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ABSTRACT

Considerations in the design and implementation of the technical assistance (TA) system for supporting Pennsylvania's statewide school improvement initiative are analyzed. After a brief introduction, the authors describe the key features of the initiative, called Long-Range Planning for School Improvement (LRPSI). They briefly review recent research data on TA's importance in school improvement efforts. A lengthy section then recounts the design of Pennsylvania's TA network, highlighting five areas: TA role definition and implementation, TA staff selection and training, TA system organization and maintenance, support systems for TA staff, and evaluation of TA activities. Five long charts are used to relate prescriptive information from TA research to specific design features of Pennsylvania's TA system. Next a short update is provided on the progress of LRPSI and the TA network. The conclusion briefly reflects on the applicability of recent linking-agent research to the TA system's design. Seven appendixes cover further research findings on school improvement and TA, training related to the TA program, TA system reporting forms, the support roles of state and district agencies, college and university roles, a sample LRPSI guide, and guidelines for LRPSI midpoint progress reports. (RW)

The Design and Implementation of a Statewide Technical Assistance System for School Improvement: Alternative Considerations

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The Design and Implementation of a Statewide Technical Assistance System for School Improvement: Alternative Considerations

Abstract

This paper describes and analyzes the alternatives considered in designing and implementing Pennsylvania's statewide technical assistance system for school improvement. Implications derived from recent RAND, TAG, RDU, NDN and RDx research studies pertinent to the role of technical assistance in school improvement are reviewed. The practical considerations encountered in relating the research implications to the general design, management, implementation, support and evaluation components of the system are described from a case study perspective. Overall, the paper should be of interest to practitioners faced with the task of developing technical assistance systems and to those interested in knowledge utilization and dissemination.

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Introduction

This paper describes and analyzes the considerations involved in designing and implementing Pennsylvania's technical assistance (TA) system or network in support of a statewide school improvement initiative. The key features of Pennsylvania's Long-Range Planning for School Improvement (LRPSI) initiative are described to provide a context for the technical assistance system. The results of recent research on school improvement and change which influenced the overall design of the school improvement effort in Pennsylvania also are highlighted. In addition, recent research data supportive of the contribution of technical assistance to effective school improvement and change efforts is cited.

The design of the technical assistance network developed to support school improvement in Pennsylvania is described with regard to specific design features in five areas: technical assistance roles and functions; selection and training of technical assistance staff; organization and management of a technical assistance system; support systems for technical assistance staff; and the evaluation of technical assistance. More specifically, prescriptive information from literature and research pertinent to each of the five areas is summarized in "chart format." Specific design features of the Pennsylvania technical assistance network are juxtaposed in the charts beside the related prescriptive information. The evolution of the network and some of the practical considerations Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) staff encountered in the course of designing and implementing the technical assistance network, are described and discussed from a case study perspective. A brief report on

the progress to date of the school improvement and technical assistance network initiatives is also provided. The paper concludes with some general reflections on the applicability, in a prescriptive sense, of recent linker research to the design of a statewide technical assistance network.

The Pennsylvania School Improvement Initiative[1]

The present PDE administration introduced a "new" school improvement initiative in late 1979. Its intent was to build upon, integrate, and update the collective school improvement activities and experiences extent in the state department. The design of the "new" initiative was a collaborative effort guided by available R&D-based information on school effectiveness and planned change. Accordingly, a large PDE task force, under the direction of the Commissioner of Basic Education was convened in the fall of 1979 to develop a plan for statewide school improvement.

The design work of the PDE school improvement task force was presented to, reviewed by, and discussed with every major educational interest group in the state. Task force staff also consulted the educational laboratory and center group, Council for Educational Development and Research, for information on school effectiveness and change. This extensive collaborative, R&D-based design effort

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[1] In addition to the school improvement initiative in basic education, the state is also involved in (1) redesigning the state's professional education and certification system to influence and strengthen the teacher preparation process at the 89 colleges and universities involved in teacher preparation in the state; (2) implementing a technology awareness and utilization initiative in the state; and (3) implementing a new statewide reform in school accounting procedures.

culminated in April, 1980, in the implementation of a comprehensive design for school improvement in Pennsylvania. Periodic amendments and revisions to the school improvement effort are envisioned based on field testing and participant feedback.

Components of School Improvement in Pennsylvania

The components of the Pennsylvania school improvement initiative are best described in relation to the state's primary aims for school improvement. These aims are: (1) to foster increased student growth in the areas outlined by the state's 12 goals of quality education; (2) to encourage schools to engage in a systematic, cyclic school improvement process; and (3) to develop a technical assistance system to facilitate and support schools' implementation of the process. Although each of the aims are central to the state's improvement effort, increased student performance constitutes the ultimate focus of school improvement in Pennsylvania. The components of school improvement associated with the three aims will be discussed in order.

Student Growth in the Areas Outlined by the Goals of Quality Education: The Educational Quality Assessment Program

The state's Goals of Quality Education provide the structure for examining schools' curriculum and instruction needs. These goals focus on the areas of communication skills, mathematics, self-esteem, analytical thinking, understanding others, citizenship, arts and the humanities, science and technology, work, family living, health and the environment. The operational definition of each goal, vis-a-vis subject matter and student performance is left to the discretion of the individual districts.

In a de facto sense the state has delineated some content in most of the goal areas by virtue of the test items included in the state's

mandatory Educational Quality Assessment (EQA) program. The state tests are administered at three grade levels and provide comparative state-normed data of use to school improvement planning. The data is reported and aggregated using the school as the unit of analysis. More specifically, the present EQA Inventory provides subscores in 11 separate areas for each grade -- 5, 8, and 11. Cognitive test subscores are provided for reading, writing skills, mathematics, knowledge of law/government, health knowledge, career awareness, knowledge of human accomplishments and information usage. Affective measure subscores are provided for self-esteem, understanding others, interest in school and learning, societal responsibility, health and safety practice, creative activities, and appreciating human accomplishments.

The EQA Inventory also provides schools with information on 35 condition and resource variables (e.g., student, teacher, parent relationships; factors disruptive to classroom management; parent education level; amount of homework; student educational expectations). Thus, the EQA program provides information about what students know and feel, teachers' perception of the school and community, and how these attitudes compare to those in schools throughout the state.

Districts are encouraged to use EQA data and a goals ranking procedure in the initial phase of a district's or school's needs assessment. The requirement regarding needs assessment, however, is flexible; districts are strongly encouraged to use any and all test and opinion data available to determine needs in their schools.

A Systematic Improvement Process

The state's second aim -- to encourage schools to engage in a systematic, cyclic, improvement process -- is addressed primarily in the state mandated, and recently revised, Long-Range Planning for School Improvement (LRPSI) guidelines. These guidelines offer a framework for cyclic local school improvement through five major activities: initial preparation, needs assessment, action planning, implementation and evaluation.

