. If a school needs to select solutions within a short timeframe, such as those schools in mandated school improvement, the school may choose a less time-consuming approach to decision-making.

## Teacher Collaboration: Establish a Regular Time for Planning, Implementation, Monitoring, and Professional Development



Experience and the research literature have shown that school improvement takes time—time to construct a clear picture of the school and to select appropriate solutions to fit the school context. Planning, of course, is only the first step in school improvement. Staff will also need time for professional development in order to focus on student achievement, to learn and refine new practices, and to reflect on these practices as they implement them.

Allocating the time to plan and implement school improvement is a critical element of the process. Most schools do not have the time already set aside in their school day that is needed to develop a school improvement plan, let alone the time needed for teachers to monitor and reflect about implementation of new instructional practices. As schools begin to develop their plans, the need for time specifically set aside for school improvement will become clear.

Teacher collaboration time does not have to be limited to SIP team activities. Permanently providing for teacher collaboration time is essential for continued school improvement so teachers can discuss student assessment, plan together, create common assessments, and support each other's professional development.

Successful school improvement efforts have been able to create the additional time needed for school improvement and teacher collaboration through several strategies. Planning teams can discuss these options as they determine the best way(s) for their school to find the time for school improvement and the ongoing collaboration required to support it. The most common types are weekly early release and late start days.

- *Early Release Days*. Many schools lengthen the school day by 10 to 15 minutes per day for four days during the week to allow for early release of students on the fifth day. This additional 40 to 60 minutes a week can then be allocated to teachers for planning and implementation.

- *Late Start Days*. A similar practice is for schools to lengthen the school day by 10 to 15 minutes per day for four days during the week to allow for late start of students on the fifth day.

- *Common Planning Periods*. Some schools design common planning times for "functional" groups of teachers (e.g., grade level teams), so they can meet for planning and implementation. Of course, all schedule changes must meet district guidelines. The following is a list of some possible ways of finding common planning periods:

- At elementary schools, align "specials" such as physical education, music, and computer;
- Use floating substitutes to cover classes (elementary and secondary);
- Use district staff development days (elementary and secondary);
- Arrange schedules to accommodate common planning periods for certain groups;
- Adjusted start/ending times (i.e., start earlier or end later one day a week);
- Bank time (i.e., Teach ten extra minutes for nine days in a row. This saves up 90 minutes to be used on the tenth day for collaboration).

Whatever final solution is favored, planning teams will need to consult with the school district office as well as the school community before selecting the best option(s) for creating time for school improvement planning and implementation. Once implementation has begun, consideration must be given to assuring time for ongoing teacher collaboration in regard to professional development as well as monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the plan.

## Encourage Team Building

Team building is the process of getting people motivated about change, not *making* people do things. People can get excited about change when they have a role in it. Teaming acts as a vehicle to help staff take ownership in the change process. When they work properly, teams are more productive than individuals. Indeed, research has shown that effective teams demonstrate better communication and greater staff involvement in problem solving and decision-making (Lezotte, 1992).

Team building plays an important role in the success of school improvement. SIP teams need to deal with the internal task of team building as well as the school's external task of making improvements. But planning teams often underestimate the need to participate in teambuilding, both for themselves and for the entire staff. When a team runs smoothly, members can concentrate on the goal of improving student learning. In contrast, a team that fails to build relationships among its members will waste time on struggles for control.

Team building is important for SIP teams, subcommittees, and the school as a whole. Team building begins with planning and continues throughout implementation. The more teams learn to work effectively as a team, the better they will be at preventing many typical problems. School staff may want to review the following eight essential ingredients to team building when establishing their SIP teams (adapted from Scholtes, 1988).

### *1. Clear Team Goals*

A team works best when everyone understands the team's overall purpose and goals. Ideally, the team should agree on its mission, see it as workable, or narrow the mission if it is not. They should also agree on larger project goals and have a vision about how they will proceed to achieve these goals. If there is confusion or disagreement over goals, successful teams work to resolve the issues.

More importantly, school staff should be involved in setting school improvement goals. School staff should frequently review the goals as a way of communicating and refining them. The steps outlined in this Guidebook give staff and the school community important roles in establishing school improvement goals.

### *2. Broad Participation*

Since every team member has a stake in the group's success, everyone should participate in discussions and decisions, share commitment to the project's success, and contribute his/her

talents. A good rule of thumb is that the more a person is involved in the implementation, the larger the role a person should play in determining what is implemented. Assure there is continued representation on the SIP team of teachers and parents who represent the various student groups at the school, as well as district personnel and relevant community members.

***3. Clearly Defined Roles***

Teams operate most efficiently if they tap everyone's talents and all members understand their duties and know who is responsible for what issues and tasks. For school improvement, the school must decide how roles will be assigned (e.g., volunteering, designation by the principal or planning team). Clearly defined roles will facilitate program coordination during implementation.

***4. Clear Communication***

Effective problem solving depends upon how well information is shared among team members. Clear communication includes speaking with clarity and directness, being succinct and avoiding long anecdotes and examples, listening actively, exploring rather than debating, not interrupting when others are speaking, and having agreed-upon modes of communication, e.g., e-mail.

***5. Effective Team Meetings***

Teams should encourage all members to use the skills and practices that make discussions and meetings more effective. Some of these simple devices include: using agendas, having a facilitator, taking minutes, avoiding being called out of meetings, using effective discussion skills, drafting the next agenda, and bringing closure to meetings by using a few minutes to debrief before leaving. Having each team member give a short, uninterrupted description of his/her learning, "ah-has," or suggestions can be a positive way to evaluate the meeting and to be sure each member is heard.

***6. Well-Defined Decision-Making Procedures***

A team's decision-making process is a good indicator about how well the team functions. Ideally, the team should discuss how to make decisions, such as when to take a poll or when to decide by consensus (see Decision-Making). The team should explore important issues by getting input from every member, deciding issues by the agreed-upon method, and using data as the basis for decisions. A team's decision-making procedure is partly determined by the school's governance structure.

***7. Established Ground Rules***

Effective teams establish ground rules or norms for what is and is not appropriate (e.g., attendance and promptness at meetings). Ideally, the team should have open discussions about ground rules to decide what behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable. These norms should be openly communicated.

### *8. Attention to Group Process*

All team members should be aware of the group process—how the team works together. For example, team members should pay attention to the content of the meeting and take responsibility to comment or intervene to correct a group process problem.

> A key test for any society is whether it is self-correcting. To be self-correcting, it must be open and truthful about itself.
>
> David K. Shipler (1997). *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*

## Manage the Change Process

School improvement, by its very nature, **is change.** School improvement is complex because change is complex. Schools and planning teams must take the necessary steps to prepare people for change to increase the chances the SIP will be implemented successfully. One way of planning ahead for change is to remember the "Implementation Dip". No matter where a performance level is, change will almost always cause an initial decrease in that performance. However, persistence and the practice of new learning will, over time, result in a higher performance level than the starting point. The implementation dip of new learning is normal and should be expected and planned for in the timeline of change.

There is a good deal of research about education change. While there are no silver bullets, research has identified valuable lessons about change.

To help schools plan for and implement school change, Michael Fullan identified ten *assumptions about change* and a set of *factors affecting implementation*.

**Assumptions About Change**

The assumptions the planning team makes about change are extremely important in determining whether the realities of implementation get confronted or ignored. SIP teams may want to review and reflect about these assumptions on change to see if they are in a good position to confront the realities of implementation.

1. **Do not assume** that the planning team's version of what the change should be is the one that staff should or could implement. Instead, assume that one of the main purposes of the process of implementation is to change the planning team's reality of what should be through interaction with the staff that implement the changes.

2. **Assume** that any important innovation, if it is to result in change, requires staff to work out their own meaning. Important change involves a certain amount of ambiguity, ambivalence, and uncertainty for individual staff about the meaning of the change. Effective implementation is a *process of clarification*.

3. **Assume** that conflict and disagreement are inevitable and fundamental to successful change. Since any group of people possesses multiple realities, any collective change attempt will necessarily involve conflict.

4. **Assume** that staff needs pressure to change (even in directions which they desire). Change will only be effective, however, under conditions that allow staff to react, form their own position, interact with other staff, obtain technical assistance and support, etc.

5. **Assume** that effective change takes time. Unrealistic or undefined timelines fail to recognize that implementation occurs developmentally. Teams should expect meaningful change to take a minimum of two or three years.

6. **Do not assume** the reason for the lack of implementation is that staff rejects the underlying values of the change, or simply resist all change. Rather, assume staff has a number of possible reasons: value rejection, inadequate resources to support implementation, or insufficient time elapsed.

7. **Do not expect** all or even most staff to change. The complexity of change suggests it is impossible to bring about widespread restructuring in any large social system. Progress occurs in steps (e.g., by following the assumptions listed here) that *increase* the number of staff affected. The planning team should be encouraged by what has been accomplished by way of improvement rather than be discouraged by all that remains to be done.

8. **Assume** that the planning team needs a *plan* which is based on the above assumptions and which addresses the factors known to affect implementation (see the section below). Knowledge of the change process is essential. Careful planning can bring about significant change on a fairly wide scale over two or three years.

9. **Assume** that no amount of knowledge will ever clearly identify what should be implemented. Planning teams make decisions on a combination of knowledge, political considerations, on-the-spot decisions, and intuition. By learning more about the change process, the planning team will improve the mix of resources on which they draw to make decisions.

10. **Assume** that change is a frustrating, discouraging business. If all or some of the above assumptions cannot be made, planning teams should not expect significant change *as far as implementation is concerned.* (Fullan, 1991. *The New Meaning of Educational Change*.)

**Factors Affecting Implementation—Guidelines for Action**

Planning teams can take steps to guide staff through the process of change and possibly improve the success of school improvement efforts. Fullan identified the factors that have the most influence on affecting the implementation of change. Planning teams may want to review these factors affecting implementation, incorporating them into their own plans, as one way to help staff implement changes under school improvement.

> *Change is a journey into uncharted waters in a leaky boat with a mutinous crew.*
>
> ~ Michael Fullan

**Clearly Identify the Need for the Change.** The planning team should emphasize the need for the change. All staff should recognize and understand these needs as well as understand how the proposed change works to address those needs. Without such understanding, the implementation of change is often ineffective.

**Clarify the Key Elements of the Change.** When implementing change, all school staff needs to clearly understand what the change is, how their practices are affected by it, and how the school will look different. It is not enough for all staff to buy in; staff must also truly understand what the change will look like and their role in it. Staff should be able to identify the essential features of the innovation or change they are implementing.

**Determine the Complexity of the Change.** Every change has a different level of complexity in terms of skills, alterations in beliefs, and use of materials required of school staff. The planning team should analyze the change in terms of complexity. While complex change can create problems for implementation, it may result in meaningful, long-term impact—which is the purpose of school improvement. Simple changes, on the other hand, may be easier to carry out, but often fail to make a big difference. If complex changes are implemented, it is important to define specific components of the change and create a schedule for incremental implementation, such as in a master action plan, to maximize the clarity of the change required.

**Determine the Quality and Practicality of Program Materials, Technologies, Products.** The adoption of new materials should not be taken lightly. When adopting new materials, the planning team should consider how the materials would be implemented. Do the materials come with an orientation or in-service training? Do the materials include instructional methods to help teachers implement the curriculum? Without such provisions, even the "most effective" curriculum can go unused or be ineffective because teachers either do not have the time to figure out how to implement it, or they lack the expertise to implement it correctly.

**Research the History of Innovative Attempts.** Educational change has been wrought with failure, frustration, and negative experiences. If staff have had continued failure in their attempts to implement change, it is likely that their attitude towards future attempts will be less than zealous and optimistic. As a result, it is important to research and understand past attempts at change to better support staff in their approach to the current change.

**Conduct a Thorough and Thoughtful Adoption Process.** While it is important that representatives of those who will implement a change be part of the decision-making and planning processes, more important is the quality of the planning processes. The planning process must produce more than a series of frustrating meetings resulting in the mere adoption of a program. Instead the process must be carried out with careful consideration of the requirements of the implementation and produce a plan for implementation from the staff that will implement it.

**Support Teacher Change with Administrative Involvement.** In order for change proposed by central administrators to be implemented, administrators must do more than just declare it. For teachers to take change seriously, district administrators must demonstrate with their actions that they are serious about change. The success of implementation is dependent on a central, unified focus and a demonstration on district administrators' parts that they understand and will actively manage the factors and processes that affect implementation.

**Provide Quality Staff Development with Ongoing Support During Implementation.** The amount of training is not necessarily related to the quality of implementation. Training must be designed to provide ongoing, interactive, cumulative learning to facilitate the development of new concepts, skills, and behavior. Teachers need training during implementation to help them with the early stages of implementation and the problems that come with it [as well as ongoing follow-up and support from administrators and colleagues]. Without this opportunity to learn while doing, teachers will not understand the basis of the theory, may only be able to use materials mechanically, or will give up on continuing the use of good strategies.

**Create a Realistic Timeline and Establish Evaluation Procedures to Guide Implementation.** It is extremely important to develop an implementation timeline that is neither unrealistically short nor casually long. The major reason is that the decision-makers who create the timeline often have an adoption time perspective while staff has an implementation time perspective. Unrealistic timelines add to the burdens of implementation: materials fail to arrive on schedule, orientation and training are neglected or carried out perfunctorily, communication is hurried and frequently overlooked, people become overloaded, and continued support is forgotten.

Another major dilemma is to decide what data to collect, when to collect it, and how best to use it for evaluation. When planning the evaluation, the planning team should consider the research which has shown that monitoring implementation is effective in facilitating change if it is linked to a plan for acting on the data collected. Research has also shown that school and classroom level information, such as information about student learning and other implementation problems, is strongly related to school improvement.

**Ensure Principal Support.** The support of principals in school improvement efforts positively affects the likelihood of success. Principal support serves to legitimize the seriousness of the change and to provide psychological and resource support for teachers. Attendance at workshops is one of the best ways principals can show their support of a proposed change. Their attendance at these workshops and other meetings [not only] helps the principal more fully understand the teacher's perspective and struggles in the change process [but also builds schema for what the principal should look for during observations].

**Provide for Teacher-Teacher Interactions.** Change requires resocialization, and interaction is the primary source of social training. Thus, the interaction between and among teachers is very important throughout the change process. They need to draw strength from other teachers, to exchange ideas with them, and receive positive feelings about their work.

**Understand the Teacher Characteristics that Support Positive Change.** Level of education and years of experience do not necessarily contribute to a teacher's success with change. Rather there are several teacher characteristics that support change, including a teacher's previous participation in and success with change, a teacher's belief that all children can succeed, a school-wide emphasis and expectation that teachers can improve student learning, and a teacher's belief in furthering his/her education through talking about the practice of teaching,

observing other teachers, planning, designing, researching, evaluating, and preparing materials with other teachers and administrators.

Another guiding resource to support the change process is reflected in the work of Gene Hall and Shirley Hord. In their book *Implementing Change: Patterns, Principles, and Potholes* (2001), Hall and Hord provide many tools and techniques for change facilitators that take into account the stages of concern of the individuals and institutions dealing with change, as well as examining the role of leadership in times of change and the different styles of change facilitators that can produce varying results in implementation.

## Communicate about School Improvement

Communication plays a pivotal role in school improvement efforts—especially in its relationship with the other five essential foundations of school improvement. Open and frequent communication encourages team building, helps prepare people for change, and informs staff and the school community about the school improvement effort, its implementation, and individual roles in the effort.

Teachers, parents, students, and community members need to have information about the school's improvement efforts. They should be involved in every step in the planning and the implementation of the improvement plan. The following discussion highlights what the planning team needs to communicate about school improvement during the four planning steps.

**Comprehensive Needs Assessment.** The entire school community should be given the opportunity to provide input into and participate in the needs assessment. Based on the needs assessment, the planning team should develop a school profile to obtain a complete picture of the school. The planning team should also communicate the results of the needs assessment to the whole school community so that the school community has the opportunity to review the results and help interpret them.

**Inquiry Process.** The planning team should involve all of the school community in reviewing the priority needs, the causes, and the goals and give input about them before solutions are determined for implementation. The planning team should communicate the results of the inquiry process, i.e., the selected goals and solutions, to the entire school community.

**Master Plan Design.** The master plan developed in this step of school improvement should effectively reflect what, when, and how school improvement activities will be implemented. The master plan should also identify the roles of all teachers in the improvement efforts. Finally, the completed master plan should be shared with the entire school community.

**Implementation and Evaluation.** Both teachers and students should know the goals of the improvement plan. Communication among teachers about the progress of the plan and evaluation of student learning in relation to the implementation of the plan should be consistent and ongoing. School improvement goals should also be communicated to the school community.

**Methods to Communicate to Staff and the School Community.** The planning team has a range of options to communicate information about the school improvement effort:

- ***Newsletters.*** Since many schools have monthly newsletters, the planning team could devote a section of the newsletter to the progress of school improvement planning, implementation, and attaining improvement goals.
- ***Planning Team Meetings.*** Hold open meetings for all planning team activities, including subcommittees that are assigned specific responsibilities.
- ***Department or Prep Period Meetings.*** These smaller meetings not only provide a chance for more open discussion, but also support teacher collaboration.
- ***Minutes.*** Create and distribute minutes of all planning team meetings and subcommittee meetings.
- ***Internet.*** Use the Internet to communicate information about school improvement efforts, such as the school newsletter, minutes of meetings, and progress on improvement goals.
- ***Display Goals.*** After the school improvement plan is complete, enlist staff and students in posting school goals at key points around the school, such as the school entrance, faculty room, and main office.
- ***Distribute School Improvement Plan.*** After the SIP is complete, first make sure to distribute the plan to all staff members and review it together. Next, make copies of the plan available to the school community in the school office and distribute a copy of the plan to parent advisory groups.

# Notes

# ATTACHMENT 2P

# Facilitator Information

# Attachment 2P: Facilitator Information

The following information is organized in alphabetical order by topic, not by order of importance. Reference the list below to find the information that you need.


| TOPIC | PAGE |
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| **Data Analysis Guide** | **32** |
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## DATA ANALYSIS GUIDE

The Data Analysis Guide guides a school improvement plan (SIP) team's discussion around the most important aspects of achievement and each of the five dimensions of school success. The questions and indicators are meant to lead the collection, discussion, and analysis of data in student achievement and in each of the dimensions. Examples of evidence are included in the guide to indicate where data on a particular subject might be found.