The LRPSI guidelines focus attention on two primary and three secondary areas. The two primary areas are: educational programs and district management practices. According to the proposed planning process, each of these primary areas is examined for potential improvement needs. The suggested procedure generally involves:

- deciding upon relevant goals
- collecting and analyzing hard data and information (building-level/district-wide) specific to the attainment of each of the goals
- obtaining perceptual data from relevant audiences (students, staff, community) on the perceived importance and degree of school/district success regarding the goals
- comparatively evaluating the goal attainment and goal importance data to establish priorities for school improvement (building-level/district-wide)
- conducting problem or causal analyses, generating alternative solutions and selecting solutions for the problems identified in each of the priority goal areas, established above, for school improvement
- preparing building-level/district-wide action plans to describe who will do what, when, and with what resources regarding the selected improvement activities.

Districts are expected to develop action plans to address priority needs in the two primary areas.

In addition, districts are asked to examine three specific areas for potential action from the perspective of their relationship to the two primary areas. Either concurrently with or immediately after preparing action plans in the two primary areas, districts are asked to examine their community/staff involvement, staff development and resource-use policies/practices to insure that they either support or are coordinated with the action plans.

Considered as a whole, the suggested school improvement procedure incorporates a number of unique features or elements:

- the Pennsylvania initiative has built upon a number of antecendent state programs, thus promoting continuity and ownership with existing school improvement programs
- a building-level approach to assessment, goal setting, action planning, implementation and evaluation is stressed
- community involvement in problem solving and planning regarding curriculum and management concerns is stressed
- the procedure was designed to reduce the amount of paper work involved in LRPSI and to result in useful, concise action plans that would serve as real guides to building/district staff in implementing changes in program and management areas
- the procedure emphasizes both building-level improvement plans that address student achievement in programs related to the Goals of Quality Education, and district-level improvement plans related to management problems facing the district
- public statewide recognition of district improvement efforts (i.e., districts will be publicly pre-registered and registered by the state upon completion of action planning and implementation-evaluation efforts, respectively, in a given five-year improvement cycle)

- finally, the procedure provides for systematic technical assistance to districts during all phases of the improvement process.

A Technical Assistance System

The technical assistance system or network is viewed as a partnership among PDE, intermediate unit and higher education staff working in regional teams at local district request. The partnership system stresses the strengths of the respective partners: PDE's statewide information perspective, technical assistance expertise, administrative authority, and financial and information resources; intermediate unit content and process expertise, geographic location and history of service to the districts; and higher education expertise, interest and resources in specialized school improvement areas.

The regional teams work with one or more school districts and their staff through the duration of a district's school improvement efforts. The strength of the team concept lies not so much in its geography as in its networking capability. The PDE field representatives are assigned to one or several districts, as they desire; the IU advisors work with all districts in their intermediate unit area; the IHE coordinators work with districts depending on proximity as well as on a request basis. To date, approximately 76 PDE field representatives, 36 intermediate unit advisors and 75 higher education coordinators have been identified to provide long-term technical assistance. The technical assistance teams are providing direct LRPSI problem solving planning assistance upon request, as well as providing assistance with general information and resource identification.

Management of this effort is coordinated by staff of the School Improvement Administrative Division (SIAD) who have the job title of "regional directors." Among other duties, SIAD staff provide appropriate training programs and materials for all technical assistance staff; provide orientation/planning workshops and teleconferences for district staff involved in school improvement; manage an information system for monitoring and evaluating technical assistance field operations; coordinate, monitor, reassign, select and/or retrain technical assistance staff as dictated by emerging needs and conditions; revise technical assistance system procedures as the school improvement program develops; and manage a school improvement region consisting of one or more intermediate unit areas.

The technical assistance network is supported by a resource system. A key component of the resource system is the PDE Resource Center. The Resource Center encourages coordination of PDE resources, houses a core collection of materials, acts as a PDE link to information services such as RISE, (Research and Information Services for Education), PRISE (Pennsylvania Research and Information for Special Education), VEIN (Vocational Education Information Network) and the State Library, and acts as a centralized point for PDE's school improvement field representatives to access information on technical assistance and educational programs that work. The Resource Center also maintains a human resources file to bolster the technical assistance system. In addition, a resource network is also being developed to share promising practices initiated as a result of the school improvement process.

Research and Development Program Base

Many of the general design features incorporated in the Pennsylvania school improvement initiative reflect the influence and consideration of recent research findings on school improvement and change. A select review of these findings is presented in Appendix A. Reflecting this R&D base, the school improvement effort in Pennsylvania was systematically designed to (1) accommodate an array of locally identified needs; (2) facilitate staff involvement in a participative cyclic, problem-solving improvement process at the school building level; (3) provide professional and financial incentives for participation in the program; (4) be flexible regarding districts' time schedules and priorities for improvements; (5) interface gracefully with ongoing improvement efforts; (6) provide social incentives and rewards for districts' continued participation, in good faith, in the process; (7) provide for sustained technical assistance to local staff with all phases of the process; (8) encourage local educational staff to match systematically R&D-based solutions with identified needs; and (9) encourage attention to all phases of the change process.

The Importance of Technical Assistance to the School Improvement Process

The Pilot State Dissemination Project (PSDP, 1972), National Diffusion Network (NDN, 1977), Technical Assistance Group (TAG, 1977) and Research and Dissemination Utilization (RDU, 1979-1981) studies collectively provide support for the conclusion that external technical

assistors can make important contributions to the success of local school improvement efforts. In a recent review of technical assistance, Rosenblum (1982) pointed out that the type of technical assistance offered districts was critical to the success of the educational change process.

Rosenblum discussed the types of technical assistance involved in the context of four approaches or models to change. In the regulatory approach, compliance related assistance in the form of external monitoring to insure conformity with federal or state program regulations and reporting requirements was found to have little impact on program effectiveness or success in terms of desired outcomes (Hill, 1978). In fact, mandated regulations were found to be much less influential in producing change than local commitment to change (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978). Similarly, assistance in the form of systematic dissemination of information about exemplary programs or products (the technological model) is not too likely to affect school adoptions or changes in practice. Some form of personal intervention is required to initiate interest in and to facilitate the use of new programs or practices (Emrick and Peterson, 1978).

Overall, it is the type of assistance offered to local education agencies that may be critical. For example, when problem solving assistance (the linkage model) was provided in (1) matching new programs with locally identified needs, and (2) implementing the programs, the programs were adopted and implemented with the desired effects (Louis, et al, 1981 -- Study of RDU program). Similarly, from the frame of reference of the (local) contextual model of change, it was concluded that technical

assistors can operate to reduce local barriers to change and can facilitate the change process (Louis and Rosenblum , 1981). In addition, it was reported that LEA staff appear to respond to incentives created by social interaction with external agents. Rosenblum (1982) concluded that skilled external assistors can "assess LEA political and cultural conditions, develop strategies that are responsive to those local conditions and help foster involvement, commitment and capacity for change, if a continuous support effort is carried out -- with both adequate time and resources." Thus, recent research supports the notion that the provision of adequate and timely external technical assistance can facilitate local school improvement efforts if systematic attention is paid to all phases of the change process.

The Design of a Technical Assistance Network in Pennsylvania

Design of the technical assistance (TA) network in Pennsylvania involved consideration of a number of conceptual issues in five major design areas: specification of technical assistance roles and functions to be performed; development of technical assistance staff selection and training procedures; development of an internal organizational structure for management and administrative purposes; identification and development of required support systems; and evaluation and refinement of the technical assistance network. In each area, the literature and research on technical assistance and educational linker activities potentially had something to suggest pertinent to the development of a technical assistance network.

In the following sections, prescriptive information from the literature and research specific to particular design areas is outlined along with related design features incorporated in the design and implementation of Pennsylvania's technical assistance network. The events and considerations involved in the design of the network are described and discussed in light of the prescriptive data and the context of the school improvement initiative. The actual design of the network or system, however, did not occur in a linear manner. Progress on the design of the system occurred developmentally and interactively over a several month period on a number of fronts. Various technical assistance network design and policy concerns were addressed by a subcommittee of the school improvement task force (1979-1980). The preparation of several concept papers, along with subcommittee discussions, consultant input and task force reviews collectively resulted in a working design for the technical assistance network.

The crosswalking of the R&D-base with select network design features and discussion of the decisions and considerations addressed by PDE staff was undertaken in this paper for both documentary and heuristic purposes. Due to time and space considerations, this paper will examine only a few of the key issues confronted by PDE staff, in each of the five major areas cited above, as development work progressed. For similar reasons, the paper will focus primarily on the functioning of PDE field representatives and regional directors. Intermediate unit and higher education partners' involvement will be outlined.

Role Definition and Implementation Considerations

This section of the paper addresses some of the decision processes involved in deciding upon the form and type, intensity and scope, and

degree of structure of the technical assistance to be delivered by the network. The influence of both the acknowledged steps in the assistance process and generally recognized implementation guidelines on the development and implementation of the primary roles in the network is also described.

Form, type and style of technical assistance. Early in the development process, the PDE school improvement task force subcommittee charged with defining the technical assistance system undertook the preparation and critical review of several concept papers outlining the types of assistance desired and the potential staff available for delivering the assistance. PDE staff were concerned with, "What form, type and style of technical assistance to deliver?" The literature and research cited in Chart 1, Part 1 and Appendix A supported the inference that school change or improvement results would be more likely to occur if a complete range or technical assistance (communication, resource linking, process help, facilitator help, etc.) were made available to district staff in support of all phases of the school improvement process.

Consideration of several contextual factors eventually resulted in the conclusion that a partnership approach to technical assistance would be most appropriate for Pennsylvania. Namely; (1) a very large number (501) of geographically dispersed districts ultimately would require assistance; (2) PDE as an institution had a broad base of expertise in many but not all desired areas; (3) staff from the state's 29 intermediate units (IUs) had already established a track record of service assistance to districts in a large number of educational content and process areas;

(4) the state's institutions of higher education (IHEs) were strategically dispersed across the state and might serve as unique resources if properly approached and motivated.

Thus, examination and discussion of the literature on linker roles, technical assistance and change led to the conclusion that the delivery system should offer a complete range of assistance services in order to have maximum effect. This conclusion, coupled with the desire to build broad statewide institutional support and ownership for the school improvement initiative and the need to utilize all available resources -- led PDE task force staff to propose a partnership approach to the design of the technical assistance network. The technical assistance roles of each of the partners are outlined in Chart 1, Part 1. The roles of the technical assistance partners were not cast in stone. Room was provided for flexibility, expansion and interplay among the roles of the partners as each local situation dictated. The PDE field representative (technical assistor/linker), however, was assigned primary responsibility for communication and coordination of activities among the partners. The proposed assistance was basically client-centered and delivered upon client's request.

Intensity and scope of technical assistance.[2] Determining how many clients (school districts) each field representative would serve, how

[2]This section on intensity and scope of technical assistance is based in part on a "working PDE paper" prepared by Joseph Skok, Chairman of the PDE Roles Subcommittee, School Improvement Task force entitled, "An Analysis of Two Systems for Deploying School Improvement Field Representatives," January 1980.

frequently and over what time period -- proved initially to be a major problem for PDE school improvement task force staff. The literature and research cited in Chart 1, Part 2 generally argued that more adequate technical assistance was provided when technical assistors (linkers) spent the large majority of their total job time in their technical assistance role while working with a relatively small number (2-5) of schools. Discussion focused on whether PDE staff should serve as field representatives on a part-time or a full-time basis, whether schools or districts should be the unit of service analysis, and whether the proposed level of effort per service unit should be high, moderate or low. Examination of the literature cited in Chart 1, Part 2 along with suggestions from former Pennsylvania R&D Utilization program staff who were members of the task force, resulted in initial committee consensus on a six-visit-per-year-per-school unit of level of assistance.

Since the first Wave of the Pennsylvania school improvement effort was scheduled to involve approximately 78 districts with a total of some 500 school buildings during 1980-81, simple arithmetic suggested that a total of 3,000 school visits would be required if six visits were to be made to each school. Assuming two building visits per staff visitation day, a total of 1,500 person days would be required for actual school visitations. Considering that each staff visitation day usually would require two additional staff days for preparation, follow up activity, and travel, a total of 4,500 person days of effort required, the linker system necessary to support school improvement was calculated to require approximately 20 full-time staff, or full-time staff equivalents to serve as school improvement field representatives in year one.

Extensive discussions among school improvement task force staff, Research for Better Schools consultants, and other PDE staff identified two basic ways in which the personnel needs for direct technical assistance to schools could be satisfied. One alternative was to simply reassign 20 PDE staff to full-time positions as school improvement field representatives. The second alternative was to assign approximately twice as many staff, 40 or more, to serve part-time as school improvement field representatives. The part-time assignments represented the lowest level of involvement per staff that any of those involved in planning felt was possible if a reasonable level of personal commitment on the part of staff was to be maint ned.

The two alternatives were summarized as follows: (1) twenty PDE staff could be assigned full-time to an organizational unit like the Bureau of School Improvement to serve as school improvement field representatives. The 20 staff would accept duty assignments as permanent members of the new unit. They would be supervised by the bureau director through a division chief in the usual PDE manner. All travel and other support functions for the staff would be assumed by the bureau to which the unit was assigned; or (2) forty or more PDE staff could be assigned to the role of school improvement field representative on a part-time duty assignment. Each staff would retain their regular bureau/division assignment and would devote somewhat more than half of their duty effort to the original unit. For that portion of their assignment, they would be supported by their existing unit and be supervised by their original supervisor. The part-time alternative had to be somewhat less than fifty percent due to state and federal regulations and policies limiting the

amount of time PDE staff, fully or partially supported by categorical funds, could spend working on functions not directly related to the categorical programs.

The notion of PDE staff performing in a school improvement field representative role on a part-time basis added some very important considerations to the design of the management system for school improvement field services. The considered opinion of committee staff was that the delivery system using part-time field agents could only be viable if the system provided that the field representatives by supervised in both their regular duties and their school improvement duties by the same person, their regular supervisor. That, in effect, meant that existing PDE supervisors would become school improvement supervisors. It also meant that there must be a coordinating unit established, perhaps in the Bureau of School Improvement, to facilitate communication between and among field representatives and to serve as a control point for the school improvement management information and quality control system. Although the system using part-time field representatives presented some unusual problems, committee staff felt that there would be no unresolvable problems associated with the establishment of that kind of unit.