The Data Analysis Guide contains two parts, a *Student Achievement Outcomes* section to guide the analysis of the state and local summative assessments and outcome evidence and a *Five Dimensions of Successful Schools* section to guide the analysis of the evidence related to the foundational components of successful schools. The *Student Achievement Outcomes – Data Analysis Guide* (Outcomes-DAG) was created to help guide SIP teams in the investigation of their outcome data. The *Outcomes-DAG* analysis includes a bank of questions to guide discussion around the important aspects of achievement.

The *Five Dimensions of Successful Schools – Data Analysis Guide* (Five Dimensions-DAG) was created to help guide school improvement teams in the investigation of the school dimensions that impact the success of improvement efforts. The five dimensions of successful schools are as follows: *Shared Leadership, Learning Environment and School Culture*; *Curriculum, Instruction, Intervention, and Assessment*; *Professional Development; and Parent and Community Involvement*. The *Five Dimensions-DAG* includes key indicators with rubric descriptors to guide discussions around the important aspects of school success. The rubric ratings of the key indicators result from this analysis of data related to the five dimensions. The indicators are the basis for discussing and analyzing results after the data have been collected. Schools are encouraged to add or expand on the areas explored in the different dimensions, according to each school's individual situation. Discuss the indicators in depth; the rating to each indicator will provide a candid analysis of the factors that are contributing to strengths and concerns found in the student achievement data.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND SHARED DECISION-MAKING

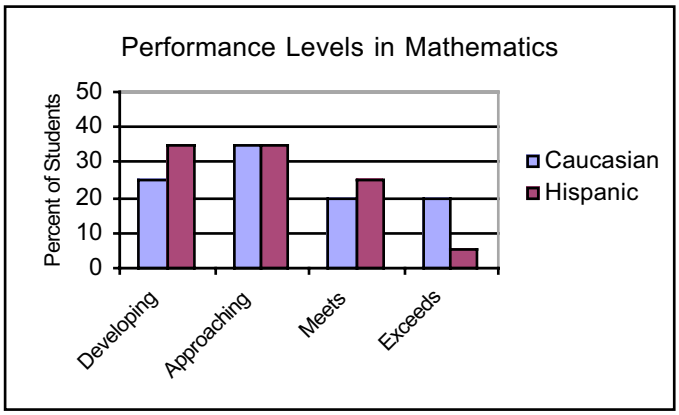
How the school examines data may depend on the size of the school staff and/or the size of the SIP team. One way to examine data and to involve the whole staff is to divide the SIP team into five leadership groups based on the five dimensions, one or two leaders per dimension. These leaders meet with staff members, explain the goal(s), and then discuss the questions in the DAG for the dimension they are leading, using the collected data and answering the questions in terms of their impact on student learning (i.e., the goal/s). The leaders will then return to the SIP team and report their findings and recommendations from the staff.

Another way to consider the data is to have the SIP team work together on each dimension or to divide into groups of two or three to look at one dimension per group. Regardless of which way works best for the SIP team and staff, it is important to communicate the results to the entire staff. This can be done via whole staff or prep period meetings so that everyone is apprised of the direction the SIP team is suggesting for the school and so that everyone can provide input.

## DISAGGREGATED DATA EXAMPLE

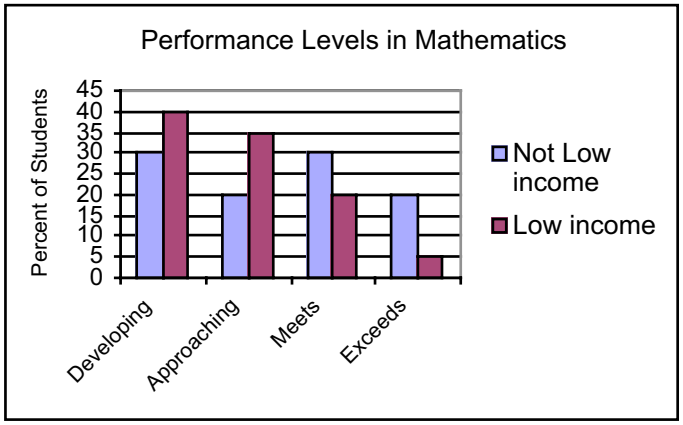
Consider a hypothetical elementary school. Overall, the staff found through examining its CRT results that a larger percentage of students were below proficient levels in mathematics than in reading. Specifically, they found that approximately 65 percent of students were below proficient levels in mathematics. When school staff disaggregated the data by ethnicity and income, they found a larger percentage of Hispanic students were below proficiency than Caucasian students. It is also important to note the small percentage of Hispanic students in the Exceeds performance level. In addition, they learned that a larger percentage of low-income students were below proficient than students who were not low-income.

**Figure 1.** CRT Scores Disaggregated by Ethnicity




The new information that the school staff obtained by disaggregating their CRT scores by ethnicity and income allowed them to more precisely identify an area of concern in order to develop a more accurate goal. The goal statement reads, "Strategies to improve mathematics instruction for all of our students, especially Hispanic students and low-income students, will be implemented to improve student mathematics skills." The refined goal statement helped the school identify solutions that would improve mathematics achievement for all students, but especially address the needs of Hispanic and low-income students. Data disaggregation is a valuable tool for looking at the performance of subgroups in any school and is required for state level tests under NRS 385.

**Figure 2.** CRT Scores Disaggregated by Income




## THE INQUIRY PROCESS

The inquiry process, modeled after scientific inquiry, is used to develop and test hypotheses about observed phenomena. The *Accelerated Schools Project* developed by Henry Levin of Stanford University uses inquiry in exploring alternative strategies to meet specific school problems. Dr. Levin states that inquiry " has been found to be the most frustrating and yet the most liberating part of the change process" (Levin, 1995, p. 2). It is frustrating because it works in opposition to the traditional school practice of making quick decisions and because many school staff have had little or no experience with such a process. At the same time, the process is

liberating, because it allows planning teams to solve complex school problems. This guidebook draws upon the inquiry process from the *Accelerated Schools* program.

The inquiry process follows a framework for creative problem solving. Without a framework, people flounder. Within the guidelines of a creative strategy, however, people can generate many creative, often more effective solutions that would not be possible otherwise. All staff can, and should, be involved in the inquiry process. The SIP team may find it helpful to have team members head subcommittees made up of staff members that investigate causes based on their interest or expertise. The subcommittees would be responsible for reporting back and sharing information, thus involving all staff members.

The Inquiry Process includes three overlapping tasks: a needs assessment, an analysis to verify root causes, and a selection of solutions. The *Five Dimensions of Successful Schools – Data Analysis Guide* (see Attachment 4P) provides the direction for a targeted analysis of the potential contributing causes/factors to the underlying needs/problems.

**Comprehensive Needs Assessment**

A needs assessment is based on the premise that a school must have a clear picture of its current status, or "what is," before effective changes can be made. To create this picture, the school gathers data on student achievement and five key dimensions crucial to understanding and promoting school success. The five dimensions promoting school success are curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention; learning environment and school culture; parent and community involvement; professional development; and shared leadership. When conducting the needs assessment, the planning team gathers data from state, district, school, and classroom assessments, as well as information from staff, parents, students, and community members, to ensure they obtain a complete picture of the school as seen by all stakeholders.

**Investigation of the Root Causes**

It has been said that the solution to any problem already exists. The real task is to ask the right questions that will reveal the underlying causes of the problem. Therefore, the most important step in the inquiry process is to understand fully each student achievement concern and the causes related to the concerns.

For example, if the concern is that the reading achievement is far below grade level for all students, especially LEP students, the SIP team may have discovered that some factors are contributing more to the problem than others. Simply adding a new reading program may not solve the problem if that particular reading program does not address the factors that contributed to the problem in the first place. If the school chooses a reading program that does not address LEP students but the cause of difficulty in reading is based on limited English proficiency in large numbers of students, the school has not chosen the best solution for the actual causes of difficulties in reading.

**Selecting Solutions to Fit the School Context**

After the SIP team determines the verified root causes for each concern, the team can investigate potential solutions. School teams made up of staff members should seek ideas for solutions and information about these solutions from many different sources, such as:

- District or state education offices, Regional Professional Development Programs, outside experts, successful practices in other schools, or the Internet, (e.g., the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory has a catalog of effective programs on the Internet, http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/natspec/catalog/index.html);
- Other schools or districts with successful programs in a similar content area,
- Research and educational literature; and
- Brainstorming sessions.

The SIP team, with staff input, search for any possible research-based solution that addresses the primary concerns. Then the SIP team looks critically at the list of potential solutions and crafts a solution with the local school context in mind. Adopting programs and practices simply because they have worked well at other sites does not ensure success, particularly when underlying conditions are different.

Strengths found in the data can often be used in developing strategies to help improve weaknesses. For instance, if the school documents low reading achievement, staff may find they have strengths in parent and community involvement or in staff collaboration. Either or both of these areas could be used as part of a solution to improve reading achievement. Successful strategies in one content area may be replicated in another.

The solutions selected by the SIP team must match the primary concerns and have a logical connection with the verified causes. The SIP team will consider the following:

- Investigate both the advantages and the disadvantages of each proposed solution in the context of the school site;
- Ensure that the proposed solutions **link directly** to the root causes of the primary concerns;
- Explore the availability of resources to implement each solution, such as federal resources under NCLB (which allows for blending funds from a variety of sources) and state resources;
- Ensure intensive and sustained professional development; and
- Elicit input and support from the entire staff.

For the list of possible solutions, use the questions below to help select the solutions(s) that are the best fit with the school and directly address the verified causes. If a solution does not receive favorable answers, it may not be the best solution for the school's goal.

- Will the implementation of the solution address our school's goal and root causes?
- Have we examined the advantages and disadvantages of implementing this solution?
- Is everyone who is part of the challenge, part of the solution?
- Have we determined the resources we need to implement this solution?
- Will the actions of the school community change, or just the actions of a few individuals?
- Can the change be sustained?
- Will the proposed solution do the most to help students learn?
- Have we modified this solution to best meet the realities and interests of our students, their families, our classrooms, and our school?
- Will the staff accept and support this solution?
- Does the school have the power to implement this solution?

**Inquiry Process: Common Pitfalls and Helpful Tips**

Planning teams often encounter several common pitfalls when going through the inquiry process. The SIP team may want to review these common pitfalls and tips to plan accordingly before conducting the inquiry step.

**Pitfalls**

- **Collecting Meaningless Data.** It is important to conduct a "comprehensive" needs assessment to examine how shared leadership; curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention; learning environment and school culture; parent and community involvement; and professional development influence student learning. However, data collection should be focused on the important issues that describe the individual school.
- **Conducting Duplicate Needs Assessments.** If the school is conducting other needs assessments to meet the requirements of other initiatives, such as accreditation, the needs assessment efforts can be combined. It is not necessary to conduct a second needs assessment.
- **Neglecting to Use Quality Data Collection Instruments.** Common instruments used in needs assessments include surveys, questionnaires, observations, and interviews. Developing good, quality data collection instruments requires training. Planning teams may want to use or revise existing instruments, or request expert advice. This planning guide includes survey instruments in Attachment 6P.
- **Not Verifying Causes of the Concerns.** Once concerns have been identified, it is critical to explore the underlying reasons why these concerns exist. Without an accurate explanation, it is difficult to develop appropriate solutions that will meet the goal(s).
- **Not Seeking Technical Assistance for Solutions.** The inquiry process takes time, primarily because it takes time to research and identify possible solutions. However,

without technical assistance and research, planning teams may not discover what solutions work best and which ones are based on scientific research.

- **Jumping to Solutions Rather Than Identifying Concerns.** The most common pitfall is that many planning teams get sidetracked in the needs assessment by identifying solutions rather than concerns. The statement, "we need a new reading program," is a solution, not a concern. The concern is "our students have low reading achievement." The appropriate time to generate solutions is during step three of the Inquiry Process.

Planning teams that have overcome these common pitfalls often use the strategies below as part of their inquiry process.

**Tips**

- **Assign Data Collection Responsibilities to Subcommittees** so that work is distributed to make data collection more efficient and to include all staff in the process.
- **Be Selective About the Type and Amount of Data Collected** by making sure the data is related to the five dimensions of school success in the *Five Dimensions of Successful Schools – Data Analysis Guide* (see Attachment 4P).
- **Integrate the School Improvement Needs Assessment with Other Needs Assessments** to make data collection more efficient.
- **Collect Information from all Stakeholders:** parents, students, teachers, and community members so that everyone has input into the process of developing the school improvement plan.
- **Consider Only the Concerns** over which the school has control.
- **Hold back** from jumping to solutions before identifying clear causes of the concerns.
- **Assigning Subcommittees to Investigate Solutions for Different Causes** based on people's interest in the cause or using the same subcommittees that identified it as a cause.
- **Tapping Multiple Resources**, such as universities, educational laboratories, Nevada Department of Education, Regional Professional Development Programs, etc., to identify a range of the best possible solutions.
- **Reviewing multiple solutions** so the solution that is finally selected is the best solution possible for the school.
- **Getting Input from Stakeholders on Selected Solutions** so that everyone feels part of the solution.
- **Developing Procedures to Share Results** with staff and the school community so that everyone has the opportunity to react to and provide input about the selected solutions before they are implemented.

## MISSIONS AND BELIEFS

One might say that the obvious mission of a school participating in school improvement would be to increase student achievement. However, for a mission to have real meaning for school improvement, the people involved in the endeavor must be in agreement as to what that mission represents to each individual and to the group as a whole. Creating a shared vision for student learning through mission and belief statements can lead and support the school in many ways.

### The Mission Statement

If your school already has a mission statement in place, it is important that all stakeholders revisit the existing mission statement, agree if it is still the purpose you are working towards, reconfirm its guidance for the improvement of the school, and recommit to it. If a mission statement does not exist for your school, this is the perfect time to draw the school community together and create one.

A mission statement does not need to be lengthy or academic. In fact, it should be a clear and concise statement that reflects the beliefs of the school. It should focus on learning for all students, be easily understood by all, and should serve as the school's "call to action."

Two questions to consider when creating a mission statement will help direct its creation.

- Why do we exist?
- What is the role the school must assume in shaping the future and providing educational opportunities for all students?

Sample school mission statements include:

- Our mission is to establish a strong foundation for lifelong learning by nurturing, guiding, and challenging all of our students to achieve their maximum potential.
- It is the mission of our school to provide its students with opportunities designed to meet individual needs and to ensure that every child has experiences that promote growth in each area of development.
- The school is a diverse community committed to the success of all learners as they become knowledgeable, responsible, and caring citizens.

### Belief Statements

Beliefs are statements that should be closely aligned with the mission statement and represent the majority of the school community. Belief statements support the goals for student learning and guide the way a school is organized, as well as the delivery of instruction. These are statements that reflect academic, social, and developmental needs of the students being served by the school.

Some sample belief statements are:

- Student learning is the priority for our school.

- The biggest determinant of student progress is teaching effectiveness.
- Students should be provided with a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their achievements.

To determine whether mission or belief statements need to be revised, a school may use the following questions from the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) as guides:

- Are our beliefs reflected in our actions on behalf of student learning?
- Does our mission drive our decisions impacting the work of the school?

**Vision Statements**

While a mission statement indicates what a school stands for, and belief statements address how a school will support that standing, a vision statement looks to the future and answers the question, "What kind of school do we hope to become?" It is based on collective inquiry into the research and learning about best practices, as well as on what the staff says is important and what they want their school to become. A compelling vision makes that future a reality. It forms the basis for school improvement planning, budgeting, and staff development, among other important endeavors of the school.

Below are some sample vision statements:

We envision a school in which:

- curriculum stimulates active engagement on the part of the students;
- staff unite to achieve a common purpose and clear goals;
- students accept responsibility for their own learning and actions.

Some schools create vision statements by category and list a few statements under each one, such as curriculum, students, leadership, school climate, personnel, etc.

In creating mission, belief, or vision statements, it is important to include the entire staff to ensure shared meaning and a sense of ownership from all involved. It is not the actual statements that are the most important result; it is the process that people go through together that gives the words and statements meaning. If the mission, beliefs, and vision have real meaning to the whole school they can truly have an impact on its future improvement.

## NEVADA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

**Standard I:**
Professional development is based on what educators need to know and be able to do to assist all students in achieving high academic standards.

**Standard II:**
Professional development is data-driven. Student performance data is used to determine appropriate targets and priorities for professional development, monitor progress, and make appropriate adjustments.

**Standard III:**
Professional development is based on findings from sound research, facilitating educators' understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned.

**Standard IV:**
Professional development is continuous and ongoing, and is part of a comprehensive long-range plan that aligns with school and district School Improvement Plans.

**Standard V:**
Professional development deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately, and gives foundational knowledge and skill in classroom management.

**Standard VI:**
Professional development is built into the day-to-day work of educators at the school level, and fosters professional learning communities by employing collaborative and problem-solving work groups both within and across disciplines and grade levels.

**Standard VII:**
Professional development is evaluated on the basis of impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning/achievement.

**Standard VIII:**
Professional development is connected with and supportive of larger school, district, state and federal initiatives for comprehensive school reform, and is an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans.

Nevada Professional Development Regional Professional Development Program, Statewide Coordinating Council, August 2003

**RUBRIC FOR REVIEW OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

The review of any school improvement effort includes two parts. First, review the steps (inquiry process and master plan design) implemented when developing the SIP. Then, review the six essential foundations that need to be established for school improvement efforts to take hold within the school.

Individually, rate the performance of your project for each planning step and for each foundation on a five-point scale where "1" indicates the evidence is Not Descriptive of the school's improvement efforts and "5" indicates the evidence is Very Descriptive. Consider the indicators under "evidence" to help you rate your project. Afterwards, as a team, discuss your ratings and try to come to consensus about your ratings. You will use the results of this activity to plan your next steps.

| **School Improvement Planning Steps** | |
|---|---|
| ***Inquiry Process: Comprehensive Needs Assessment.*** *Is the comprehensive analysis of school strengths and areas of concern based on objective data?* | Not Descriptive ... Very Descriptive<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| ***Evidence—***<br>• An analysis of disaggregated student achievement data on state standards and local assessments or competencies.<br>• An analysis of survey results from teachers, parents, and students about school services and school climate, focus groups, interviews.<br>• A list of the school's areas of concern that are the focus of improvement efforts. | Notes: |
| ***Inquiry Process: Verification of Causes and Selection of Solutions.*** *Does the selection of research-based strategies, practices, and programs best address the school's priority concerns?* | Not Descriptive ... Very Descriptive<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| *Evidence—*<br>• The school has a list of the priority causes and the data that verify each reason.<br>• A list of the most appropriate research-based solutions for the school.<br>• The selected solutions clearly describe the structures and practices to be implemented in the classroom/school in the core academic areas. | Notes: |

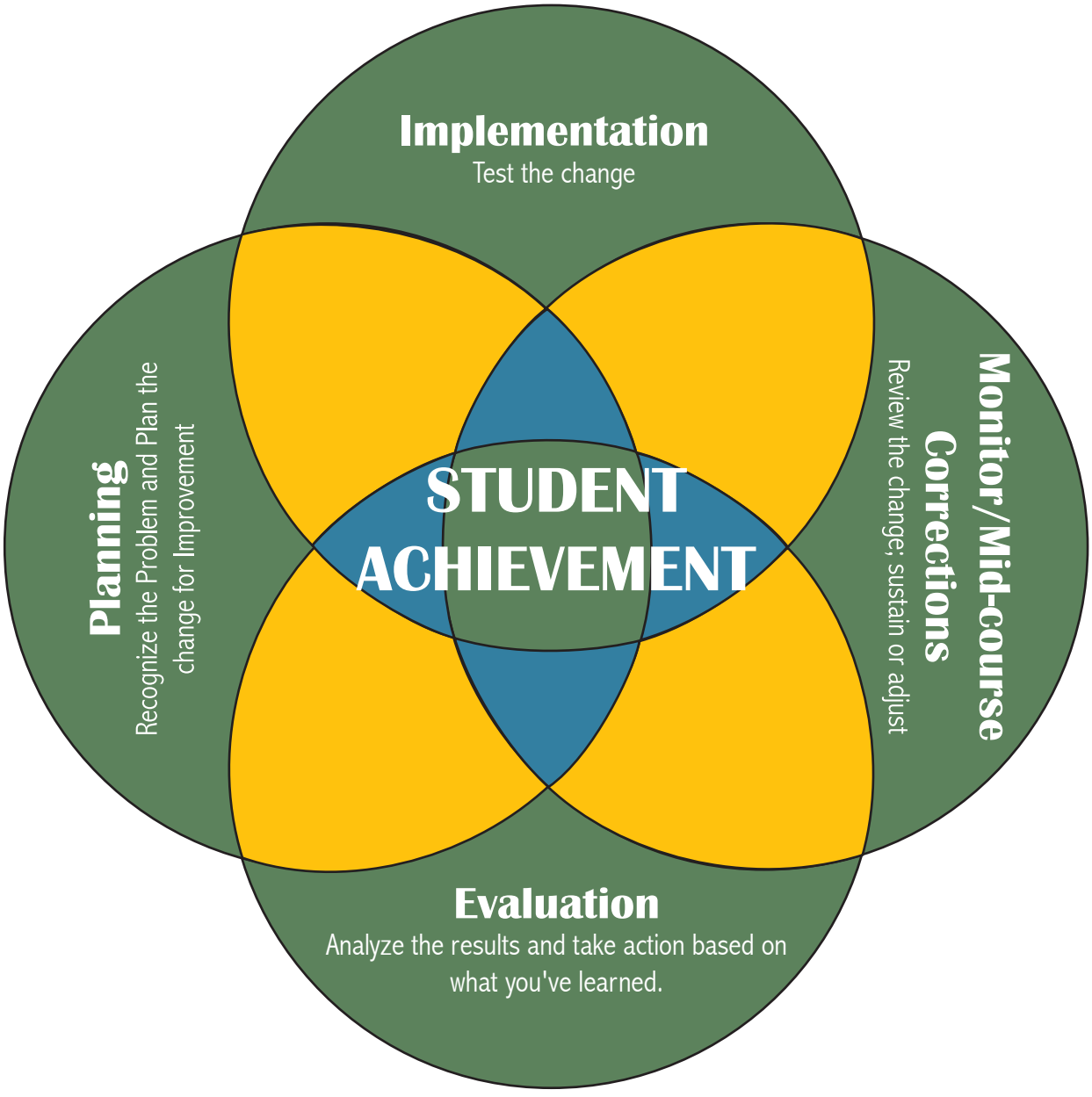
| School Improvement Planning Steps (cont.) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Master Plan Design.*** *Does the plan guide the school community in implementing and monitoring the selected solutions?* | Not Descriptive | | | | Very Descriptive |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ***Evidence—***<br>• Clear measurable objectives that include a statement of what will happen, an outcome indicator, baseline, expected performance level, and timeline.<br>• An action plan that identifies the key activities, the resources required, the timeline, and persons responsible.<br>• The level of detail in the action plan—it provides enough detail so staff know what, when, and how they will be involved in improvement efforts.<br>• The establishment of a team to monitor the implementation of solutions.<br>• A plan to collect data on the implementation of key activities from the master plan.<br>• The frequency that school staff meet to monitor program implementation.<br>• The data collected on the quality of implementation of key instructional activities. | Notes: | | | | |
| ***Evaluation.*** *Does the school community measure the quality of the implementation of selected activities and their impact on student outcomes?* | Not Descriptive | | | | Very Descriptive |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ***Evidence—***<br>• A plan to collect data on master plan and student achievement goals.<br>• A plan to measure the progress for achieving the measurable objectives and improvement goals. | Notes: | | | | |

| Essential Foundations of School Improvement | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Governance Structure.*** *Does the management structure the school uses assist in developing and implementing the School Improvement Plan?* | Not Descriptive | | | | Very Descriptive |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| *Evidence—*<br>• Staff can articulate how the SIP is managed.<br>• Staff can articulate who makes decisions about school improvement.<br>• The number and percent of teachers that are on the management structure.<br>• Some staff plays a leadership role in managing school improvement efforts. | Notes: | | | | |
| ***Decision-Making Process.*** *Does the process the school uses to make decisions assist in developing and implementing the School Improvement Plan?* | Not Descriptive | | | | Very Descriptive |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| *Evidence—*<br>• Staff can articulate the process of how the school makes decisions about school improvement.<br>• The number and percent of school staff that help make decisions about school improvement. | Notes: | | | | |
| ***Teacher Collaboration.*** *Does the time that the school establishes for collaboration assist in developing and reviewing school improvement efforts and in supporting professional development?* | Not Descriptive | | | | Very Descriptive |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| *Evidence—*<br>• The school has established a regular time for the planning/implementation team to meet.<br>• The school has established a regular time for teacher professional development. | Notes: | | | | |

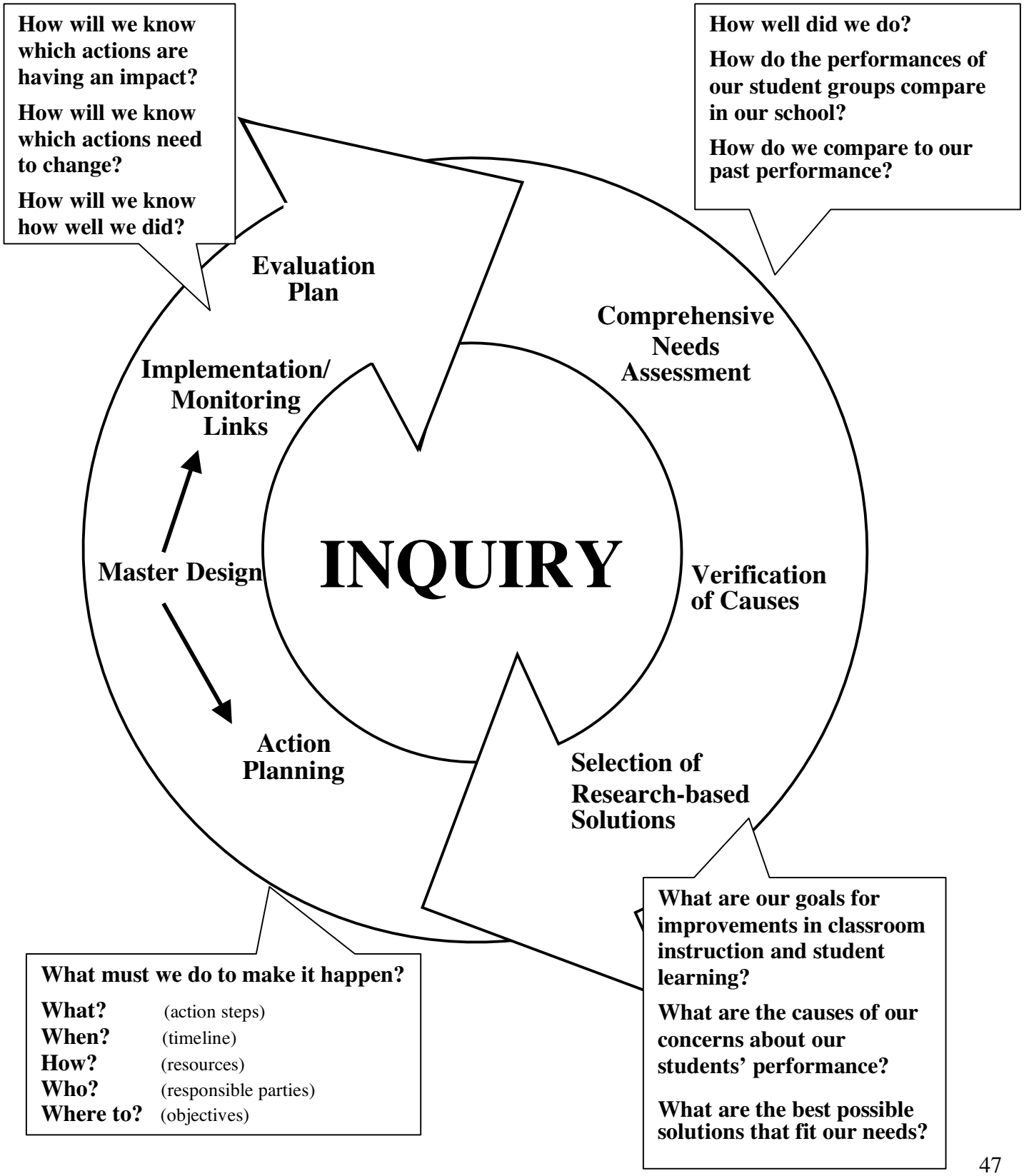
| | |
|---|---|
| ***Team Building.*** *Do the activities the school conducts help the school community develop and implement the plan efficiently?* | Not Descriptive Very Descriptive<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| *Evidence—*<br>• The level of staff commitment and ownership to school improvement efforts.<br>• The level of participation of staff and school community in school improvement planning and implementation.<br>• The level of staff understanding of the roles and responsibilities for school improvement. | Notes: |
| ***Communication.*** *Do the activities the school conducts ensure that the school community has the information they need to be active members of the school improvement process?* | Not Descriptive Very Descriptive<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| *Evidence—*<br>• The devices and structures the school uses to communicate information about school improvement efforts to staff and the school community.<br>• The familiarity of the school community with the school's improvement efforts.<br>• The school community has and knows their role in school improvement efforts. | Notes: |
| ***Managing Change.*** *Do the activities the school conducts help the school community, and especially teachers, make the changes necessary to implement the key components of the school improvement plan?* | Not Descriptive Very Descriptive<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| *Evidence—*<br>• The devices and structures the school uses to help staff make the necessary changes about school improvement efforts.<br>• Clear designation of those responsible for aspects of staff support.<br>• Staff morale for school improvement efforts. | Notes: |

# ATTACHMENT 3P

# Continuous Improvement Cycles


Implementation
Test the change
Planning
Recognize the Problem and Plan the change for Improvement
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
Monitor/Mid-course Corrections
Review the change; sustain or adjust
Evaluation
Analyze the results and take action based on what you've learned.

# School Improvement Planning Cycle



# ATTACHMENT 4P

# Five Dimensions of School Success – Data Analysis Guide

# Five Dimensions of Successful Schools

## DATA ANALYSIS GUIDE

The Data Analysis Guide included in this guidebook contains two parts: a) a *Student Achievement Outcomes* section to guide the analysis of the state summative assessments, local summative assessments, and other outcome evidence and b) a *Five Dimensions of Successful Schools* section to guide the analysis of the evidence related to the foundational components of successful schools. The *Five Dimensions of Successful Schools* – D*ata Analysis Guide* (*Five Dimensions-DAG*) was created to help guide school improvement teams in the investigation of the school dimensions that impact the success of improvement efforts. The five dimensions of successful schools are as follows: *Learning Environment and School Culture*; *Curriculum, Instruction, Intervention, and Assessment*; *Professional Development; Parent and Community Involvement*; and *Shared Leadership*. The *Five Dimensions-DAG* includes key indicators with rubric descriptors to guide discussions around the important aspects of school success. The rubric ratings of the key indicators result from this analysis of data related to the five dimensions.

### Analyze each of the indicators to determine the strengths and concerns related to the school's structures and practices. Follow the steps below:

- **Data Collection:** Gather the evidence that is most reliable, sufficient, and relevant in revealing the school's current status.
- **Indicator Rating:** Analyze the evidence to determine the appropriate rating on the rubric (based on the evidence).
- **Key Strengths:** From analysis of the evidence, what structures and practices are key strengths that can be utilized in the upcoming year relative to the concerns identified in the student achievement data?
- **Areas of Concern:** From the evidence, what structures and practices are areas of concern that potentially need to be addressed in the upcoming year?

List the key strengths and areas of concern in "Part III: Inquiry Process, Comprehensive Needs Assessment" in the SIP.

# Five Dimensions of Successful Schools

## Shared Leadership

| **1. The school has a system in place to support organizational improvements and shared leadership.** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Supporting Questions:**<br>• What practices are in place to cultivate leadership at the school?<br>• How do the school leaders solicit input for decision-making?<br>• How does the school involve parents and community in decision-making processes?<br>• How are school data communicated so that all stakeholders are informed of the school's progress?<br>• What structures are in place to ensure efficient and effective use of resources to support increases in student and staff performance? | | | |
| **Examples of Evidence:**<br>• Displays of mission and vision<br>• Meeting agendas and minutes | • Staff, student, and parent interviews and surveys<br>• Descriptions of organizational structures | • Leadership professional development (as part of professional development plan) | |
| **1**<br>**Limited** | **2**<br>**Partial** | **3**<br>**Substantial** | **4**<br>**Full** |
| There is **no evidence** of a system focused on organizational and leadership capacity.<br>OR<br>There is a system in place that incorporates **one** of the following: Sustains a shared mission and vision, implements shared decision-making practices with all stakeholders, provides opportunities for enhancement of leadership skills, and maximizes organizational structures. | There is a system in place that incorporates **two** of the following: Sustains a shared mission and vision, implements shared decision-making practices with all stakeholders, provides opportunities for enhancement of leadership skills, and maximizes organizational structures. | There is a system in place that incorporates **three** of the following: Sustains a shared mission and vision, implements shared decision-making practices with all stakeholders, provides opportunities for enhancement of leadership skills, and maximizes organizational structures. | There is a system in place that incorporates **all** of the following: Sustains a shared mission and vision, implements shared decision-making practices with all stakeholders, provides opportunities for enhancement of leadership skills, and maximizes organizational structures. |

# Five Dimensions of Successful Schools

## Learning Environment and School Culture

| **1. The school culture supports a climate of high academic and behavioral expectations for all students.** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Supporting Questions:**<br>• How does the school ensure that the staff applies consistent levels of academic expectations and standards of conduct?<br>• In what ways do the school leaders and staff demonstrate the belief that all children can and do learn? | | | |
| **Examples of Evidence:**<br>• Lesson plans<br>• Walkthrough observations<br>• Posted behavior standards<br>• Posted academic standards<br>• School policies and procedures<br>• Student and parent handbooks<br>• Newsletters (student, parent)<br>• School mission, vision, and belief statements<br>• School accountability reports | | | |
| **1**<br>**Limited** | **2**<br>**Partial** | **3**<br>**Substantial** | **4**<br>**Full** |
| There is **no evidence** that the school (staff and structures) has set high academic and behavioral expectations.<br><br>OR<br><br>The school (staff and structures) sets and applies standards of academic and behavioral expectations for a **limited** number students. | The school (staff and structures) sets and applies high academic and behavioral expectations for **some** of the students. | The school (staff and structures) sets and applies high academic and behavioral expectations for **most** of the students. | The school (staff and structures) sets and applies high academic and behavioral expectations for **all** students. |

# Five Dimensions of Successful Schools

## Learning Environment and School Culture

**2. The school functions as a safe, positive, and caring learning community that is conducive to academic success.**

**Supporting Questions:**

- How does the school ensure that all students feel accepted and supported academically, socially, and culturally?
- What concerns exist about the safety of students and staff on the school campus (including before and after school hours)?
- What is the rate of student office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions? How has this rate changed over the last three years?
- How does the school ensure a broad level of involvement in extra-curricular school activities that reflects the diversity of the school population?
- How does the school provide time for teachers to collaborate on curriculum, instruction, interventions, and assessment?
- What process is in place to ensure that conversations during collaboration time are focused on curriculum, instruction, intervention, and assessment?

**Examples of Evidence:**

- School safety plan
- Student and parent interviews
- Student discipline reports
- Observations
- School policies and procedures
- Safe schools reports
- Student and parent handbooks
- School accountability reports
- Collaborative teacher planning time (e.g. PLC, STPT)

| 1<br>**Limited** | 2<br>**Partial** | 3<br>**Substantial** | 4<br>**Full** |
|---|---|---|---|
| There is **no evidence** that the school structures provide a safe and nurturing learning community.<br>OR<br>There is **no evidence** that the safe and nurturing environment promotes a learning community focused on academic success. | The school (staff and structures) has established a safe and nurturing environment that promotes academic success for **some** students and staff. | The school (staff and structures) has established a safe and nurturing learning community that promotes academic success for **most** students and staff. | The school (staff and structures) has established a safe and nurturing learning community that promotes academic success for **all** students and staff. |

# Five Dimensions of Successful Schools

## Curriculum, Instruction, Intervention, and Assessment

**1. The school implements effective instructional practices that are used to meet the needs of all students in learning challenging standards-based curriculum.**

**Supporting Questions:**

- How does the school ensure that teachers are implementing the district-adopted curriculum aligned to Nevada content standards?
- How does the school ensure that instructional resources are sufficient to support the effective delivery of the curriculum?
- How does the school provide multiple pathways to post-secondary education and career options?
- How practices are in place to ensure students participate in self-monitoring of their own performance?
- How does the school ensure that teachers are using research-based instructional practices?
- What practices are in place to ensure that students have access to instructional practices that bring relevancy to the curriculum?
- Where are the IEP/LEP students receiving services (e.g. pull out services, general education classroom)?
- How does the school ensure that the special education students have access to the general education curriculum at their grade level?