PDE opted to decide among the two alternative delivery systems by rating each on a set of ten evaluative criteria derived in part from the literature on linking. The ten evaluative criteria are listed in Chart 1, Part 2 in the Pennsylvania Design column. Each delivery alternative was assigned a Likert scale value from one to ten for each criteria item based on the consensus of committee staff. By a-priori agreement some

items were weighted differentially. The ratings were summed across the ten criteria to obtain total scores for both alternatives. The results favored the second alternative, "40 or more part-time staff" (112 versus 141 points). Accordingly, staff initiated the development of a delivery system, for the provision of technical assistance to school districts based on the part-time assignment of PDE staff as field representatives. It should be noted that based on the year one implementation experiences of the field representatives, the unit of service was changed to the district and the number of proposed on-site visits was adjusted back to approximately one per month per site per field representative. On the average, it was assumed that each visit would involved 2 to 3 days when one added together preparation, travel, on-site, and reporting time. A twenty-five days per year figure for work in the field was generally proposed as the approximate time required of a field representative to adequately support two districts based on year one PDE experiences.

Structured versus unstructured role. Another consideration was the degree of structure to build into the field representatives' role. It was recognized that the general description provided in Chart 1, Part 1 did not provide sufficient description to facilitate unambiguous understanding of the role. PDE staff also anticipated that the number of field representatives required would increase each year over the next five years as more districts entered the process and as turnovers in staff occurred. More detail in the field representative job description was needed to facilitate role clarification, role implementation, staff recruitment, staff training, and some coherence and consistency of implementation of the role across field representatives to win the confidence of LEAs. This

need was in full agreement with the prescriptions from the research cited in Chart 3, Part 1 which essentially argue for adequate up-front role description and clarification accompanied by on-site flexibility of implementation.

Accordingly, PDE School Improvement Administrative Division (SIAD) staff undertook a task analysis of the problem solving improvement process district staff were being asked to carry out. SIAD staff next performed an analysis of the potential types of assistance districts/schools might be provided with each of the common tasks and activities involved in implementing the school improvement process. A model for the analysis was provided, in part, by a recent study of the linking process (Patrick, McCann, and Whitney, 1981). Chart 1, Part 3 illustrates the suggested types of assistance that PDE field representatives or other technical assistance partners in the network might provide to districts. This structure provided the needed clarification of the technical assistance roles. Field representatives are granted a wide range of flexibility in negotiating, brokering and/or directly providing technical assistance based upon (1) each district's needs and receptivity to working with field representatives and other partners, and (2) the specific background and skills of each field representative.

Steps in the technical assistance process. PDE SIAD staff viewed the technical assistance process both from an individual and a group or systems perspective. From the individual's perspective, field representatives were familiarized with the general steps in a single linking or assistance activity (see Chart 1, Part 4) with appropriate emphasis on the importance of interpersonal skills and timely delivery of

promised services. In fact, the training sessions conducted for field representatives involved role-play simulations of the interaction between and among the technical assistance partners and LEA staff.

The long range planning for school improvement (LRPSI) process requires specific tasks and deliverables of LEAs. From a group or systems perspective these tasks and deliverables provide systematic entry points for field representative - LEA interaction. Accordingly, LEA's were assigned field representatives on a long term basis. Opportunities for field representative, intermediate unit advisor, and higher education coordinator interaction and engagement with LEA LRPSI coordinators and staff were systematically built into the initial LEA LRPSI orientation and planning sessions designed by PDE.

Similarly, Chart 1, Part 4 illustrates that procedures and resources were developed to help technical assistance staff, as a group and a system, implement the context specification, diagnosis and collection/-translation steps in the linking-assistance process.

Guidelines for the implementation of a technical assistance role.

The literature offers a number of guidelines on the implementation of a technical assistance role. Chart 1, Part 5 illustrates a number of the features incorporated in Pennsylvania's technical assistance network which reflect consideration of one or more specific guidelines. TA staff serve primarily as generalists. Technical assistance role clarification is a key objective during the entry process, as is face-to-face communication and the use of quality hardcopy materials. It bears noting that PDE staff

modified the entry process in year two based on year one experiences. In year one, three regional large group orientation workshops were conducted to orient LEA's to the improvement process. The large group workshops were followed by several two-day LEA team planning sessions. In year two the orientation meetings were conducted in relatively small-group settings, at 22 of the intermediate units located across the state. Subsequent administrative planning assistance regarding district preparations for the first phase of the process was provided by field representatives to district ERPSI coordinators and superintendents in-person, at three regional meetings, followed by on-site consultations. Overall, a more effective and controlled entry was achieved in year two.

Staff Selection and Training Considerations

Specific issues and considerations related to technical assistor skills, selection procedures, origin and location, and training will be addressed in this section.

Technical assistance skills required. PDE staff were presented with the problem of what skills and what levels of skills would be required of the proposed PDE technical assistance staff. At one extreme, models existed (e.g., several of the projects in the RDU Program) for somewhat intensive levels of linker or assistor training and skills. Faced with a need for a relatively large number of technical assistance staff on a fixed budget, PDE school improvement administrative staff made the assumption, noted in Chart 2, Part 1 that most PDE staff could assume the field representative's role, with adequate startup assistance, and sustained training and support.

This assumption appeared justified in that most PDE staff have had field experience interacting with the educational public in the context of explaining, representing or otherwise supporting various state programs. It was further assumed that the field representatives did not have to be super-linkers. They would be trained to broker the services of others to accomodate district needs they could not meet by themselves. Administrative and organizational support was provided for the "brokering role" by the establishment of the partnership technical assistance system and a human resource file. In addition, training and support materials were prepared to bolster field representatives' awareness and skills in areas related to assisting LEAs with school improvement.

Suggested technical assistance staff selection procedures. Having decided on the general role and required number of technical assistors, PDE staff were faced, in the late winter and early spring of 1980, with the task of selecting TA staff. Based on the assumptions cited above regarding required skills, and given the uncertainties always associated with a new role, PDE School Improvement staff decided that it would be best initially to ask for volunteers for the part-time position of field representative. Accordingly, the Commissioners of Basic Education, Higher Education and Planning sent out a memo to all staff outlining the position and the basic conditions of the assignment. Chart 2, Part 2 provides a sample of the memo used to solicit volunteers for the school improvement effort.

Overall, 55 PDE staff from a cross-section of PDE bureaus volunteered to be field representatives during the first year of the program. They were interviewed by the Commissioner of Basic Education and SIAD staff to

(1) determine general background experience, personality characteristics and level of motivation, and (2) explain the job role and management conditions of the assignment. Particular emphasis was placed on the training and support they would receive. Continuation of their job classification status in their current bureau was also assured. With one or two exceptions, all those who volunteered were accepted for the role. In the first year of school improvement some 54 field representatives were available to provide assistance to the 78 Wave I school districts. In fact, many of the Wave I district superintendents requested that specific PDE staff serve as their field representatives. The department was able to meet over half of these assignment requests from the pool of volunteers. In the second year (Wave II) 22 new volunteer field representatives were added to this technical assistance cadre. Thus, a total of 76 field representatives was available to assist the 124 new Wave II districts along with the Wave I districts.

Based on progress to date, PDE experiences support the literature in Chart 2, Part 2. Staff from many different PDE divisions and units were successful in the technical assistance role. PDE's experiences also support the assertion that there appears to be no "science of selection" for the field agent role. PDE would caution others involved in selecting technical assistance staff in similar contexts that it is important to (1) clarify the role, (2) assure the job security and job classification status of staff volunteering for the role, (3) promote and deliver on the staff development or training aspects of the experience, (4) provide, where possible, for choice of assignment to districts, and (5) emphasize

the social reward and intellectual stimulation aspects of the role. All five of the above points required attention.

Origin and location of technical assistors. The literature citations in Chart 2, Part 3 emphasize the importance of utilizing linkers/technical assistors who are most homophilous with the target group culture and who are most proximate to the target group. The partnership aspect of the Pennsylvania technical assistance network attended in part to both of these prescriptions. The network at present consists of 76 PDE Harrisburg-based field representatives, 36 intermediate unit (IU) school improvement advisors located in 29 IUs, geographically distributed within the state, and 75 staff from various institutions of higher education (IHEs) located across the state.

The notion of PDE, Intermediate Unit and IHE staff acting in a coordinated and focused support role to districts is new in the state. Each have acted in service support roles, in various capacities, to Pennsylvania school districts for many years and each have generally been well received in many parts of the state. For example, intermediate unit curriculum specialists have offered a range of assistance services to districts in their respective areas. Select IHE staff have generally offered data processing and consultant services. PDE made a special attempt to involve both the intermedicate unit and the IHE staff in the network to add to its effectiveness and responsiveness.

Overall, this team approach to technical assistance is expected to work as follows. Depending on its disposition to external assistance, each district can potentially draw upon the services of a PDE field representative, an IU school improvement advisor and an IHE school

improvement coordinator. The field representative formally coordinates interaction among the team members and between the team and the district. Operationally speaking however, the district controls its interaction with the team. District school improvement coordinators are free to interact with the team member(s) with whom they are most comfortable.

Suggested training. PDE established two major foci for training: internal staff development training of PDE, IU and IHE staff to facilitate the implementation of their technical assistance roles; and external orientation, or training of district personnel to facilitate their successful participation in the school improvement effort. The literature and research cited in Chart 2, Part 4 stresses a number of training "shoulds": acquisition of basic program knowledge, utilization of concrete experiences and materials, focus on organizational change issues, focus on role clarification, attention to interpersonal skills, involvement of experienced field-based staff in the design and delivery of training, and the focus of training on immediate problems and issues. By and large PDE attempted to attend to each of the training "shoulds" where possible.

Chart 2, Part 4 outlines the dual focus of the training and orientation sessions conducted by PDE in 1980 and 1981. In addition, Appendix B provides a more detailed listing of the orientation and training sessions conducted by PDE staff in 1980-81. As might be expected, improvements in training and orientation in year two were made on the basis of year one experiences. Year one training and orientation sessions did not have the benefit of either PDE or LEA staff experienced

in the proposed school improvement and technical assistance process. In the second year of training and orientation, however, Wave I district staff were called on to participate in Wave II orientation sessions in order to share their experiences with the 124 new districts about to commence the process. Similarly, a cadre of experienced Wave I field representatives utilized simulations and structured exercises to provide experience-based training for their new Wave II counterparts.

Organization, Management and Implementation Considerations

Considerations and practices regarding organizational design or structure and network conceptualization, startup, and maintenance will be discussed in this section.

Suggested organizational design or structure. The literature and research cited in Chart 3, Part 1 indicate that from an organizational perspective the effectiveness of technical assistance efforts depend on achieving the right balance between size and organizational complexity. Organizational units conducive to "family" operations were recommended as being the most effective. The literature and research also recommended the development of a core leadership unit to conceptualize, implement, interpret, adapt, administer, and provide continuous support for the improvement and technical assistance efforts. PDE staff were faced with the task of operationally defining these prescriptions in the context of an improvement effort that was projected to involve some 500 school districts and 150 to 200 field representatives over a five year period. The course taken by PDE in consideration of these recommendations is cited in Chart 3, Part 1 and discussed briefly in the following text.

Shortly after the initiation of the LRPSI process and the technical assistance network in 1980, PDE management recognized the need for a permanent administrative and development core-group to continue to lead, develop and monitor the implementation of the LRPSI process and the technical assistant network. Accordingly, eight members of the school improvement task force accepted assignments, six as members of the PDE School Improvement Administrative Division (SIAD) in the new Bureau of School Improvement, one as coordinator for the development of the IHE partnership role, and one as information specialist for the unit. SIAD staff assumed both administrative and program development responsibilities regarding the LRPSI process and technical assistance network operations. Administratively, each SIAD staff served in year one as a regional director for one of six school improvement administrative LEA regions and worked with 8 to 10 field representatives assigned to these regions. The field representatives met regularly in regional groups with their assigned SIAD regional directors for programmatic training, two-way information sharing, problem solving and role clarification -- thus promoting an intra-organizational structure conducive to "family" operations. The SIAD regional directors served as "the interpreters" of the LRPSI process and guidelines of the field representative role, for the field representatives with whom they worked. Additionally, one SIAD staff member acted as "interbureau liaison," assuming responsibility for communication and coordination of SIAD operations within PDE.

From a program implementation and development perspective, respective SIAD staff were responsible for: the development and administration of

internal (technical assistance network) and external (LEAs) orientation and trainin sions; the promotion and development of community involvement strategies for LRPSI, the continued development and documentation (see Appendix C) of field representative roles and interactions with LEAs; the continued development or operationalization of various aspects of the Long-Range Planning for School Improvement (LRPSI) process; the development, with PDE evaluation staff, of an evaluation design for LRPSI; and the continued development of LRPSI information and technical resource materials for use by both LEA and technical assistance network partners. As a part of their leadership role, SIAD staff chaired one or more internal and/or external task forces related to the respective program implementation and development functions cited above.

State plans called for the successive introduction of roughly a fifth of the state's school districts into the LRPSI process each year. In 1980, 78 districts started LRPSI and in 1981, 124 districts became involved. This increased both the SIAD and the technical assistance network work load. Thus, PDE management increased the SIAD group to 11 staff and the field representative group to 76. Ten administrative LEA regions were also formed in 1981. Each of the SIAD staff, most of whom had experience as a field representative, again assumed administrative responsibility in their role as regional directors for facilitating and monitoring the work of 7 or 8 field representatives.

Organizationally, SIAD staff report to the Director of the Bureau of School Improvement, who in turn, reports to the Commissioner of Basic Education who is a member of the Secretary of Education's Management Team.

SIAD staff have met since 1980 to conduct SIAD's affairs. The "interbureau liaison" staff person acts as a coordinator and arranges the SIAD agenda, conducts meetings and affects general interbureau liaison and communication. Estimates to date indicate that most SIAD staff spend about fifty percent of their time on regional matters in collaboration with their field representatives, and fifty percent on other school improvement matters.