**Examples of Evidence:**

- Units of study/lesson plans and accompanying assessment tasks
- Course syllabi
- Curriculum documents
- Staff and student interviews
- Resource allocation reports
- Observations
- Work-based learning programs
- Examples of student work
- Formative assessment data
- IEP/LEP placement data

| 1<br>Limited | 2<br>Partial | 3<br>Substantial | 4<br>Full |
|---|---|---|---|
| **None** or **one** of the following effective instructional practices are observed: Addressing the learning needs of diverse students, engaging students in learning, instructing students at all cognitive levels, integrating literacy skills in all content areas, and monitoring student learning through ongoing formative and summative assessment. | **Two** of the following effective instructional practices are observed: Addressing the learning needs of diverse students, engaging students in learning, instructing students at all cognitive levels, integrating literacy skills in all content areas, and monitoring student learning through ongoing formative and summative assessment. | **Three** of the following effective instructional practices are observed: Addressing the learning needs of diverse students, engaging most students in learning, instructing students at all cognitive levels, integrating literacy skills in all content areas, and monitoring student learning through ongoing formative and summative assessment. | **All** of the following effective instructional practices are observed: Addressing the learning needs of diverse students, engaging all students in learning, instructing students at all cognitive levels, integrating literacy skills in all content areas, and monitoring student learning through ongoing formative and summative assessment. |

# Five Dimensions of Successful Schools

## Curriculum, Instruction, Intervention, and Assessment

**2. The school has an intervention system that meets the needs of students who are not meeting academic/behavior expectations.**

**Supporting Questions:**

- How is the intervention system integrated with collaborative teacher planning time, the assessment system, and the professional development plan?
- How does the intervention system inform or impact classroom instruction?
- How is staff supported as they implement interventions (peer mentoring, coaching, side-by-side teaching)?
- How is technology used by all teachers and students to support standards-based instruction and intervention?
- What process is in place to ensure that teachers provide all students with opportunity and access to challenging curriculum?

**Examples of Evidence:**

- Intervention plan
- Lesson plans/units of study
- Student schedules
- Classroom Observations
- Technology plan
- Individual education plans
- Special education referral rates
- Results from intervention programs and practices
- Student and parent interviews
- Special education graduation rates

| 1<br>Limited | 2<br>Partial | 3<br>Substantial | 4<br>Full |
|---|---|---|---|
| There is **no evidence** of an intervention system in place.<br>OR<br>There is a system in place that incorporates **one** of the following: Established procedures for monitoring student progress, a data-driven process for identifying students in need, a data-driven process for determining and delivering appropriate interventions, structures that support staff collaboration, and evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions in meeting student needs. | There is a system in place that incorporates **two** of the following: Established procedures for monitoring student progress, a data-driven process for identifying students in need, a data-driven process for determining and delivering appropriate interventions, structures that support staff collaboration, and evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions in meeting student needs. | There is a system in place that incorporates **three or four** of the following: Established procedures for monitoring student progress, a data-driven process for identifying students in need, a data-driven process for determining and delivering appropriate interventions, structures that support staff collaboration, and evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions in meeting student needs. | There is a system in place that incorporates **all** of the following: Established procedures for monitoring student progress, a data-driven process for identifying students in need, a data-driven process for determining and delivering appropriate interventions, structures that support staff collaboration, and evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions in meeting student needs. |

# Five Dimensions of Successful Schools

## Curriculum, Instruction, Intervention, and Assessment

**3. The school has a system in place to support the development and use of valid and reliable standards-based assessments that identify student learning needs and student achievement progress.**

**Supporting Questions:**

- What resources and support does the school provide to ensure that quality formative assessments are used?
- How do teachers use formative and summative assessment data to adjust instruction?
- How do students receive meaningful feedback on their learning?
- How does the school determine if students are meeting grade-level standards?
- How are district, school, and/or classroom assessment results used to inform instruction and intervention decisions?

**Examples of Evidence:**

- Units of study/lesson plans and accompanying assessment tasks
- Samples of classroom assessments
- Student work folders/portfolios
- Progress report forms
- Displays of student work
- Rubrics posted in classroom

| 1<br>Limited | 2<br>Partial | 3<br>Substantial | 4<br>Full |
|---|---|---|---|
| There is **no evidence** of the use of valid and reliable standards-based assessments.<br><br>OR<br><br>There is evidence that **one** of the following effective assessment practices is in place: Focuses assessments on specific learning expectations, applies standards of assessment quality, uses a range of assessment options, accurately interprets assessment results, and provides meaningful feedback to students and parents. | There is evidence that **two** of the following effective assessment practices are in place: Focuses assessments on specific learning expectations, applies standards of assessment quality, uses a range of assessment options, accurately interprets assessment results, and provides meaningful feedback to students and parents. | There is evidence that **three or four** of the following effective assessment practices are in place: Focuses assessments on specific learning expectations, applies standards of assessment quality, uses a range of assessment options, accurately interprets assessment results, and provides meaningful feedback to students and parents. | There is evidence that **all** of the following effective assessment practices are in place: Focuses assessments on specific learning expectations, applies standards of assessment quality, uses a range of assessment options, accurately interprets assessment results, and provides meaningful feedback to students and parents. |

# Five Dimensions of Successful Schools

## Professional Development

**1. The school has a system in place that provides ongoing professional development based on teacher needs as identified in multiple sources of data.**

**Supporting Questions:**

- What procedures are in place to support ongoing professional development at the school (e.g., peer coaching, collaborative teacher planning time, teacher learning communities, designated specialists)?
- How does the school ensure that the professional development provided is in accordance with the Nevada Professional Development Standards (see Attachment 2P for the Nevada Professional Development Standards)?
- How does the school ensure that the professional development provided is in response to data about student achievement needs tied to school improvement goals?
- What procedures does the school have in place to orient new teachers to curriculum, instructional, and intervention materials?

**Examples of Evidence:**

- Professional development plan
- Collaborative teacher planning time (e.g. PLC, STPT)
- Observations
- Professional growth plans
- Implementation monitoring results
- Professional development calendar
- Student data analysis reports
- Staff interviews and surveys

| 1<br>Limited | 2<br>Partial | 3<br>Substantial | 4<br>Full |
|---|---|---|---|
| There is no evidence of a system that provides ongoing professional development (PD).<br><br>OR<br><br>There is a system in place that incorporates **one** of the following: Identification of PD needs based on data, alignment of PD to school improvement goals, research-based PD focused on teacher and student needs, and a process for monitoring full implementation. | There is a system in place that incorporates **two** of the following: Identification of PD needs based on data, alignment of PD to school improvement goals, research-based PD focused on teacher and student needs, and a process for monitoring full implementation. | There is a system in place that incorporates **three or four** of the following: Identification of PD needs based on data, alignment of PD to school improvement goals, research-based PD focused on teacher and student needs, and a process for monitoring full implementation. | There is a system in place that incorporates **all** of the following: Identification of PD needs based on data, alignment of PD to school improvement goals, research-based PD focused on teacher and student needs, and a process for monitoring full implementation. |

# Five Dimensions of Successful Schools

## Professional Development

| **2. The school has a system in place to ensure that professional development impacts instructional practice and student learning.** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Supporting Questions:**<br>• What procedures are in place to ensure that quality professional development is provided to staff?<br>• How does the school evaluate the impact of professional development on instructional practices and student learning?<br>• How is the employee evaluation process aligned to the implementation and evaluation of professional development? | | | |
| **Examples of Evidence:**<br>• School improvement plan<br>• Professional development plan<br>• Staff interviews and surveys | • Observations<br>• Professional growth plans<br>• Teacher evaluation protocol | • Professional development evaluations<br>• Student achievement data (formative and summative) | |
| **1**<br>**Limited** | **2**<br>**Partial** | **3**<br>**Substantial** | **4**<br>**Full** |
| There is **no evidence** of a system to monitor impact of professional development (PD).<br>OR<br>There is a system in place that incorporates **one** of the following: Support provided for effective implementation, procedures for monitoring implementation of PD (especially in the core content areas), analysis of impact on instructional practice, and analysis of impact on student learning. | There is a system in place that incorporates **two** of the following: Support provided for effective implementation, procedures for monitoring implementation of PD (especially in the core content areas), analysis of impact on instructional practice, and analysis of impact on student learning. | There is a system in place that incorporates **three** of the following: Support provided for effective implementation, procedures for monitoring implementation of PD (especially in the core content areas), analysis of impact on instructional practice, and analysis of impact on student learning. | There is a system in place that incorporates **all** of the following: Support provided for effective implementation, procedures for monitoring implementation of PD (especially in the core content areas), analysis of impact on instructional practice, and analysis of impact on student learning. |

# Five Dimensions of Successful Schools

## Parent and Community Involvement

| **1. The school structures and practices promote involvement with families and community groups to remove barriers and enhance learning opportunities for all students.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Supporting Questions:**<br>• What services does the school offer to assist parents in supporting student learning at home?<br>• How does the school provide for two-way communication with parents about student performance?<br>• How does the school provide regular and meaningful information about the school's functions and progress to families and community groups?<br>• How do the school structures and practices promote a welcoming and collaborative environment for parents and the community?<br>• How are parents kept informed and included in the school improvement decision-making processes?<br>• In what ways does the school monitor the impact of partnerships on the school and on the partners? | | |
| **Examples of Evidence:**<br>• Parent and community member interviews | • Volunteer schedules<br>• School-to-home communications<br>• Community involvement programs | • Parent/teacher conference records<br>• School event calendar |

| **1**<br>**Limited** | **2**<br>**Partial** | **3**<br>**Substantial** | **4**<br>**Full** |
|---|---|---|---|
| There is **no evidence** of structures and practices that promote family and community involvement.<br><br>OR<br><br>The school offers a **few** opportunities for families to support their child's learning and for families and the community to become involved in the support of the school. | There are **partial** structures and practices in place that assist families in supporting their child's learning and for families and the community in becoming involved in the support of the school. | There are **substantial** structures and practices in place that assist families in supporting their child's learning and for families and the community in becoming involved in the support of the school. | There is a **fully** collaborative structure in place that assists families in supporting their child's learning and for families and the community in becoming involved in the support of the school. |

# Five Dimensions of Successful Schools

## Rating Summary

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SHARED LEADERSHIP** | | | | | |
| **1** | The school has a system in place to support organizational improvements and shared leadership. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND SCHOOL CULTURE** | | | | | |
| **1** | The school culture supports a climate of high academic and behavioral expectations for all students. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **2** | The school functions as a safe, positive, and caring learning community that is conducive to academic success. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, INTERVENTION, ASSESSMENT** | | | | | |
| **1** | The school implements effective instructional practices that are used to meet the needs of all students in learning challenging standards-based curriculum. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **2** | The school has an intervention system that meets the needs of students who are not meeting academic/behavior expectations. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **3** | The school has a system in place to support the development and use of valid and reliable standards-based assessments that identify student learning needs and student achievement progress. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** | | | | | |
| **1** | The school has a system in place that provides ongoing professional development based on teacher needs as identified in multiple sources of data. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **2** | The school has a system in place to ensure that professional development impacts instructional practice and student learning. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT** | | | | | |
| **1** | The school structures and practices promote involvement with families and community groups to remove barriers and enhance learning opportunities for all students. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |

# ATTACHMENT 5P

# School Improvement Plan Template

# SCHOOL DISTRICT NAME

# SCHOOL NAME
# ADDRESS

## SAGE
## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE
## TITLE I - NRS 385

For Implementation in
(SCHOOL YEAR)

**School Improvement Planning Team**

- ALL Title I schools must have a parent on their SIP team that is NOT a district employee. Indicate this member with an asterisk.

| Name of Member | Position |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Submission Date: DATE  Area Reviewer: NAME, TITLE

| | |
|---|---|
| **School:** | **District:** |
| **Principal:** | **School Year:** |
| **Address:** | **Phone:** |
| | **Email:** |

| **TABLE OF CONTENTS** | | **Page #** |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| **Part I:** | Vision of Learning | |
| **Part II:** | Inquiry Process: Evidence of Development of the SIP | |
| **Part III:** | SIP Goals & Measurable Objectives | |
| **Part IV:** | School Improvement Master Plan: Goal 1: Action Plan & Monitoring Plan | |
| | Goal 2: Action Plan & Monitoring Plan | |
| | (Add extra rows for additional goals) | |
| **Part V:** | Budget for the overall cost of carrying out the plan | |
| **Part VI:** | Evaluation of the SIP | |
| **Part VII:** | Other Required Elements of the SIP (All schools) | |
| **Part VIII:** | Required Elements for Title I Schools | |
| **Part IX:** | Additional Required Elements for Non-Title I Schools | |
| | | |
| **Appendix A:** | School Profile (Accountability Report, Other Data) | |
| | | |

| **Part I: VISION FOR LEARNING** |
| --- |
| **District Vision or Mission Statement** |
| **District Goal 1** |
| **District Goal 2**<br><br>**(add more rows if necessary)** |

| **VISION FOR LEARNING** (continued) |
| --- |
| **School Vision or Mission Statement** |
| **School Highlights** |

## PART II: INQUIRY PROCESS

**Comprehensive Needs Assessment**

Based on a complete analysis of the data, list the key strength and priority concerns in student performance, instructional and remediation practices, and program implementation.

***Key Strengths***

(to sustain in the school improvement plan)

***Priority Concerns***

## **INQUIRY PROCESS** (continued)

**Verification of Causes – Root Cause Analysis**

For each concern, verify the root causes that impact or impede the priority concerns. Identify research-based solutions that address the priority concerns.

| ***Priority Concerns*** | ***Root Causes*** | ***Solutions*** |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

## Part III: IMPROVEMENT GOALS AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Convert the top priority concerns into the goal(s) for improvement and incorporate the identified solutions into the action plan.

| |
|---|
| **Goal 1:** |
| **Measurable Objective 1:**<br><br>(Add additional rows for measurable objectives if needed.) |
| **Goal 2:** |
| **Measurable Objective 2:**<br><br>(Add additional rows for measurable objectives if needed.) |
| **Goal 3** (if applicable)**:** |
| **Measurable Objective 3:**<br><br>(Add additional rows for measurable objectives if needed.) |

## Part IV: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MASTER PLAN

**Action Plan**: List the action steps to implement the solutions for each goal, as well as the timeline, resources, and the person(s) responsible.
**Monitoring Plan**: Identify the data that will be collected to monitor the action steps, as well as the timeline and the person(s) responsible.

| **Goal 1:** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Measurable Objective(s):** | | | | | |
| **ACTION PLAN** | | | | **MONITORING PLAN** | |
| **Action Steps**<br>to implement the solutions/strategies | **Timeline**<br>for implementing action steps | **Resources**<br>e.g., money, people, facilities to be used for implementation | **Person(s) Responsible**<br>Who is the person or group who will ensure that each action step is implemented? | **Monitoring Measures**<br>Identify data sources & timeline for monitoring the progress of each action step. | **Person(s) Responsible**<br>Who is the person or group who will ensure that the progress is monitored? |
| **1.1** | | | | | |
| **1.2** | | | | | |
| **1.3** | | | | | |
| **1.4** | | | | | |
| **1.5** | | | | | |
| **1.6** | | | | | |
| **1.7** | | | | | |
| **1.8** | | | | | |

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MASTER PLAN (Continued)

**Goal 2:**

**Measurable Objective(s):**

| ACTION PLAN | | | | MONITORING PLAN | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Action Steps**<br>to implement the solutions/strategies | **Timeline**<br>for implementing action steps | **Resources**<br>e.g., money, people, facilities to be used for implementation | **Person(s) Responsible**<br>Who is the person or group who will ensure that each action step is implemented? | **Monitoring Measures**<br>Identify data sources & timeline for monitoring the progress of each action step. | **Person(s) Responsible**<br>Who is the person or group who will ensure that the progress is monitored? |
| **2.1** | | | | | |
| **2.2** | | | | | |
| **2.3** | | | | | |
| **2.4** | | | | | |
| **2.5** | | | | | |
| **2.6** | | | | | |
| **2.7** | | | | | |
| **2.8** | | | | | |

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MASTER PLAN (Continued)

**Goal 3:** (if applicable)

**Measurable Objective(s):**

| ACTION PLAN | | | | MONITORING PLAN | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Action Steps**<br>to implement the solutions/strategies | **Timeline**<br>for implementing action steps | **Resources**<br>e.g., money, people, facilities to be used for implementation | **Person(s) Responsible**<br>Who is the person or group who will ensure that each action step is implemented? | **Monitoring Measures**<br>Identify data sources & timeline for monitoring the progress of each action step. | **Person(s) Responsible**<br>Who is the person or group who will ensure that the progress is monitored? |
| **3.1** | | | | | |
| **3.2** | | | | | |
| **3.3** | | | | | |
| **3.4** | | | | | |
| **3.5** | | | | | |
| **3.6** | | | | | |
| **3.7** | | | | | |
| **3.8** | | | | | |

## Part V: BUDGET FOR THE OVERALL COST OF CARRYING OUT PLAN

List the funds necessary to carry out the school improvement plan and accomplish the goals.

| Goals | Total amount needed to accomplish Goal.<br><br>(Amounts for each action step should be listed under "Resources.") | Funds available in current school funding that have been specifically set aside for the implementation of the goal. | Funds still needed to implement goal. |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Goal 1** | | | |
| **Goal 2** | | | |
| **Goal 3**<br>(if applicable) | | | |

## Part VI: EVALUATION OF THE SIP

For each measurable objective, identify the data that will be collected to monitor the action steps, as well as the timeline and the person(s) responsible.

| **Measurable Objectives** | **Evaluation Measures** (Monitoring Data & Outcome Indicators to evaluate progress in achieving the Measurable Objectives.) | **Timeline** For collecting data | **Person(s) Responsible**, Who is the person or group who will ensure that the evaluation is completed? |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

## Part VII: OTHER REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF THE SIP

All schools MUST complete this page.

| School Characteristics | # | % | Title I | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average Daily Attendance | | | Eligible | | |
| Transiency Rate | | | Served | | |
| % enrolled continuously since Count Day | | | Targeted Assisted | | |
| Incidents of School Violence: Student-to-Student | | | Schoolwide | | |
| Incidents of School Violence: Student-to-Staff | | | Did your school make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)? | | |
| | | | What was your school's AYP Designation? Exemplary (EX), High Achieving (HA), Watch List (W), Needs Improvement Year 1 (N1), Needs Improvement Year 2 (N2), Needs Improvement Year 1 Hold (N1-H), Needs Improvement Year 2 Hold (N2-H), etc. | | |
| Dropout Rate (HS) | | | Did you appeal your latest AYP designation? | | |
| Graduation Rate (HS) | | | Was your latest appeal granted? | | |
| | | | Designated as Persistently Dangerous School? | | |
| | | | Receiving State Remediation funding? | | |
| | | | Has a State SST been assigned to your school? | | |

1. What are the policies and practices in place that ensure proficiency of each subgroup in the core academic subjects?

2. List and briefly describe, as appropriate, how the school has incorporated activities of remedial instruction or tutoring before school, after school, during the summer, and/or during any extension of the school year.

3. Describe the resources available to the school to carry out the plan.

4. Summarize the effectiveness of any appropriations for the school made by the Legislature to improve student academic achievement.

| |
|---|
| 5. Discuss how the school will utilize Educational Involvement Accords for Parents including the Honor Code and meet all the requirements of the law. |
| 6. If applicable, describe how the school will make its Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objective (AMAO) targets in English language proficiency (reading, writing, listening, and speaking comprehension). |

## Part VIII: REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR TITLE I SCHOOLS

Title I schools, identified as "Needs Improvement," MUST complete this page.

1. Describe the required services the school has provided based on the number of years the school has been in need of improvement, *(e.g., schools in Year 2 of "Needs Improvement" must identify Year 1 and Year 2 services, and so on).*

    - Year 1: School Choice.
    - Year 2: Supplemental Services.
    - Year 3. Corrective Action.
    - Year 4. Restructuring.

2. Provide an assurance that the school will not spend less than 10% of their annual Title I allocation for quality professional development.

3. Describe how the school will provide written notice to parents on the school's "Needs Improvement" status and/or AMAO status.

4. Specify how Title I funds will be used to remove school from "Needs Improvement" status.

5. Describe the school's teacher mentoring program and how it supports the achievement of the school's annual goals and objectives.

## Part VIII: REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR TITLE I SCHOOLS

Title I schools, identified as "Needs Improvement" and are a schoolwide Title I school, MUST complete this page.

| |
|---|
| 6. Describe the school's strategies to attract high-quality highly qualified teachers to your school. |
| 7. Describe the school's strategies to increase parent involvement in accordance with Section 1118 of NCLB, such as family literacy services. |
| 8. Describe the school's plans for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood programs, such as Head Start, Even Start, Early Reading First, or a state-run preschool program, to local elementary school programs. |

## Part IX: REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR NON-TITLE I SCHOOLS

Non-Title I schools, identified as "Needs Improvement," MUST complete this page.

1. Describe how and when the school will provide written notice to parents on the school's "Needs Improvement" status and/or AMAO status.

2. Describe the school's teacher mentoring program and how it supports the achievement of the school's annual goals and objectives.

# ATTACHMENT 6P

# Data Types, Sources, and Tools

# DATA TYPES, SOURCES, AND TOOLS

## DATA TYPES

### Demographic Data

- Student Characteristics
- Staff Characteristics
- School Characteristics and School-level Outcome Indicators
- Parents/Community Characteristics

### Student Achievement Data

- Norm-referenced Achievement Tests
- College Entry Exams
- State Criterion-referenced Tests
- State High School Exit Exams
- District Interim Assessments
- Classroom Assessments
- Student Grade Reports

### Curriculum and Instruction Data

- Curriculum Maps
- Curriculum Guides and Syllabi
- Standards Alignment Documents
- Scope and Sequence Resources
- Professional Development Plan
- Professional Development Evaluations
- Classroom Observations
- Evaluation Protocol
- Teacher Collaboration Meeting Minutes
- Technology Plan
- Grade Level and Department Meeting Agendas
- Intervention System Procedures
- Intervention Monitoring Results
- Online Monitoring and Interim Reports

### Perception Data

- Staff Self-reflection Results
- Staff, Student, or Parent Surveys
- Staff, Student, or Parent Interviews
- Summary of unsolicited parent and community perceptions

# DATA SOURCES

## *Sources for Demographic Data*

### NEVADA REPORT CARD WEBSITE

In Nevada, an important source of information is the School Accountability Report that districts and schools are required to submit annually to parents and to the Nevada Department of Education. In fact, NRS 385, requires schools to examine their accountability report when working on their school improvement plan. The report contains information about student learning and school community characteristics, as well as information on the dimensions of school success (visit: www.nevadareportcard.com).

## *Sources for Student Achievement Data*

### SCHOOL & CLASSROOM ASSESSMENTS

School and classroom assessments are used to inform the instructional process. These assessments can be both formal and informal (e.g. paper and pencil vs. teacher observation). They are administered throughout the school year in pace with the general flow of instruction. Teachers often use the assessments to monitor the effectiveness of their instructional strategies. Students can also use the assessments as a self-evaluation of their own learning. Over the course of the year, the results from multiple administrations can be used to form a "body of evidence" that in the aggregate paints a picture of student achievement.

### DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS

The districts are at different stages of development and implementation of local interim assessments. Ultimately the assessments are intended to provide benchmark data to schools and teachers to assist them in monitoring the students' progress towards proficiency of the state standards.

### STATE ASSESSMENTS

The table below lists all the assessments that are administered by the state and where information about the assessments can be located.

**Table 1: State Assessments for the 2006-2007 School Year**

| Type | Subject(s) | Grade(s) | Purpose(s) of Assessment | Source(s) of Data |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT) | Reading & Math | 3 - 8 | ▪ Determine Proficiency Relative to Nevada Content Standards<br>▪ Used to Determine AYP | ▪ Score Reports Issued by Measured Progress<br>▪ Electronic Data at District<br>▪ State Website: www.nevadatestreports.com www.nevadareportcard.com |
| Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT) | Science | 5 & 8 | ▪ Determine Proficiency Relative to Nevada Content Standards<br>▪ Not Used to Determine AYP | ▪ Score Reports Issued by Measured Progress<br>▪ Electronic Data at District<br>▪ State Website: www.nevadatestreports.com www.nevadareportcard.com |
| Norm-Referenced Tests (ITBS/ITED) | Reading, Language Arts, Math, & Science | 4, 7, & 10 | ▪ Compare Student/Group Performance to that of a National Norm Group<br>▪ Not Used to Determine AYP | ▪ Score Reports Issued by Riverside Publishing Company<br>▪ Electronic Data at District<br>▪ State Website: www.nevadatestreports.com www.nevadareportcard.com |
| Analytic Performance Assessment | Writing | 5 & 8 | ▪ Determine Proficiency Relative to Nevada Content Standards<br>▪ Used to Determine AYP<br>▪ Provide Diagnostic Information for Instruction | ▪ Score Reports Issued by Nevada Department of Education<br>▪ Electronic Data at District<br>▪ State Website: www.nevadareportcard.com |
| High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE) | Reading & Mathematics | 10+ | ▪ Determine Proficiency Relative to Nevada Content Standards<br>▪ Required for Receipt of Standard High School Diploma<br>▪ Used to Determine AYP | ▪ Score Reports Issued by Measured Progress<br>▪ Electronic Data at District<br>▪ State Website: www.nevadatestreports.com www.nevadareportcard.com |

| Type | Subject(s) | Grade(s) | Purpose(s) of Assessment | Source(s) of Data |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE) | Writing | 11+ | ▪ Determine Proficiency Relative to Nevada Content Standards<br>▪ Required for Receipt of Standard High School Diploma<br>▪ Used to Determine AYP | ▪ Score Reports Issued by Nevada Department of Education<br>▪ Electronic Data at District<br>▪ State Website: www.nevadareportcard.com |
| Nevada Alternate Scales of Academic Achievement (NASAA) | English Language Arts, Math, Science (pending), based on alternate achievement standards | 3 – 8, 10+ | ▪ Alternate assessment for participation in all statewide tests<br>▪ Used to determine AYP in conjunction with CRT | ▪ Included in school Report Card for AYP |
| English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) | Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Comprehension | Limited English Proficient (LEP) K-12 Students | ▪ Determine English Language Proficiency<br>▪ Determine Possible Placement in ESL Program<br>▪ Used to determine AMAOs (Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives)<br>▪ Not used to determine AYP | ▪ Score reports will be available on district and school basis |

# DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Collection tools for the gathering of perception data are available on the following pages. The available tools are as follows:

- Teacher Survey
- Parent Survey
- Student Surveys
- Community Focus Group Guidelines
- Teacher Focus Group
- Parent Focus Group
- Student Focus Group
- Administrator Interview Protocol

## Teacher Survey

Please complete the following survey by checking the box that best describes the statement. Thank you for your time.

| Survey Statements | *Strongly disagree* | *Somewhat disagree* | *Somewhat agree* | *Strongly agree* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Most students are meeting state standards in core subject areas. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. Most students are learning effectively in other subject areas. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. Teachers clearly communicate information about state standards to parents and students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. Student learning goals and objectives are articulated across grade levels. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. There is fair and consistent enforcement of school rules. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. The physical environment is clean, neat, and comfortable. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. The school's discipline policy is communicated to teachers, parents, and students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. School staff works as a team to help students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9. School staff has an important voice in making decisions about curriculum and instruction. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10. The school facilities are adequate to support the instructional program. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 11. Teachers participate in sustained and ongoing professional development related to school goals. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 12. Teachers receive sufficient professional development opportunities to help students meet state standards. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 13. School staff believes that all students can master both basic and more advanced skills. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 14. Teachers actively engage students in learning. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 15. Goals and objectives are clearly communicated to parents and students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| Survey Statements (cont.) | *Strongly disagree* | *Somewhat disagree* | *Somewhat agree* | *Strongly agree* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. There are specific study skills and tutoring programs to help students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 17. The school has access to a sufficient number of computers for student learning. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 18. School staff helps students understand the relationship between what they are studying and their lives. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 19. Teachers use assessment results to help guide classroom instruction. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 20. Teachers design appropriate assessments to measure student progress. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 21. Students have access to a variety of resources to help them learn, such as media centers, and libraries. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 22. The quality of curriculum and instruction is consistently high across grade levels and subject areas. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 23. Curriculum and instruction is coordinated across grade levels. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 24. Teachers use a variety of learning strategies, personal skills, and time management skills to enhance learning. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 25. Goals and objectives guide instructional and curricular decisions (e.g., time allocations, curriculum adoptions). | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 26. All teachers use effective instructional strategies. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 27. The school communicates information about school activities in the language of the parent. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 28. Parents are involved in their children's learning at home. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 29. The school makes it easy for families to find out about school activities. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 30. The school provides parents and community members various ways to become involved in school activities. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| Survey Statements (cont.) | *Strongly disagree* | *Somewhat disagree* | *Somewhat agree* | *Strongly agree* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31. Families are involved in the creation, revision, and review of the school's mission and goals. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 32. The school is actively involved in the community. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 33. Parents and community members are involved in activities at school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 34. Students are happy to be at this school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 35. Drugs, alcohol, and weapons are not an issue at this school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 36. Students are rewarded for both good behavior and academic achievement. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 37. Student discipline is not an issue at this school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Comments:

# Parent Survey

Please complete the following survey by checking the box that best describes the statement. Thank you for your time.

| Survey Statements | *Strongly disagree* | *Somewhat disagree* | *Somewhat agree* | *Strongly agree* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Students are learning what they need in the basic skills, such as reading, writing, and math. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. Students are learning what they need in other subjects. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. I am aware of state standards. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. There is fair and consistent enforcement of school rules. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. The school is clean, neat, and comfortable. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. I am aware of the school's discipline policy. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. The school offers a variety of extracurricular activities. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. School staff works as a team to help students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9. Staff believes that all students can master both basic and more advanced skills. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10. At school, students are challenged and engaged in learning. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 11. My child and I know what is expected of him/her in school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 12. Students receive meaningful homework assignments that support classroom goals. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 13. The principal clearly communicates the mission and goals of the school to staff, families, and students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 14. The school communicates information about school activities in the language spoken by the parent. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 15. I am actively involved in my student's learning at home. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 16. The school provides parents and the community with various ways to be involved in activities at school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| Survey Statements (cont.) | *Strongly disagree* | *Somewhat disagree* | *Somewhat agree* | *Strongly agree* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. Families have opportunities to participate in the creation, review, and revision of the school's mission and goals. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 18. I feel welcome at the school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 19. There are active parent groups. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 20. My child is happy to be at this school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 21. Drugs, alcohol, and weapons are not a problem at this school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 22. Students take pride in and are rewarded for both good behavior and academic achievement. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

## Student Survey – Primary

Teachers read the statements about the school. Ask students to circle a happy face if they agree with the statement, a sad face if they disagree with the statement.

| Survey Statements | *Disagree* | *Agree* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. I am learning what I need in reading, writing, and math. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 2. I am learning what I need in other subjects like science and social studies. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 3. I know what state standards are. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 4. School rules are fair and all kids have to follow them all the time. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 5. The school is clean, neat, and comfortable. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 6. I am aware of the school rules and what will happen if I don't follow them. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 7. I have chances to do school activities such as clubs and sports. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 8. I feel safe at school. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 9. Students who bully or fight with others get in trouble at our school. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 10. The teachers believe they can help all kids learn. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 11. I am interested and challenged in school. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 12. I know what my teachers want me to do. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 13. There are study skills and tutors to help me with my school work. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 14. My school has computers that I can use during the school day. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 15. My teachers give me extra help when I need it. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 16. My teachers notice when I do well. | ☹ | ☺ |

| Survey Statements (cont.) | *Disagree* | *Agree* |
|---|---|---|
| 17. My teachers say or do things that make me feel good about myself. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 18. The principal listens to students. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 19. The school provides the books and materials I need for schoolwork. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 20. People who work at my school care about students. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 21. My school sees learning as the most important job for students. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 22. People who work at school encourage me to stay in school. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 23. My parents get news from school in the language we speak at home. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 24. My parents help me with school. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 25. Volunteers work to help students learn. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 26. I am happy to be a student at my school. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 27. Drugs, alcohol, and weapons are a big problem at our school. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 28. I am rewarded for doing a good job with my work and for having good behavior. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 29. Most students at my school stay out of trouble. | ☹ | ☺ |
| 30. Overall, my school is a good one. | ☹ | ☺ |

Comments: _____

## Student Survey

Please complete the following survey by checking the box that best describes the statement. Thank you for your time.

| Survey Statements | *Strongly disagree* | *Somewhat disagree* | *Somewhat agree* | *Strongly agree* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am learning what I need in reading, writing, and math. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. I am learning what I need in other subjects, such as science and social studies. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. I am aware of state standards. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. School rules are fair and all students have to follow them. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. Our school is clean, neat, and comfortable. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. I am aware of the school rules and the consequences for not following them. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. I have chances to take part in school activities, such as clubs and sports. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. I feel safe at school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9. Students who bully or fight with others receive tough discipline at our school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10. Most teachers believe they can help all students learn. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 11. I am usually interested, involved, and challenged in school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 12. I know what teachers expect of me and my schoolwork. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 13. There are specific study skills and tutoring programs to help students with schoolwork. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 14. My school has enough computers for me to use during the school day to help me with my work. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| Survey Statements (cont.) | *Strongly disagree* | *Somewhat disagree* | *Somewhat agree* | *Strongly agree* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15. Most of my teachers provide me with extra help when I need it. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 16. My teachers notice when I do well. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 17. My teachers say or do things that make me feel good about myself. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 18. The principal listens to students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 19. The school provides the textbooks and materials I need for schoolwork. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 20. Teachers and other school staff care about students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 21. My school sees learning as the most important job for students. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 22. Teachers encourage me to stay in school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 23. My parents get news from school in the language we speak in our home. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 24. My parents help me with schoolwork at home. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 25. Volunteers work at my school to help students learn. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 26. I am happy to be a student at my school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 27. Drugs, alcohol, and weapons are a problem at our school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 28. I am rewarded for doing a good job in school and for having good behavior. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 29. Most students stay out of trouble at my school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 30. Overall, my school is a good one. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Comments:

# Conducting a Community Focus Group

**Who:** External Facilitator, Principal, Members of the School Leadership, Parents, Community Members, Translators, and Recorders

**Purpose:** To share and collect information and input from parents regarding school improvement

**When:** [Fill in time.]

**Where:** [Fill in location.]

## Considerations

1. The school must make every effort to recruit as many parents and community members as possible to attend in order to collect information and build support for change.
2. A clear purpose and reason(s) need to be communicated as to why community members need to attend this meeting.
3. If parent involvement and attendance at school meetings have been a problem in the past, the School Improvement Planning Team should brainstorm different ways to build attendance for the meeting.
4. Translators
5. Childcare
6. Refreshments
7. Transportation
8. Recorders for breakout groups
9. Facilitators and translators for break-out groups
10. Breakout group process training

## Agenda for a 90 Minute Community Dialogue

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Purpose
3. Overview of the School Improvement Initiative
4. Briefly share the results from the Report of Findings
5. Breakout groups
6. Resume large group meeting to hear reports from breakout groups

**Breakout Group Questions**

1. What does your family do to help your child be a successful student?
2. What does your school do to help your child be a successful student?
3. How can the school, community, and families work better together to increase student achievement?

**Breakout Group Ground Rules**

1. The goal is to make sure the school serves all students.
2. There is one speaker.
3. We treat each other with respect; no interrupting or put-downs.
4. Everyone listens with an open mind.
5. Participate when you have a contribution; however, we need to make sure everyone has the opportunity to speak at least once before someone speaks a second time.
6. Encourage everyone to speak from his or her own experiences, challenges, issues, and ideas.
7. We will keep a list of other concerns or issues that can be addressed at a future meeting.

**Breakout Group Process**

1. Facilitator explains the process and the ground rules.
2. Facilitator asks a question and then seeks input from each member of the breakout group.
3. Facilitator records responses and looks for commonalities.
4. Use the round robin approach.
5. Participants may pass.
6. Be prepared to share with the whole group.

# Community Letter Sample

Dear _____,

(Name of school) has been selected to participate in an effort to increase student academic achievement among our students. This program is called SAGE: Student Achievement Gap Elimination. As part of this program we are working with an External Facilitator.

Research indicates that, in order for this process to succeed, the entire school community must join in the effort by sharing and providing input into the planning for whole school reform. We would like to invite you to join us in a community dialogue as we work together to make our school successful for all of our students. Your input is very important to our administration, staff members, and students. We want our school to be the best it can be for the whole community.

The following are the three questions to be answered during the 90-minute community dialogue:

- What does your family do to help your child be a successful student?
- What does your school do to help your child be a successful student?
- How can the school, community, and families work better together to increase student achievement?