Field representative meetings are held regularly, generally on Monday. During heavy preparation periods (i.e., beginning of a new Wave of district involvement and addition of new field representatives in LRPSI) the field representatives meet weekly. In less busy periods they meet bi-weekly or monthly. The agenda of successive meetings are often scheduled in cycles of three: a general large group information meeting; concurrent small group regional meetings to discuss regional issues and problems and exchange information; and a general large group skill-building meeting to address specific technical assistance functions, as noted in Chart V, Part 3. On the average, field representatives are expected to spend about 25 days a year or ten percent of their time in the field providing LRPSI assistance to districts, based on the two district per field representative average assignment figure.

System conceptualization, startup and maintenance. The conceptualization of the technical assistance network occurred developmentally and interactively along with the conceptualization of the long range planning for school improvement (LRPSI) process in late 1979 and early 1980. During that period, staff of the 25 member PDE school improvement task

force worked on four major conceptual fronts represented by the following committees: the PDE development work group (charged with designing and developing the school improvement process); the PDE roles work group (responsible for operationalizing the technical assistance component of the effort); the PDE training work group (responsible for the identification, development and delivery of appropriate training/orientation sessions for all aspects of the state effort); and the PDE higher education work group (charged with operationalizing higher education's role in the developing statewide school improvement and technical assistance effort).

To a large extent, the conceptual work of the latter three work groups or committees were contingent upon the progress of the development group and the formulation of "the school improvement process." After extensive work and deliberation, PDE task force staff proposed a school improvement process that: (1) systematically incorporated several ongoing state programs: (2) adapted a number of the process components of the Pennsylvania Research and Development Utilization process, and (3) was broad in scope. The accompanying technical assistance effort, therefore, had to be more comprehensive than anything previously proposed by the state and totally coordinated with the LRPSI process.

A number of issues were debated in the course of developing the improvement process: local versus state targeted improvement priorities, broad versus discrete domain of improvement priority areas; maintenance versus development focus; regulatory versus service orientation; bureaucratic versus professional strategies; responsive versus proactive stance,

district versus school focus; imposition versus ownership; teacher proof versus teacher managed; school proof versus school managed; compliance versus commitment; partnership versus imposition; and open versus closed improvement process. The underlined alternatives represent the state's orientation regarding the school improvement initiative. In some instances the state supported both positions but from differing perspectives: (e.g., development in new priority areas and maintenance of effective programs...and, proactive promotion of the state initiated LRPSI process while providing responsive implementation assistance to address locally identified priorities).

Similarly, the following issues were considered in developing the technical assistance component of the state improvement effort: short-term versus long-term assistance; single strategy versus multiple strategy assistance; limited versus comprehensive assistance goals; dissemination versus technical assistance; mandatory versus voluntary assistance system; autonomous versus coordinated assistance system; individual versus team (partners) approach; proactive versus responsive style; capacity building versus knowledge utilization; specialist versus generalist; problem-solving versus solution advocacy/implementation; autonomy versus control of field agents; and networking versus hierarchical approach. Again, the underlined alternatives represent the state's policy regarding the technical assistance network. By design the network provided for both generalist field representative and intermediate unit advisors) and specialists (select PDE staff, intermediate unit advisors and higher education coordinators) services and accommodated both

reactive and proactive assistance styles. Technical assistance with the implementation of LRPSI was the central focus of the network but dissemination of validated and non-validated programs was also seen as a priority goals to be developed by the network.

In addition to the background information on the conceptualization process cited above, Chart 3, Part 2 provides an outline which crosswalks relevant prescriptions from the literature and research with specific PDE network design features related to technical assistance system conceptualization, communications, funding, startup and maintenance. Among the design features that are of worthy of note are: (1) that LRPSI is a state mandated "bottom-up" improvement process; (2) the planned correspondence between the school/district improvement steps and the content of the technical assistance services available to districts; (3) the systematic use of a variety of modes of communications; (4) the policy of long term face-to-face assistance to districts; (5) the state funding provided districts, intermediate units and institutions of higher education to facilitate both district and technical assistance network implementation activities; (6) the widespread involvement of PDE staff as field representatives; (7) the regional small group support structure developed to provide technical and psychological support to field representatives; (8) the systematic, widespread introduction and promotion of the improvement effort (LRPSI process, technical assistance network, training and orientation sessions and resources); (9) the systematized entry process developed to facilitate the assistance process; (10) the incremental implementation of the overall process; (11) the developmental nature of

the district LRPSI process and the state technical assistance partnership concept; and (12) the continued support and visibility given to both the LRPSI process and the technical assistance partners by PDE management.

The current membership of the technical assistance network is presented in Appendix D along with the most recent listing of IHE/district pairings for school improvement. Seventy-six PDE field representatives and thirty-six intermediate unit school improvement advisors are active in the network. In addition, 75 colleges or universities have appointed school improvement coordinators. Twenty-five of these institutions and their coordinators are currently involved in school improvement pairing relationships with a total of 31 Wave I and 64 Wave II districts. Appendix E details the colleges/universities-districts partnership process for school improvement. The kinds of services involved in some of the newly formed IHE-district partnerships include:

- community priority probe data analyses and computer services
- organizational development techniques
- processes for goal definition, clarification and analysis
- item-by-item analyses of current testing data
- evaluation services for staff development programs
- workshops on instruction
- needs assessment data collection
- data-based decision-making
- kindergarten curriculum development related to the 12 Goals of Quality Education.

Support System Considerations

The development of information and resource materials, and a resource

system will be addressed in this section.

Products, information and materials support. A task force concern during the development of the school improvement initiative was what materials in support of the initiative should be developed, when, by whom, covering what content, in what format? The answers to these questions were not immediately apparent and became known over time as task force work progressed.

Several initial information products were developed as a direct or indirect by-product of task force work. The publications, The School Improvement Program: an Overview of Its Developing Shape and the LRPSI Guidelines and Instructions were developed by task force staff to guide Wave I school improvement efforts. An internal communication memo series, "Notes from the School Improvement Desk" evolved to facilitate internal administrative communications among SIAD, field representative and other PDE staff throughout 1980. The School Improvement Update, a regular newsletter to communicate with all LRPSI participants was initiated in mid-1980. An additional publication, Relation of Middle States to LRPSI was developed cooperatively by Middle States and SIAD staff in 1980 as a result of numerous questions from the field concerning the nature of the interface between the new LRPSI process and the Middle States Evaluation procedure for school accreditation. All in all, a substantial set of guideline materials and communication publications were developed in support of the LRPSI process in 1980 just prior to and during the implementation of Wave I of LRPSI. It bears noting that the majority of SIAD staff time in May-December, 1980, was consumed by the day-to-day tasks and problems involved in implementing Wave I of LRPSI.