Our community dialogue will be held (date/time/location). Childcare will be provided for parents with small children, and interpreters will be on hand for participants who speak (language). Please let us know if you can attend this important meeting by calling us at (school phone number). If you cannot attend, please write to us by (date – where to return) with your comments, concerns, suggestions, and ideas on how to improve the academic performance of the school.

We look forward to your positive energy in helping us with this great task. We thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Principal

# TEACHER
## Focus Group
**(45 minutes)**

1. How do standards influence your instructional decisions?

2. How do you decide what to teach (i.e., what to cover and in what order)?

3. Do you have the resources you need to meet the needs of your students (e.g., instructional materials, supplies and equipment, technology, and support services)?

4. How would you describe the students in your class (i.e., in terms of achievement, language proficiency, or other factors influencing instruction and grouping)? In what ways, if any, do these factors influence your teaching?

5. If serving LEP students, how is the primary language used, if at all, in these classes? What primary source and support materials are used in these classes and in what language(s) are the materials available? What, if any, support is provided to LEP students (e.g., tutors use the primary language to aid comprehension of subject matter, teachers make modifications relative to students' levels of English proficiency)?

6. How do you monitor the progress of your students (e.g., standards, assessment strategies, benchmarks, and use of assessment information to drive instruction and determine student needs)?

7. How do you help students monitor their own progress?

8. What intervention strategies do you use in the classroom? What additional intervention strategies are offered at the school?

9. What is the nature of professional development at your school? How are topics selected and how is it delivered? Have any staff development opportunities helped you address the learning needs of LEP students?

10. What formal or informal opportunities are available for collaborating with other teachers? What is the focus (e.g., standards, assessment) and structure (e.g., when, how often, within and across grade levels) of the collaboration?

11. Are teachers involved in decision-making at your school? In what ways and regarding which areas (e.g., budget, staffing, curriculum, and assessment)?

12. What additional support do you need to teach effectively?

# PARENT AND COMMUNITY
## Focus Group
**(60 minutes)**

1. How long have you had children enrolled at this school? In what grades are your children enrolled?

2. In your opinion, what is happening at this school that is working for your children?

   - How is the curriculum helping your children learn important skills and knowledge?
   - Is your child engaged in and excited about learning?

3. What gets in the way of students learning or being successful at this school?

4. What can this school do to help students be more successful or learn more?

5. What do you know about the standards the school uses to develop its curriculum and define what is "high achievement"? What do you know about the assessments the school uses to determine your child's achievement level?

6. How does the school communicate with you regarding your child's academic progress (is it in a language you can understand)?

7. What supports does this school provide to help students succeed academically? Are there any other supports that you think they could provide?

8. What supports does this school provide to help students with personal, social or health needs? Are there any other supports that you think they could provide?

9. How are you and other parents involved in the school (e.g., decision-making through school site council, volunteer activities, PTA)?

10. Do you feel that parent involvement is generally representative of the students in the school? If not, who is involved and who is not?

11. What type, if any, parent education programs are offered at this school?

12. What does your child like/not like about this school?

13. What are your greatest concerns as the parent of a student at this school?

# STUDENT
## FOCUS GROUP
**(45 minutes)**

1. How long has each of you been at this school? What grade are you in?

2. What do you like best about this school?

3. What do you like least about this school?

4. Do teachers keep you informed about how well you are doing or what you need to do to improve? In what ways and how often?

5. What type of support is available if you need help completing assignments or have academic difficulties? How easy or difficult is it to get additional help?

6. In general, do you find that teachers challenge you and expect a lot from you? Or do you find your classes easy, that teachers do not expect very much of you?

7. What are the expected behavior standards at this school?

8. How do students get along at this school? Do you feel safe at this school?

9. How do other students feel about this school?

10. What do you think teachers could do to help you learn more and be more successful in school?

11. What types of programs or activities would you like to see more of at school? What does the school need?

12. How well do you understand what is being taught in class? (For LEP students) How well are you learning English and in what ways are you being taught?

# Administer Interview Protocol

**(Approximately 60 minutes)**

***Context***

1. What is the school's community context in terms of socioeconomic status, cultural and language diversity, population stability, etc.?

2. What is the level and nature of support for the school's program from the district office and school board?

3. To what extent is the external community aware of the school's services and involved in the school?

4. To what extent did the school meet its goals and objectives of the previous year's school improvement plan?

***Student Achievement***

1. How does the school measure student learning (i.e. data collection methods such as norm and criterion-referenced assessments, commercial and locally developed assessments, and measures of behavior and affect)? Are your measures linked to standards?

2. What formative assessments are you administering throughout the year to ensure that all students will meet state standards?

3. If serving LEP students, how do you gauge their progress in reaching English proficiency? How do you gauge their progress in content areas?

4. To what extent are all students learning to high levels (e.g., as compared against state and district achievement, when examined longitudinally or by snapshot years)? What outcomes are observed when examined by cultural, racial or language subgroups?

5. What changes in student learning have taken place over time and are the changes related to formal or informal school reform efforts at the school?

***Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Intervention***

1. In what ways do standards (state, district, and/or site) guide your curriculum?

2. How do groups of teachers and/or the staff as a whole use evidence of student learning (i.e. for schoolwide or grade-level planning, instructional decision-making, evaluation)? How is aggregated and disaggregated data used?

3. What, if any, instructional strategies and ways of organizing students are promoted across the curriculum?

4. What are your school's instructional approaches for serving LEP students? What are the qualifications of staff assigned to teach these students?

5. What interventions, if any, are triggered for students not making the necessary progress in a regular classroom setting? How are students identified for intervention and at what point are interventions provided?

6. Describe the key professional development activities in the school (i.e. provided by whom, involving what staff, and selected based on what needs or priorities).

***Learning Environment and School Culture***

1. What is the guiding vision for the school (i.e., is it centered on high academic expectations for all students and shared across key stakeholders in the school community)?

2. Describe the ways that teachers collaborate with their colleagues, both formally and informally, at this school (i.e., which groups, when and how often, for what purpose).

3. How are major decisions in the school made (i.e. what are major decision-making bodies, who is on them, and what decisions do they make)?

***Parent and Community Involvement***

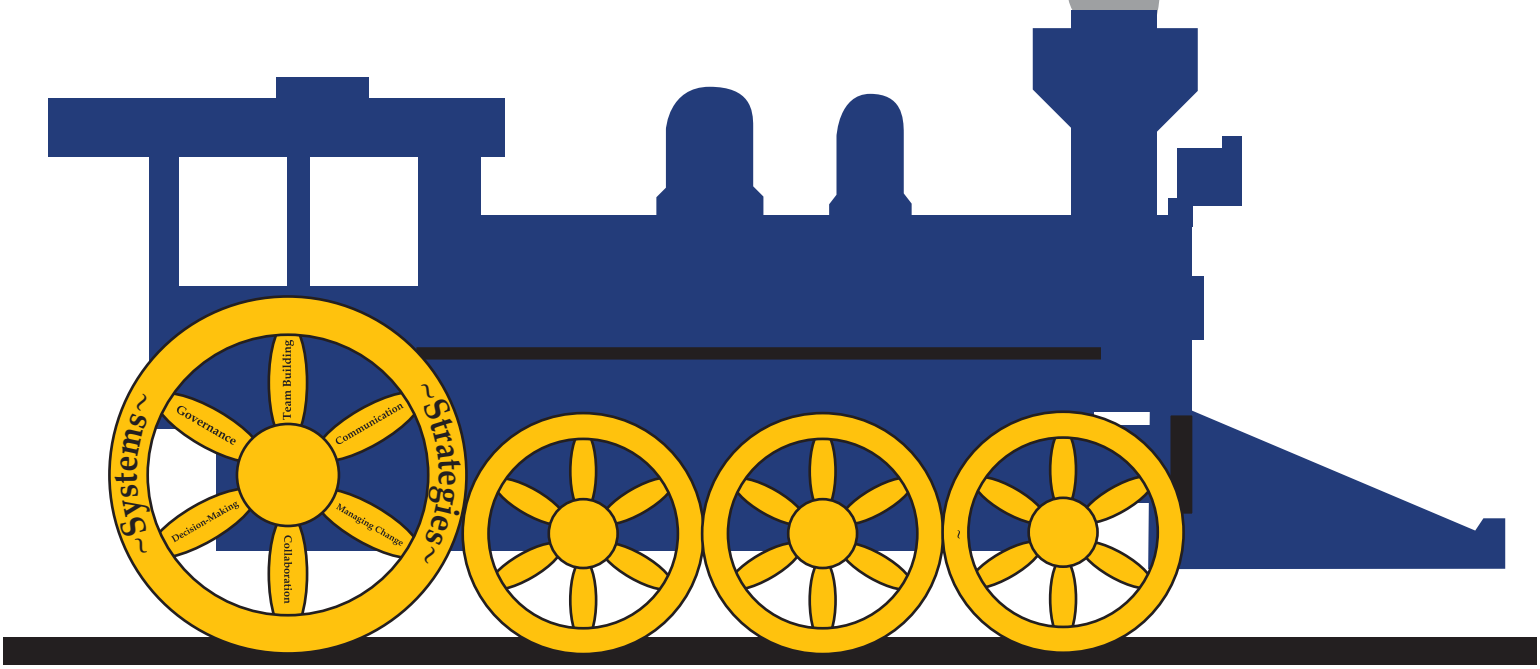
1. How are parents and community members involved at the school (e.g., decision-making and planning, volunteers)? How representative are those involved of your parent population as a whole?

2. What kind of outreach strategies does the school use to involve parents and community members in the school (across language and cultural groups)?

3. How does the school collaborate with outside community groups, agencies etc?

# SAGE

## School Improvement Guidebook




# Implementation and Monitoring Guide

2007 SAGE (Student Achievement Gap Elimination) School Improvement Guidebook
Prepared by: Nevada Department of Education, 700 E. Fifth Street, Carson City, NV 89701

# Implementation & Monitoring Guide

Implementation and monitoring are the actual "doing and checking" of the school improvement plan. A primary reason that school improvement plans fail to show success is that they are not kept in the forefront of the school's daily life and work. A plan that is put on the shelf and forgotten or initially implemented but neglected will not contribute to the achievement of the students at the school. The plan needs to be a living document that evolves according to the successes and needs of the students and staff.

## TO BEGIN:

The Implementation & Monitoring Phase focuses on systems and strategies, rather than procedural steps. Therefore, this guide is structured differently than the Planning Process Guide and Evaluation Process Guide. The first two sections in this guide focus on research-based systems and strategies that will assist with effective implementation of the SIP and purposeful progress monitoring of the impact. The last section describes the process of the mid-course correction review.

- If you are **implementing** the action steps in the school improvement plan (SIP), go to the *Implementation Guide*, page 102.
- If you are **monitoring** the action steps, go to the *Monitoring Guide*, page 105.
- If you are ready to make **mid-course corrections**, go to the *Mid-course Corrections Guide*, page 108.

The Implementation & Monitoring Guide does not promote any specific program or model, rather it provides guiding questions to stimulate collaborative thinking about your school's unique needs and characteristics.

## ONGOING REVIEW OF THE SIP:

The key assumption underlying the SAGE school improvement process is that the school has been engaged in a cycle of continuous improvement (see Attachment 3P, p. 45 for graphic representations of improvement cycles).

**Primary Assumptions**

1. The SIP is focused on a few powerful research-based strategies/solutions to improve instruction and increase student achievement based on an analysis of staff and student needs.
2. The school has collected and analyzed data and documentation throughout the year that shows the progress made toward improvement goals.
3. The school has met several times during the year to monitor the implementation and impact of the plan.

A plan has been developed. It is now time for the "doing and checking" work to begin. Each school has unique characteristics, therefore the systems and strategies that will work best for a school are those that fit the school.

To begin, the school forms a School Improvement Plan (SIP) implementation team. Typically, the SIP implementation team includes many members from the school improvement planning team (or it can simply be the continuation of that team). The SIP implementation team is an important leadership committee and should meet on a consistent basis to monitor the progress of the action steps of the SIP. Other teams can be formed as offshoots of this group to help distribute duties and involve all staff in the implementation and monitoring process. For example, progress-monitoring teams for grade levels or departments can be formed to assemble data and report to the SIP implementation team.

Effective implementation of the action steps in the SIP is contingent upon a clear understanding of what needs to be done and who needs to do it. The systems and strategies listed below in the Implementation Guide address key aspects of effective implementation.

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

The five systems and strategies that follow are key components in the five dimensions of school success. Each system or strategy includes a brief description and four to six questions. The questions are meant to provide the SIP team with the opportunity to begin (or continue) a discussion about the structures and practices that are in place that support effective implementation.

It is not necessary or advisable for a school to focus on all of these systems and strategies at once. It is recommended that the SIP team identify the system or strategy that best fits the need of the school, based on the action steps in the SIP, on the staff and student needs, and on the current structures and practices already in place at the school.

## *Implementation Systems and Strategies:*

### 1. Culture of Improvement

By its very definition a school is a place of improvement. The word "improvement" comes from the Middle English term that means "something profitable." Ideally, every person who enters a school does profit from being there. A culture of improvement is internal, existing within the individuals at the school. The external structures and practices expand that internal mindset; the external is not able to dictate an internal attitude of improvement.

The questions below are a starting point for reflecting on the effective implementation of a culture of improvement.

- How does the school sustain a commitment to continuous improvement?
- Are school goals for student learning clearly defined and widely communicated?
- Do teachers hold high academic and behavioral expectations for all students, and how is this evident in their practice?

- Do school leaders and staff create experiences that demonstrate the belief that all children can learn at high levels, and in what ways is student success highly valued and publicly celebrated?

- Are support structures and programs in place to reduce barriers to learning for all students?

- Are learning opportunities for advanced, underperforming, and/or gifted students available and promoted?

## 2. Shared Decision-Making

There are numerous organizational structures that promote shared decision-making. The working definition developed by the North Kansas City School District describes this concept in a concise yet thorough statement. "Shared Decision Making is an ongoing cooperative process in which members of the school community, where appropriate, define goals, shape direction, assume responsibility for implementation of decisions, and share accountability for outcomes" (NKCSD, 1992).

The questions below are a starting point for reflecting on the effective implementation of shared decision-making.

- How does the leadership at the school unite the school community in a common purpose?

- How are teaching staff and non-teaching staff involved in both formal and informal decision-making processes regarding teaching and learning?

- Is a collaborative process used to develop and communicate the school's vision, mission, and goals, and guide decision-making for improvement?

- Does the school leadership collaborate to analyze student performance data and elicit input relative to the data to shape improvement decisions?

- How does the school foster the safe sharing of input from all members of the school community?

- Are families and the community active partners in the educational process and do they work with the school staff to promote programs and services for all students?

## 3. Collaborative Teacher Planning Time

Teaching and learning are social events, yet much of a teacher's time is spent separate from his or her colleagues. A systematic structure for collaborative teacher planning time provides the opportunity for teachers to work together. This structured planning time centers around continuous improvements in teaching and learning.

The questions below are a starting point for reflecting on the effective implementation of collaborative teacher planning time.

- How does the school provide time for teachers to collaborate on curriculum, instruction, interventions, and assessment?
- What system is in place to ensure that conversations during collaboration time are focused on curriculum, instruction, intervention, and assessment?
- How do procedures promote vertical and horizontal team planning that is focused on the goals, objectives, and strategies in the school improvement plan?
- How do staff members collaboratively develop annual growth goals that foster reflection and improved performance?
- How do teachers collaborate within content areas and grade levels to analyze student work to inform and revise curriculum, instruction, interventions, and assessment?

## 4. Professional Development Plan

A professional development plan is designed to enhance the ability of the educator to improve student learning and should be consistent with the educational needs of the school. The plan is in alignment with the school/district improvement plans (see Attachment 2P, p. 31 for the Nevada Professional Development Standards). It outlines the staff needs relative to student performance gaps. It includes an implementation plan for application of new knowledge, skills and behaviors into the teaching process and evaluation steps (including formative data) to make changes in the design as needed along the way.

The questions below are a starting point for reflecting on the effective implementation of professional development.

- Does the school develop and implement a formal process (needs assessment) to identify professional development needs for all staff members?
- Do all teachers participate in sustained, classroom-embedded professional development that updates their content knowledge and professional practices to challenge and motivate students to high levels of learning?
- Does the school/district provide research-based professional development opportunities for staff on performance evaluation procedures in order to improve teaching and learning?
- Is professional development monitored and evaluated for effectiveness?
- Have teachers received training and use of common processes for analyzing student work?

## 5. Efficient Use of Resources (Human, Funding, Time, Etc.)

School improvement efforts are directly tied to the efficient use of available resources. The efficient use of resources begins with a plan. The plan guides the allocation and monitoring of the resources, as well as the evaluation of the use. The resources are the "school inputs" that are intended to impact the "student outputs" of improved learning and increased achievement.

The questions below are a starting point for reflecting on the effective implementation of available resources.

- Does leadership allocate resources based on identified needs through an analysis of appropriate data and monitor the use of the resources?
- Are available fiscal resources maximized to provide support for professional growth and development?
- Are staff members assigned to maximize opportunities for all students to have access to the staff's instructional strengths?
- Is the school organized to maximize the use of all available resources to support high student and staff performance?
- Does the staff makes efficient use of instructional time to maximize student learning?
- Does leadership ensure that time is protected and allocated to focus on curricular and instructional issues?

Effective implementation is guided by monitoring that is purposeful in checking the progress of the actions that are being taken and the impact that those actions are having, both intended and unintended impacts. Monitoring of the SIP action steps is carried out to check the degrees of implementation and the extent of the impact on student learning and achievement.

## MONITORING GUIDE

The three systems and strategies that follow are key components in the five dimensions of school success. Each system or strategy includes a brief description and four to six questions. The questions are meant to provide a SIP team with the opportunity to begin (or continue) a discussion about the structures and practices that are in place that support ongoing progress monitoring.

# *Monitoring Systems and Strategies:*

## 1. Comprehensive Data Management System

A comprehensive data management system is made up of software programs that control the storage, organization, and retrieval of data in a database. The data management system provides the school with the ability to access the data on a regular basis, analyze the data and update it

when needed. The benefit of a comprehensive data management system is that information can be changed much more easily as the school's information requirements change. New categories of data can be added without the need for extensive revision or addition to the existing system.

The questions below are a starting point for reflecting on a comprehensive data management system as an essential component of progress monitoring.

- Does the school maintain an accurate, secure student record system that provides timely information pertinent to the student's academic and educational development?
- Does the school maintain accurate, up-to-date records of students' academic history and educational development, which are monitored?
- Are relevant, current, and accurate data from multiple sources included in cumulative student records?
- Are efficient data management practices utilized at the classroom and school levels?
- Is adequate technology for monitoring progress readily available and equitably accessible to all staff and are there sufficient technology resources to provide support for sustaining an accurate student record system?

## 2. Systematic Monitoring Structures

Systematic monitoring structures are used to monitor the progress being made in the implementation of the improvement efforts and the impact on student learning. These structures include adult performance activities, such as the self-reflection practices, the coaching practices, and the classroom observation practices of staff and administration. These structures also include student performance activities, such as formative assessments, self-assessment, and intervention systems. In addition, structures are in place to support collaborative planning time and ongoing reviews of student level assessment data in order to adjust instruction and identify student needs.

The questions below are a starting point for reflecting on the systematic monitoring structures that are essential to progress monitoring.

- Are instructional strategies, activities, and programs monitored to ensure that they are meeting the changing needs of a diverse student population?
- Does school leadership routinely monitor classroom instruction and provide on-going feedback to ensure that teachers plan and modify instruction to meet student needs?
- Do students have varied opportunities to demonstrate proficiency?
- Are samples of student work analyzed to obtain information on student learning, identify achievement and curricular gaps, to refine instruction, and to measure student growth over time?

- Does the school use a body of evidence to identify advanced, underperforming, and/or gifted students who could benefit from advanced learning opportunities?

- Is a clearly defined evaluation process (directly connected to the goals for improving student learning) implemented at the school for evaluating the effectiveness of the improvement plan?

## 3. Performance Feedback Loops

Performance feedback loops are an integral part of an effective progress monitoring system. Administration provides feedback to staff, parents, and the community about the performance of the school. Staff provides feedback to the students, parents, and administration about the performance of the students. Parents provide feedback to students, staff, and administration about their children' performance.

The questions below are a starting point for reflecting on the performance feedback loops that are essential to progress monitoring.

- Are proficiency standards and performance level descriptions clearly communicated, evident in classrooms, and observable in student work?

- Do teachers routinely communicate learning targets (objectives) to students in ways that students understand, and students make connections between learning targets and the lesson?

- Do students have varied opportunities to receive meaningful feedback on their learning and are they encouraged to use the feedback to continuously strengthen future performance?

- Do teachers use proficiency standards and performance level descriptions to develop clearly defined rubrics that are reviewed with students prior to assignments and assessments.

- Are models of student performance and teacher-made examples consistently used to clarify tasks to the student and to show distinctions between levels of performance?

- Does school leadership regularly provide school improvement updates and reports? Are accomplishments formally recognized and celebrated?

Along the way, adjustments will need to be made to the action steps within the SIP. These minor revisions happen as they arise, instead of waiting until the next formal review of the SIP takes place. There may be a need to conduct a more formalized review of the SIP at some point within the school year. This "mid-course correction" allows the SIP team to make critical changes to the SIP in order to more effectively implement action steps and impact student learning and achievement.

## MID-COURSE CORRECTIONS GUIDE

After monitoring the progress of the action steps over a period of time, necessary adjustments may become apparent. A formalized review process provides the opportunity for the SIP team to make these adjustments, without having to wait until the next year's planning phase. Any changes that are being considered need to be intentional, for the purpose of greater degrees of implementation of the plan and more significant impacts on student learning and achievement.

A mid-course correction review is a special meeting of the SIP team and others on the staff to conduct a more formalized review of progress. It is different than the ongoing progress monitoring meetings in this respect. A productive mid-course review includes the following:

- **Communication Loop:** Implement a communication plan that specifically targets how the school community will be kept informed of the intended changes to the SIP.

- **Compilation of Data:** In order to best utilize the time available for the mid-course review, gather the most reliable and relevant data. There will need to be sufficient data to justify changes to the action steps.

- **Time and Resources:** Review how resources are being used. Review how time is being spent (schedules, meetings, instructional, etc.).

- **New Solutions:** New developments and opportunities may have arisen during the school year. Incorporating these into the action steps may be appropriate, depending on the review of data, resources, and time.

- **Degrees of Adjustment:** The mid-course corrections are ***minor changes*** that need to be made to the SIP. This is not the time to conduct a complete overhaul, unless significant changes have occurred at the school that warrants a fully revised plan.

### ***Mid-course Review Process***

1. Go through the current SIP action plan. Evaluate each of the action steps according to the impact on achieving the measurable objectives and reaching the goals. Refer back to the data that the school has collected and analyzed during the monitoring process to answer the questions below.

   - Which actions were implemented?
     - How well were the actions implemented? Why?
     - If the actions were not implemented well, what was the reason?
     - What intended outcomes and unintended outcomes resulted from implementation?
     - What unplanned or unexpected factors affected the implementation of an action?

   - Which actions were not implemented?
     - Why were the actions not implemented?

- What new actions were implemented that were not in the plan? Why?
- Which actions were modified during implementation? Why?
- Which actions (programs, practices, etc.) improved the quality of instruction and impacted student learning and achievement?
- What other factors/variables affected the SIP process?

**2.** Identify the successes that resulted from the implementation of the SIP.

*Note: Remember to plan for celebration of these successes.*

**3.** Determine the status of each action step.

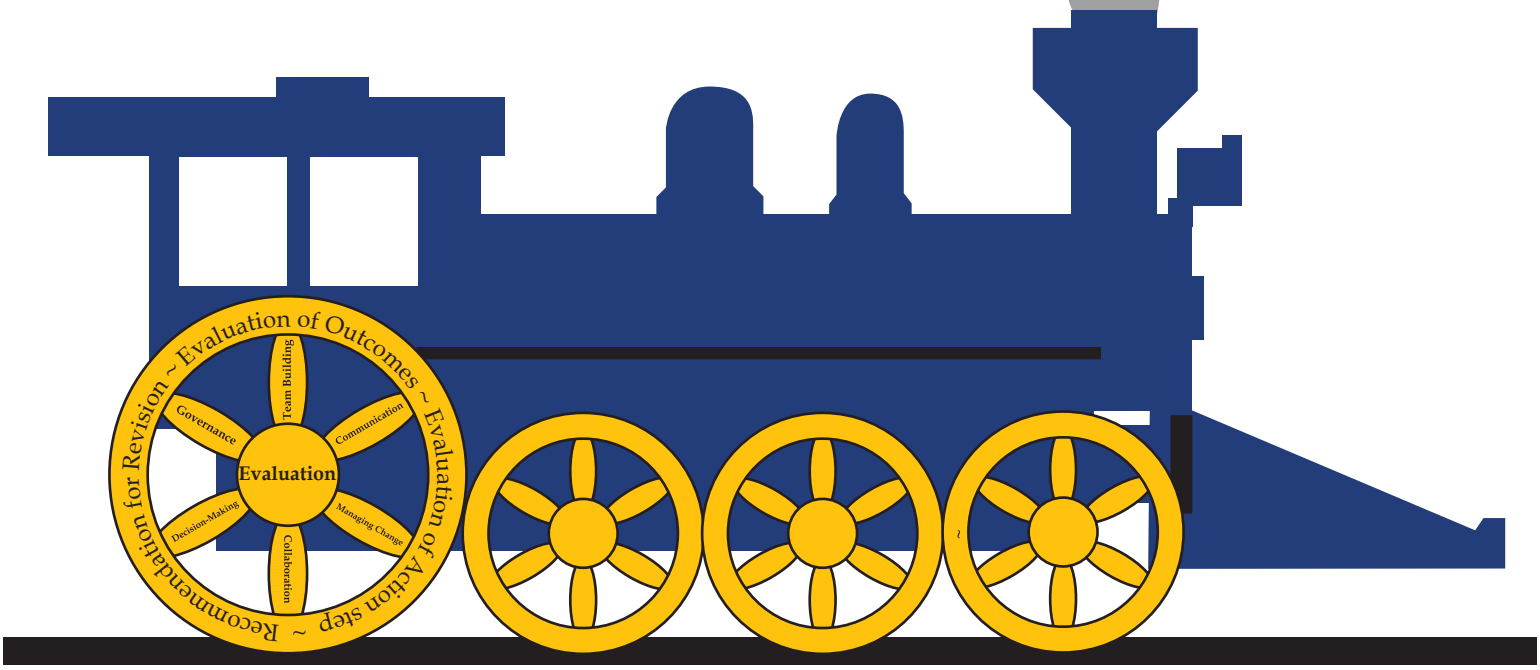
1. Which action steps have successfully impacted student learning and achievement and need to be sustained?
2. Which action steps are making progress and need more time to fully implement?
3. Which action steps require minor revisions to ensure a positive impact on student learning and achievement?
4. Which action steps require major revisions to ensure a positive impact on student learning and achievement?
5. Which action steps require elimination because the action has been completed and fully implemented. Which action steps require elimination due to the lack of effectiveness?

Use the answers to these questions to make minor adjustments to the SIP that will ensure greater degrees of implementation and will increase the impact on student learning and achievement.

# Notes

# SAGE

## School Improvement Guidebook




# Evaluation Process Guide

2007 SAGE (Student Achievement Gap Elimination) School Improvement Guidebook
Prepared by: Nevada Department of Education, 700 E. Fifth Street, Carson City, NV 89701

# Evaluation Process Guide

The SAGE Evaluation Process Guide is intended to guide a school through an evaluation of the existing School Improvement Plan (SIP). The evaluation phase has two purposes:

1. To engage in a **focused and candid judgment** of the progress made toward reaching the objectives in the current plan, and
2. To provide a **direction for possible revisions** to the plan in the planning phase.

Comprehensive improvement plans take several years to implement. Additionally, it takes time for improvement to be seen in targeted areas. An annual review of the plan provides the opportunity to identify effective programs and practices to sustain, as well as ineffective programs and practices to adjust or eliminate.

### TO BEGIN:

During the evaluation phase, the School Improvement Plan (SIP) team takes a look back at the school year in order to guide forward progress. The evaluation of the plan includes three steps, as follows:

- **Evaluation of Outcomes:** To determine progress that has been made in achieving the measurable objectives and in accomplishing the goals in the SIP.
- **Evaluation of the SIP Action Steps:** To examine what has worked and has not worked in the implementation of the plan and in impacting on student learning.
- **Recommendations for Possible Revisions:** To make recommendations for possible revisions to the SIP for the next improvement cycle.

## ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE SIP:

The key assumption underlying the SAGE school improvement process is that the school has been engaged in a cycle of continuous improvement (see Attachment 3P, p. 45 for graphic representations of improvement cycles).

**Primary Assumptions**

1. The SIP is focused on a few powerful research-based strategies/solutions to improve instruction and increase student achievement based on an analysis of staff and student needs.
2. The school has collected and analyzed data and documentation throughout the year that shows the progress made toward improvement goals.
3. The school has met several times during the year to monitor the implementation and impact of the plan.

A plan has been created, implemented, and monitored. It is now time to evaluate the school's improvement efforts.

## EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES

The evaluation of outcomes is for the purpose of determining the progress the school has made in achieving the measurable objectives and accomplishing the goals in the SIP. The evaluation of outcomes is also the **initial analysis** of the school's strengths and areas of concern. The SIP team will dig deeper into the five dimensions of school success during the planning phase.

### *Evaluation Process*

**Resources and Tools to have on hand:**

- Current School Improvement Plan, particularly the *Evaluation of the SIP* (see "Part IIIC: Plan to Evaluate Goals" in the original SIP)
- *Student Achievement Outcomes – Data Analysis Guide (Outcomes-DAG)* (see Attachment 1E, p. 115)
- Relevant outcome data (see Attachment 6P, p. 79 for Data Types, Sources, & Tools)

**1)** Analyze the student achievement outcome data by answering each of the relevant questions in the *Outcomes-DAG* (Attachment 1E, p. 115).

a) For each relevant question, analyze the corresponding data.

b) Determine the areas of strength related to student performance outcomes.

c) Determine the areas of concern related to student performance outcomes.

**2)** Review the *Evaluation of the SIP* plan (see "Part IIIC: Plan to Evaluate Goals" in the original SIP). For each measurable objective, use the *Outcomes-DAG* results to determine the following:

a) What progress was made in achieving the measurable objectives?

b) What progress has been made in accomplishing the improvement goals?

The analysis of the student achievement outcomes is the initial step. To evaluate the implementation and impact of the SIP action steps requires an analysis of additional data and other variables.

## EVALUATION OF THE SIP ACTION STEPS

The evaluation of the SIP action steps utilizes the data that was collected throughout the year in order to monitor the implementation and impact of the improvement actions.

### *Evaluation Process*

**Resources and Tools to have on hand:**

- Current School Improvement Plan, particularly the *Evaluation of the SIP* (see "Part IIIC: Plan to Evaluate Goals" in the original SIP)
- *Outcomes-DAG* (see Attachment 1E, p. 115)
- Relevant monitoring data (see Attachment 6P, p. 79 for Data Types, Sources & Tools)

**1.** Go through the current SIP action plan. Evaluate each of the action steps according to the impact on achieving the measurable objectives and reaching the goals. Refer back to the data that the school has collected and analyzed during the monitoring process to answer the questions below.

- Which actions were implemented?
  - How well were the actions implemented? Why?
  - If the actions were not implemented well, what was the reason?
  - What intended outcomes and the unintended outcomes resulted from implementation?
  - What unplanned or unexpected factors affected the implementation of an action?
- Which actions were not implemented?
  - Why were the actions not implemented?
- What new actions were implemented that were not in the plan? Why?
- Which actions were modified during implementation? Why?
- Which actions (programs, practices, etc.) improved the quality of instruction and impacted student learning and achievement?
- What other factors/variables affected the SIP process?

**2.** Identify the successes that resulted from the implementation of the SIP.

*Note: Remember to plan for celebration of these successes.*

**3.** Determine the status of each action step.

1. Which action steps have successfully impacted student learning and achievement and need to be sustained?
2. Which action steps are making progress and need more time to fully implement?

3. Which action steps require minor revisions to ensure a positive impact on student learning and achievement?
4. Which action steps require major revisions to ensure a positive impact on student learning and achievement?
5. Which action steps require elimination because the action has been completed and fully implemented. Which action steps require elimination due to the lack of effectiveness?
6. Based on circumstances and inquiry from the past year, are there any additional action steps that need to be included in next year's plan?

Use the answers to these questions to establish recommendations for the review of the SIP during the planning phase.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISION

The last step in the evaluation phase is to make initial recommendations for possible revisions to the SIP for the next improvement cycle.

### *Recommendation Process*

**Resources and Tools to have on hand:**

- Results from the analysis of the *Outcomes-DAG* questions
- Results from the evaluation of the SIP action steps
- Optional: SIP Evaluation & Recommendation Summary template (see Attachment 2E, p. 119)

1. **Sustaining Progress:** Indicate which action steps should be sustained and make recommendations for how to incorporate these successful action steps into the plan.
2. **Possible Revisions:** Indicate which action steps may require revision and make recommendations for possible changes to be made in order to ensure effective implementation and impact on student learning and achievement.
3. **Elimination or Refocus:** Indicate which action steps should be eliminated or refocused based on the analysis of the five dimensions of school success in the planning phase.
4. **Data Recommendations**: What additional data will need to be collected and analyzed to assist with the SIP goals?

As you begin the planning phase, you will turn to additional data to look analytically at causes of both the successes and concerns of your school. You will use ongoing data collection and analysis to drive decisions about student achievement, instruction, professional development, and changes or adjustments to the SIP. You will keep a focus on your goals; through ongoing, committed improvement efforts, you will make a difference!

# ATTACHMENT 1E

# Student Achievement Outcomes – Data Analysis Guide

# Student Achievement Outcomes
## DATA ANALYSIS GUIDE

The Data Analysis Guide included in the SAGE School Improvement Guidebook contains two parts, a *Student Achievement Outcomes* section to guide the analysis of the state and local summative assessments and outcome evidence and a *Five Dimensions of Successful Schools* section to guide the analysis of the evidence related to the foundational components of successful schools. The *Student Achievement Outcomes – Data Analysis Guide* (Outcomes-DAG) was created to help school improvement teams target their investigation of the outcome data. The *Outcomes-DAG* analysis includes a bank of questions created to guide discussion around the important aspects of achievement.

**Directions:**

1. For each question that is relevant to your school, analyze the corresponding data.

2. Determine the areas of concern related to student performance outcomes.

# Outcome Indicators

## State Assessments

What percentages of students at the school are performing at each achievement level, compared to district and state averages? Consider the following:

- How does the performance of each subgroup compare to the school, district, and state averages?
- How does the performance in subjects, grade levels, departments, and etc. compare to the school, district, and state averages?
- What performance patterns exist in the performance percentages?

Comparing assessment results over several years, what do performance trends in the various assessments show about student achievement at the school, compared to district and state averages? Consider the following:

- How do the performance trends of each subgroup compare to the school, district, and state averages?
- How do the performance trends of subjects, grade levels, departments, and etc. compare to the school, district, and state averages?

## District Assessments

What percentages of students at the school are performing at each achievement level, compared to district averages? Consider the following:

- How does the performance of each subgroup compare to the school and district averages?
- How does the performance in subjects, grade levels, departments, etc. compare to the school and district averages?
- What performance patterns exist in the performance percentages?
- Are the patterns of performance on the district assessments different than the patterns of performance on the state assessments?

Comparing assessment results over several years, what do performance trends in the district assessments show about student achievement at the school, compared to district averages? Consider the following:

- How do the performance trends of each subgroup compare to the school and district averages?
- How do the performance trends of subjects, grade levels, departments, and etc. compare to the school and district averages?

# Outcome Indicators

If the district has assessments that monitor growth in achievement of the same group of students over time, what is the growth in achievement of the school, compared to the district averages? Consider the following:

- How does the growth in achievement of the subgroups compare to the school and district averages?
- How does the growth in achievement of subjects, grade levels, departments, etc. compare to the school and district averages?

## School Assessments

What percentages of students at the school are performing at each achievement level? Consider the following:

- How does the performance of each subgroup compare to the school and district averages?
- How does the performance in subjects, grade levels, departments, etc. compare to the school and district averages?
- What performance patterns exist in the performance percentages?
- Are the patterns of performance on the school assessments different than the patterns of performance on the district assessments?

If the school has assessments that monitor growth in achievement of the same group of students over time, what is the growth in achievement of the school? Consider the following:

- How does the growth in achievement of the subgroups compare to the school averages?
- How does the growth in achievement of subjects, grade levels, departments, and etc. compare to the school averages?