In December, 1980, the initial demands of implementation subsided and SIAD staff found time to address systematically materials and information support needs identified as a result of Wave I experiences. In January, 1981, work was initiated on a comprehensive information and resource guide for LRPSI. A representative advisory committee of SIAD staff, field representatives, intermediate unit advisors, higher education coordinators and district LRPSI coordinators was formed to contribute to the quality and utility of the materials. After reviewing the first drafts of the proposed comprehensive guide, the advisory group and staff decided to develop a "series of information guides" for use by all personnel involved in the process (local district, state, intermediate unit and higher education staff) and a "series of resource guides" primarily for use by the technical assistance partners. The series of guides was designed to provide background information on long-range planning and the school improvement process; general suggestions for carrying out long-range planning for school improvement; and suggested resources and models for each of the process steps. The information presented was based on field development and experience with local school districts. As such, the guides provided a practical and realistic base of knowledge for school districts involved in LRPSI. Overall, the series of guides was designed to provide the information necessary for local educators to move fom a basic awareness regarding LRPSI to a significant level of operational knowledge. Chart 4, Part 1 outlines the information products and guides developed in support of LRPSI.

The following "information guides" were shared with Wave I and Wave II districts in the spring of 1980. The Revised LRPSI Guidelines and Instructions specified what was to be submitted to the department as evidence that the school district and its buildings had engaged in LRPSI. The guidelines described the desired outcomes of LRPSI in five major areas: (1) Educational Programs and Services; (2) School District Management; (3) Personnel Development; (4) Community/Staff Involvement; and (5) Non-district Support Services. Twenty-one items which comprise districts' reporting requirements for the LRPSI process are also presented and defined in the guidelines.

The LRPSI Overview Guide addressed the broad purposes of LRPSI, provided an overall picture of its operation, outlined the key steps in the process, and described the technical assistance support available from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, intermediate units, and colleges and universities.

The LRPSI Process Guide moved the educator from an overview of the key steps to a more specific description of basic tasks. Using a sequence of primary activities and basic tasks as a framework, references are made to alternative approaches, resources, and factors to consider while implementing LRPSI.

The series of LRPSI "resource guides" was developed to provide information to (1) help technical assistance partners assist school districts with specific planning, implementation and evaluation steps; and (2) promote and organize a resource sharing process among the partners. Appendix F presents a sample of the first three sections of LRPSI Resource

Guide 3: Programs and Services Needs Assessment. The resource guides describe the specific LRPSI "step" involved, outline possible district variations in the implementation of the "step," suggest possible technical assistance partner roles, answer questions likely to be asked by districts, provide examples of district work and products related to the "step," offer planning guides and worksheets, include an activities checklist for the "step," and cite other available resources.

The first three resource guides have been completed and were shared with the technical assistance partners to facilitate their asssistance activities in support of Wave II districts. The remaining resource guides are targeted for completion in 1982, and should impact assistance efforts planned for Waves III, IV and V as well as the LRPSI recycle efforts of Waves I an II. The technical assistance staff who received the guides were encouraged to share the information in the guides with school districts staff, as districts either expressed interest in the information or demonstrated a need for it.

The key points to be made regarding the resource guides are: they were developed with extensive field (user and client) input; they incorporate exemplary examples from districts that have participated in the process; they suggest and reinforce appropriate technical assistance roles; they are flexible in their implementation; and they are developmental in nature -- they are not finished products.

Resource System Support. PDE staff planned to coordinate and tailor the services of the developing PDE resource center with the LRPSI and technical assistance process. An initial consideration was whether the

resource center would focus on technical/product information services or human resource services. As is noted in Chart 4, Part 2 the resource center was designed to provide both lines of service.

The resource center is acquiring information and process-related materials from both local and national sources that is of use to field representatives assisting districts with the steps in LRPSI. In addition, the resource center maintains the Pennsylvania Education Resource File (PERF) which was developed at the suggestion of and with the assistance of school improvement task force staff. The computerized PERF file contains documents, human resources and promising educational practices pertinent to both the problem solving improvement "process" and potential solutions to affect desired "improvements."

A second consideration was whether districts would have direct or mediated access to the resource center. It was decided that districts would have mediated access through the field representatives providing support with LRPSI. The resource center is viewed as the primary information source for field representatives and the field representatives have been acquainted with the services it can provide.

A final consideration was whether the resource center should disseminate R&D-based or craft knowledge products. Again, the answer was both. The resource center has access to extensive R&D-based materials through Research and Information Services for Education (RISE) which houses the state's NDN facilitator. The department also recently completed a survey of successful practices and activities in local districts which it plans to share with districts through the resource center. Overall, the

resource center is considered to be an active and essential component of the school improvement initiative in Pennsylvania.

Evaluation Considerations

This section will outline the general design proposed for the evaluation of LRPSI.

Major evaluation concerns. The literature cited in Chart 5, Part 1 suggests that the initial evaluation of a technical assistance system focus on providing useful information about program process as well as results. In effect, a formative evaluation is recommended. The technical assistance system's goals, procedures, methods and activities should be documented and an appraisal made of the degree to which specific assistance procedures were carried out and specific goals were achieved. Recommendations can then be made for modifying activities or procedures to facilitate the accomplishment of specified objectives or goals.

In brief, there is a central need to delineate specifically what is planned in the way of technical assistance, to what end. The next step is to ascertain if what was planned was indeed carried out as intended. The final step is to evaluate the affect of the process or assistance on the recipient of the assistance. This summative evaluation step asks if improvements in schools occurred and if changes in districts'/schools' problem solving procedures occurred.

Examination of the outline of the design proposed for the evaluation of PDE's school improvement effort (Chart 5, Part 1) indicates that both process and impact evaluations are planned. The major components to be evaluated from a process or formative evaluation perspective are the

guidelines, the field representatives, the technical assistance network, the resource center, the orientation and training sessions, the district registration process, the utilization of Educational Quality Assessment data, and the fiscal support process. The impact evaluation questions examine districts' satisfaction with technical assistance, degree of institutionalized cyclic improvement planning exhibited by districts and degree of student growth in targeted improvement areas.

The school improvement evaluation design is currently being implemented. Preliminary evaluation results from the user survey generally reflected favorably on the utility of the guidelines and the effectiveness of the technical assistance partners. The evaluation timeline calls for study of the resource center and the field representatives' assistance level in 1982.

Update on School Improvement and The Technical Assistance Network in Pennsylvania

In the two-and-one half years since planning for school improvement was initiated in Pennsylvania, two waves of school districts have commenced the improvement process and plans are in progress to commence with yet a third wave of districts in the spring of 1982.

To date, the first 78 districts have now essentially completed "action plans" for program and management changes they expect to make over the next few years. The plans have resulted from a critical review of building-level and district-level information under the long range planning for school improvement (LRPSI) process. Analyses of the plans submitted to PDE by Wave I districts in September 1981, revealed a variety

of approaches to the planning guidelines. In some cases, the planning process has been an effective vehicle to structure much needed community involvement in those districts that chose to re-examine the use of buildings because of declining enrollment. In other cases, the emphasis was on curriculum improvement. Overall, emphasis in responding to the guideline items has varied depending on the local needs identified during LRPSI preparation.

In the spring of 1981, the second group (Wave) of 124 school districts began the school improvement process under LRPSI. The Wave II districts were provided a series of orientation workshops, followed by administrative planning sessions in June. Continued technical assistance was provided to districts to assist them in organizing, planning and implementing their improvement efforts. Long-range plans from Wave II districts will be submitted to the Department of Education in September 1982.