## Other Outcome Indicators

What is the school's student attendance rate, as compared to district and state averages? Consider the following:

- How do the attendance rates of the subgroups compare to the school, district, and state averages?
- How do the attendance rates of subjects, grade levels, departments, and etc. compare to the school, district, and state averages?

What is the school's graduation rate, as compared to district and state averages? Consider the following:

- How do the graduation rates of the subgroups compare to the school, district, and state averages?

# Outcome Indicators

What is the school's drop out rate, as compared to district and state averages? Consider the following:

- How do the drop out rates of the subgroups compare to the school, district, and state averages?

What percentage of students received the following diplomas last year: Standard, Advanced, Adjusted, Adult, and Certificate of Attendance, as compared to district and state averages? Consider the following:

- How do the percentages of receipt of diplomas of the subgroups compare to the school, district, and state averages?

What percentages of students made adequate yearly progress, compared to district and state averages? Consider the following:

- How does the percentage making adequate yearly progress of each subgroup compare to the school, district, and state averages?
- Which subgroups made adequate yearly progress through safe harbor?
- How does the percentage making adequate yearly progress of each core content area included in AYP compare to the district and state averages?
- What is the AYP designation of the school?

# ATTACHMENT 2E

# SIP Evaluation Phase Recommendation Summary

# (school year) School Improvement Plan

## Evaluation Phase Recommendation Summary

| Goal # | Action Step # | Recommendation |
|---|---|---|
| **Sustaining Progress** | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| **Possible Revisions** | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| **Elimination or Refocus** | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| **Data Recommendations** | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Note: Add rows for each section as needed.

# Notes

# APPENDIX A

## Legal References:

State Law for School Improvement Plans p. A1
AYP Designations p. A5
School Support Teams p. A7

# State Law for School Improvement Plans

All public schools in Nevada must develop or revise a school improvement plan in the fall of each year. An elementary or secondary that fails to make **adequate yearly progress (AYP)** for two consecutive years will be designated by its school district as a school in need of improvement. Each school identified for school improvement must, within three months after being identified, develop or revise a school plan in consultation with school staff, the school district serving the school, and outside experts. For Title I schools in improvement, this activity is in accordance with **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**. For non-Title I schools in improvement, this requirement is established by state legislation (**NRS 385**). Besides fulfilling the legislative requirements, the goal of school improvement (through a school improvement plan) is to increase student achievement at the school.

***School Improvement Plans***

In order to comply with NCLB and NRS 385, all schools must submit a school improvement plan or revised plan to their district by November 1 of each year.

- Non-Title I schools and Title I schools not in improvement or non-Title I schools and Title I schools that did not make AYP for one year may choose, with the approval of the district, which school improvement plan **template** they will use to submit their school improvement plan. However, the SAGE school improvement plan is highly recommended for all schools as it reflects the points of law under both NCLB and NRS 385. More importantly, though, this plan reflects the thoughtful process in which schools should engage during the school improvement planning process.
- Non-Title I schools that fall into improvement may also choose their school improvement plan template, with approval from the district, adding the minor additions that are required for a non-Title I school in improvement. However, a non-Title I school may also choose to follow the SAGE process and use the accompanying SAGE school improvement plan, with the approval of the school district.
- Title I schools in improvement must use the SAGE process and the accompanying school improvement plan template. Title I improvement plans must be peer-reviewed by the school district according to the criteria established by the Nevada State Board of Education.

School improvement plans for all schools must adhere to the following components:

1. Include a review of the school's accountability report and other data;
2. Include an identification of problems and/or factors causing the school to be in improvement;
3. Use scientifically-based research strategies to strengthen the core academics;
4. Adopt policies and practices concerning the school's core academic subjects that have the greatest likelihood of ensuring that all groups of students will meet State standards;

5. Establish specific annual, measurable objectives for continuous and substantial progress by each group of students to make adequate yearly progress to meet the State standards;
6. Include strategies to promote effective parental involvement in the school;
7. Incorporate, as appropriate, activities of remedial instruction or tutoring before school, after school, during the summer, and during any extension of the school year;
8. Determine strategies to improve achievement;
9. Specify the responsibilities of the school, the local educational agency, and the State educational agency serving the school under the plan, including the technical assistance to be provided by the local educational agency and the local educational agency's responsibilities;
10. Establish a timeline;
11. Develop measurable criteria for evaluating effectiveness of each provision in the plan (including increasing achievement, attendance or decreasing dropouts);
12. Describe resources available to the school for carrying out the plan;
13. Provide a summary of effectiveness of Legislative appropriations to improve achievement and of programs approved by the Legislature.
14. A budget of the overall cost for carrying out the plan.

According to NRS 385, Non-Title I schools that fail AYP for two consecutive years must also comply with NCLB 6316(b)(3). Therefore, **Non-Title I schools that are designated in improvement** must complete two additional requirements, numbers 15 and 17 listed below, and include them in their school improvement plan.

For Title I schools in improvement, plans must cover a two-year period and the four additional components below must be addressed:

15. Assure the school will spend at least 10 percent of the school improvement funds to provide high-quality professional development to the school's teachers and principal that
    - Directly addresses the academic achievement problem that caused the school to be identified for school improvement,
    - Meets the requirements for professional development activities, and
    - Is provided in a manner that helps teachers participate in the professional development;
16. Describe how the school will provide written notice about the identification to parents in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that the parents can understand;
17. Specify how the Title I funds will be used to remove the school from school improvement; and
18. Incorporate a teacher-mentoring program.
19. Describe the school's strategies to attract high-quality highly qualified teachers to your school.

20. Describe the school's strategies to increase parent involvement in accordance with Section 1118 of NCLB, such as family literacy services.
21. Describe the school's plans for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood programs, such as Head Start, Even Start, Early Reading First, or a state-run preschool program, to local elementary school programs.

***What happens once the school improvement plan is developed, written, and approved?***

Schools identified for school improvement must implement the school plan (or a revised plan) no later than January 1 after approval of the plan. However, schools typically implement their plan as soon as it is approved by their school district.

School improvement plans are action plans created to activate change within schools in order to improve student achievement. Implementing a school improvement plan is a process, requiring continuous monitoring and evaluation by members of the School Improvement Planning (SIP)/Implementation Team as well as other staff members. Writing the school improvement plan is only the beginning and the success of this plan is contingent upon all those who have committed to implement it.

In addition, the school improvement plan itself can be a useful tool in other educational initiatives, such as the Northwest Accreditation (NWA) process or applying for remediation funding.

# Notes

# AYP Designations & Consequences

| Every school is required by NRS 385 to complete/revise a School Improvement Plan yearly, whether or not it is in improvement. This plan is due by law to the district on or before November 1 and to the NDE by December 15.<br><br>This chart reflects the regulations that take effect when a school fails to make adequate yearly progress. | **Watch list** | **Year 1 & Y1 Hold** | **Year 2 & Y2 Hold** | **Year 3 & Y3 Hold** | **Year 4 & Y4 Hold** | **Year 5 & Y5 Hold** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LEA Technical Assistance | Needs Improvement Status | Needs Improvement Status | Needs Improvement Status | Needs Improvement Status | Needs Improvement Status |
| | | Continue LEA Technical Assistance | Continue LEA Technical Assistance | Continue LEA Technical Assistance | Continue LEA Technical Assistance | Continue LEA Technical Assistance |
| | | School Choice<br>Title I only | School Choice<br>Title I only | School Choice<br>Title I only | School Choice<br>Title I only | School Choice<br>Title I only |
| | | | Supplemental Services<br>Title I only | Supplemental Services<br>Title I only | Supplemental Services<br>Title I only | Supplemental Services<br>Title I only |
| | | | | School Support Team | School Support Team | School Support Team |
| | | | | **Corrective Action**<br>~ New curriculum (& PD to support it)<br>~ Decrease number of managerial duty employees<br>~ Extend year or day<br>**And for Title I –**<br>~ Replace staff<br>~ Decrease management authority at school<br>~ Outside expert<br>~ Restructure internal organization of school | **Corrective Action**<br>~ New curriculum (& PD to support it)<br>~ Decrease number of managerial duty employees<br>~ Extend year or day<br>**And for Title I –**<br>~ Replace staff<br>~ Decrease management authority at the school<br>~ Outside expert<br>~ Restructure internal organization of school | **Corrective Action**<br>~ New curriculum (& PD to support it)<br>~ Decrease number of managerial duty employees<br>~ Extend year or day<br>**And for Title I –**<br>~ Replace staff<br>~ Decrease management authority at school<br>~ Outside expert<br>~ Restructure internal organization of school |
| | | | | | Plan for Alternative Governance:<br>Charter, replace staff, private management, State control, or other fundamental reform | Carry out Alternative Governance:<br>Charter, replace staff, private management, State control, or other fundamental reform |
| | 1st AYP failure | 2nd consecutive AYP failure | 3rd consecutive AYP failure | 4th consecutive AYP failure | 5th consecutive AYP failure | 6th consecutive AYP failure |

AYP = Adequate Yearly Progress LEA = Local Education Agency (District)

# Notes

# School Support Team

Under NRS 385, any school that is in its third or fourth year of improvement must have a School Support Team (SST). If a school in its third year of improvement does not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the SST continues with that school through the fourth year of improvement (planning for restructuring) and the fifth year of improvement (implementation of restructuring). The purpose of the SST is to provide outside expertise and ideas for schools in order to assist them to focus on key factors that will help them to increase student achievement.

**Membership**

1. The school support team must, by law include:
    a) Teachers and principals who are considered highly qualified but do not work for the school for which the support team is established;
    b) At least one representative from Department of Education;
    c) Except for a charter school, at least one administrator at the district level who is employed by the board of trustees of the school district;
    d) At least one parent or guardian of a pupil who is enrolled in the public school for which the support team is established;
    e) In addition to paragraphs "a" to "d", inclusive, for a charter school
        i. At least one member of the governing body of the charter school;
        ii. If the charter school is sponsored by the board of trustees of a school district, at least one employee of the school district, which may include an administrator.

2. The team may also include:
    a) One or more members of the board of trustees of the school district in which the school is located;
    b) Representatives of institutions of higher education;
    c) Representatives of regional educational laboratories;
    d) Representatives of outside consultant groups;
    e) Representatives of the regional training program for the professional development of teachers and administrators;
    f) The Legislative Counsel Bureau; and
    g) Other persons who the Department determines are appropriate.

**SST Responsibilities**

1. Review and analyze the operation of the school, including and without limitation, the design and operation of the instructional program of the school;

2. Review and analyze the data pertaining to the school accountability report and review and analyze any data that is more recent than the data upon which the report is based;
3. Review the latest school improvement plan;
4. Identify and investigate the problems and factors at the school that contributed to the designation of "in need of improvement;"
5. Assist the school in developing recommendations for improving the performance of pupils.
6. Make recommendations to the board of trustees of the school district, the State Board, and the Department concerning additional assistance for the school in carrying out the plan for improvement of the school;
7. In addition, the SST may require the school for which the support team was established to submit plans, strategies, tasks and measures that, in the determination of the support team, will assist the school in improving the achievement and proficiency of pupils enrolled in the school
8. Work with the school to revise the most recent plan to improve the achievement of the school's pupils. The plan must:
    a. Include the data and findings of the support team that provide support for the revisions;
    b. Set forth goals and objectives for the school that are:
        1. Designed to improve the achievement of the school's pupils;
        2. Specific;
        3. Measurable; and
        4. Conducive to reliable evaluation.
    c. Set forth a timeline to carry out the revisions;
    d. Set forth priorities for the school in carrying out the revisions; and
    e. Set forth the duties of each person who is responsible for carrying out the revisions.
9. Work cooperatively with the board of trustees, the employees of the school, and the parents and guardians, whose child(ren) are enrolled in the school, to carry out and monitor the plan for improvement of the school.

**Written Reports**

***November 1st Report***

*On or before November 1st*, the support team shall submit a copy of the written report to the:

1. Board of Trustees of the School District in which the school is located;
2. Superintendent of the school district in which the school is located;

3. Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Nevada ;
4. Deputy Superintendent of Instructional, Research, and Evaluative Services;
5. State School Improvement Consultant;
6. The Legislative Counsel Bureau;
7. SST Members;
8. Assistant Director, School Improvement;
9. Director, Special Education, ESES, and School Improvement ; and
10. Made available to each parent or legal guardian upon request.

The report should include:

1. Information about the latest school improvement plan;
   a) The appropriateness of the plan;
   b) Whether the school has achieved the goals and objectives set forth in the plan;
2. A newly revised school improvement plan;
3. Summary of each program for remediation;
   a) The name of the program;
   b) The date the program was purchased and the date the program was carried out by the school;
   c) The percentage of personnel at the school who were trained regarding the use of the program;
   d) The satisfaction of the personnel of the program;
   e) An evaluation of whether the program has improved the academic achievement of the pupils enrolled in the school who participated in the program;
4. An analysis of the problems and factors at the school which contributed to the designation of in need of improvement, including, without limitation issues relating to:
   a) The financial resources of the school;
   b) The administrative and educational personnel of the school;
   c) The curriculum of the school;
   d) The facilities available at the school, including the availability and accessibility of educational technology;
   e) Any other factors that the support team believes contributed to the designation of the school;

5. An analysis of other information concerning the school, including:
    a) The results of state examinations that are administered, including but not limited to CRT, HSPE, NRT, 5th grade and 8th grade writing exam;
    b) Records of attendance and truancy;
    c) Transiency rate of pupils who are enrolled at the school;
    d) A description of the number of years that each teacher has provided instruction at the school and the turnover rate of teachers and other educational personnel;
    e) A description of the participation of parents and legal guardians in the educational process and other activities relating to the school;
    f) A description of each source of money for the remediation of the pupils enrolled at the school; and
    g) A description of disciplinary problems of the pupils in the school, including, without limitation:
        i. Records of incidents involving weapons or violence;
        ii. Records of incidents involving the use or possession of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances;
        iii. Records of suspension and expulsion;
        iv. The number of students who are deemed habitual disciplinary problems.

***Monthly Report***

For Title I schools, the SST must have at least one site visit per month to monitor and ensure that the school is following its improvement plan and provide technical assistance to the school. The monthly report, written by SST, should include:

1. Agendas and minutes from all meetings;
2. Any new data the school/district may have;
3. Action step monitoring (using Monitoring Plan In SIP); and
4. Any other materials required by the SST's Monitoring Plan.

***End-of- year Report***

The purpose of the End-of-Year report is to evaluate the progress of the school and plan for the next year's school support team duties. The End-of-Year report is written by school support team leader and applies only to schools that receive Title I funding.
The report should include:

1. A summary of November 1st report;
2. Changes in the school and in the achievement of pupils:

a) An analysis of end-of-year data in terms of CRT, NRT, HSPE, etc. and what the assessments show;
b) Changes in faculty and whether these changes had impact on student achievement;
c) Changes in administration and evidence of effective leadership;
d) The impact of new programs, professional development, scheduling or innovation of any sort;
e) The impact of additional funding, and how these funding are aligned with the goal of school improvement plan;
f) The impact of curriculum changes;

3. Remaining challenges;
4. Recommendation for corrective action;
5. Recommendation for restructuring;
6. Suggestions for improving school/student achievement.

**Non-Title I Schools**

Under NRS 385, non-Title I schools in their third or fourth year of improvement must have a School Support Team (SST).

**Membership**

1. Highly qualified teacher from site other than the identified school
2. Highly qualified principal
3. District representative
4. NDE representative

In addition to core members, the SST may include:

a. One parent from each identified site in the cohort
b. Principal of the site
c. SIT Leader (if different from the principal)

# Notes

# APPENDIX B

## Northwest Accreditation and SAGE

The crosswalk document for Appendix B is under construction. The document will be provided as soon as it is complete.

# APPENDIX C

# Glossary

# *Glossary*

### *Achievement Data*

Evidence gathered to determine student growth towards learning targets based on established expectations.

### *Assessment System*

A management system containing a series of assessments that is designed to collect and evaluate data about student performance. Each assessment must be aligned with at least one of the students' performance goals in the improvement plan. The quality of assessments is described by using the terms: "reliable," "valid," and "fair."

### *Curriculum Alignment*

The directness of the link between the Nevada Content Standards with the local curriculum, assessment, instruction, and reporting structures. The process of ensuring that a district's "taught" curriculum is aligned with State academic standards.

### *Data Management System*

An established electronic system used to disseminate, sort, and manage data for timely and accurate distribution.

### *Evaluation*

In most educational settings, the process used to measure, compare, and judge the quality of student work, schools, or a specific educational program as well as the performance of teachers and administrators.

### *Formative Assessments*

Ongoing assessment (district, school and classroom level) used to modify and improve instruction while it is in progress. Examples: informal observation, quizzes, homework, worksheets, daily assignments, performance assessments, scoring rubrics, activities.

### *Intervention*

An intervention is an activity or practice that is administered to or with a student to develop specific skills or learning with a student with a gap in learning. An intervention can be specific a program, strategy, or concentration of work focusing on decreasing the gap in learning that is targeted in instruction and/or written in an IEP or school improvement plan.

### *Organizational structures*

Organizational structures are the way that the interrelated groups of a school are constructed. The primary components are effective communication and coordination. Organizational

structures within a school include (but are not limited to) the governance structure, decision-making protocol, and resource allocation practices.

### *Professional Development*

Ongoing and extensive opportunities for teachers, staff, and parents to learn research based instructional practices to support student learning or to gain additional knowledge in instruction.

### *Proficiency*

Having or demonstrating an expected degree of knowledge or skill in a particular area.

### *Research Based Strategies*

Research based: Refers to programs, practices and strategies that have been shown to be effective through rigorous, systematic and objective research.

### *Student Engagement*

The continuous mental involvement of students in accomplishing tasks to meet daily learning targets. Elements to consider include:

- Learning objectives: Ensuring students understand their daily learning objectives.
- Relevance: Using challenging curriculum that is relevant to students' lives, interests, and learning profiles, and that creates new interests, knowledge and opportunities.
- Pacing: Allowing students to work at an appropriate pace based on their abilities.
- Choice: Allowing students to exercise some choice in what and how they are learning and how they demonstrate what they have learned.
- Collaboration: Allowing students to work with peers in purposeful ways.
- Technology: Providing students the use of technology to enrich and support their learning.

### *Summative Assessment*

Assessments used to judge the success of instruction at its completion. Examples: formal tests, final exams, final projects, term papers, etc. The information is often used in determining a grade, placement, or promotion.

### *Systematic*

Refers to processes that are ongoing, logical, and consistent, rather than anecdotal and episodic.

# APPENDIX D

# References

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