At present the department is preparing for the start of Wave III. Overall, 150 Wave III districts have been identified and it is expected that close to 50 new field representatives will be added to the existing cadre of 76, to provide assistance to the increased number of districts. Wave III's initial improvement plans are due in September, 1983. The plans from the remaining Waves of districts are due in 1984 and 1985, respectively.

In the past two years the technical assistance partners provided districts, on request, a broad range of assistance. For example, assistance was provided with: clarification of LRPSI guidelines and

requirements; development of needs assessments; provision of needs assessment materials and community involvement information; review of plans; utilization and interpretation of EQA test results; development of priority setting procedures; action plan development; development of community surveys; general timeline and plan development; and statistical analyses and data processing. The preliminary results of the recent evaluation "user survey" indicated that the assistance provided by the technical assistance network has generally been very well received by districts. The information guides developed for LRPSI were also viewed as quite useful.

It also bears noting that the department initiated two pilot projects in 1981 to explore the feasibility of (1) bringing the state's vocational-technical schools into the LRPSI planning process and (2) incorporating program planning for special education into the district LRPSI process. At present pilot work with eight area vocational-technical education institutions (AVTS) is progressing to test the utility of the LRPSI process for AVTS and to find the best ways to coordinate AVTS planning with school district planning. Similarly, seven volunteer Wave II districts are involved in a pilot of procedures for including special education planning in the LRPSI process and are providing feedback to SIAD staff.

In the coming year state staff plan to:

- continue to provide inservice training for the technical assistance staff
- continue to provide technical assistance to Wave I, II and III district staff engaged in LRPSI

- continue to develop and refine the resource center to support the school improvement process
- continue to develop "resource and guidelines" booklets to facilitate all aspects of the school improvement process
- continue to operationally define and refine all aspects of the school improvement initiative based on feedback from the participating districts
- maintain the funding base for the school improvement effort.

Regarding the latter point, the state advisory committee for federal block grants recently recommended that the department continue to fund school districts involved in LRPSI, and intermediate units and colleges/universities involved in providing technical assistance to districts in support of LRPSI. It was recommended that a portion of the state's share of the block grant monies be set aside for that purpose.

Summary and Reflections

In summary it appears that the literature and research has much to contribute regarding prescriptive information pertinent to the prospective design and implementation of a technical assistance network or system. The literature and research provided many general suggestions pertinent to the design areas addressed in this paper. How one operationally defines and implements these suggestions is another matter. The intent of the present paper was to provide a relatively comprehensive documentation and analysis of the considerations involved in the development and implementation of a technical assistance network for school improvement, juxtaposed with and presented in relation to, the available literature and research data on technical assistance, linking agentry and change. Hopefully, the design questions and considerations described in the paper will

provide a framework of use to others regarding the development, implementation and evaluation of a technical assistance system, from both a practical operational perspective and a theoretical perspective.

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COMPENDIUM OF CHARTS 1-5:

-- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DESIGN QUESTIONS --

PRESCRIPTIONS FROM THE LITERATURE/RESEARCH

AND

RELATED COMPONENTS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NETWORK

Chart 1. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ROLE DEFINITION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 1

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT FORM, TYPE AND STYLE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Major Conceptualizations of Technical Assistance or Linker Roles and Functions View Technical Assistors as:

- Resource linkers, process helpers, solution givers and catalysts (Havelock, 1973)
- Resource finders, process helpers and solution givers (Piele, 1975)
- Front-end-roles (product peddlers, information linkers, program facilitators, process enablers, provocateur/doers) and back-end-roles (resource arrangers, information linkers, technical assistors, action researchers, capacity builders) (Crandall, 1977)
- Resource finder, process helper, solution giver and generalist/communicator (Butler and Paisley, 1978)

An Empirical Study Found that Linker Activities Clustered into Three Main Roles:

- Communicator...Tells client groups about potentially useful resources programs, information. (One way spread of information.) Know data bases and client groups. Has skills in communication, marketing and program implementation
- Resource Linker...Provides client with valid information relevant to specific need. (Two way exchange of information.) Know data bases and how to access them. Has skills in problem definition, search negotiation, and retrieval
- Facilitator...Assist client in resolving problems or completing tasks by providing valid and relevant information and technical assistance. (Two way collaborative improvement activity.) Knows data bases and how to access them. Has skills in planning, problem solving, implementation, communication, evaluation, simulation, etc. (Madey, 1979; and Roberts, 1980)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

Technical Assistance Network

- Technical assistance for school improvement is the organization and delivery of human and material resources. It is designed and defined to meet those needs identified by a local education agency as necessary to support the delivery of school services.
- The organization of the technical assistance network will provide a systematic process by which school districts and their schools can receive services. This planned partnership should reduce fragmentation and improve the supportive value and resulting impact of technical assistance to our school districts and their schools.
- The technical assistance network involves four basic partners. These include the Department, intermediate units, institutions of higher education, and other local education agencies. Each of the partners has the responsibility of synchronizing its resource system to the technical assistance requirements of the district in need.
- The school districts's role of identifying technical assistance requirements will come from its own analyses. If no assistance is needed, none is required to be delivered by the partners. If, however, services are requested, it is expected that this technical assistance network will provide the service. The degree to which this is systematic and correlative to the school district and its schools, is the degree to which accuracy of need is identified by the local district.

Field Representative

- The PDE school improvement field representative will be the primary contact between the Department and the school district and its school(s). The individual will provide assistance at the local district by working closely with an intermediate unit school improvement advisor(s) and/or a representative from participating colleges and universities.

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Decisions by Technical Assistance Staff:

- Two decisions constantly facing technical assistors involve: (1) whether to act as specialists or generalists, and (2) whether to be directive or responsive. The former decision appears to rest mostly with assistors' given areas of expertise in the context of specific client problem situations. Decisions regarding assistance style, directive or responsive seem to vary as a function of both assistor personality and experience. More experienced assistors tend to be less hesitant in assuming a directive style

  (Patrick, McCann and Whitney, 1981)

- The assistance of external linking agents increased the impact of the program on the school as a whole and the predicted continuation of aspects of the problem solving process. Schools with intensive linking agent involvement, and initiating -- rather than reacting -- linkers rated highest on school outcomes. The involvement of a variety of other external consultants was also important to school improvement, particularly in the area of training for implementation received from program developers and district specialists

  (Louis, et. al., 1980)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

- The PDE field representative will also bear responsibility for insuring that necessary technical assistance is made available at the local district either by providing the assistance personally or through a brokerage arrangement with other department staff, with intermediate units, or with higher education institution representatives.

Role of the Field Representative

- As the School Improvement Program has evolved, the Department has placed a substantial and increasing amount of responsibility for the conduct of school improvement in the hands of the field representative. It seemed clear from the beginning that frequent and continued attention from a specific Department representative was highly desirable for the school district. In fact, such attention was probably the only way the Department could influence the local district to carry out a truly localized improvement effort that would lead to implementation of improved programs and practices.

- As the importance of the role of the field representative has become clear, so also has the definition of the role become more refined. Since the major goal of School Improvement field operations is the translation of the Long Range Planning for School Improvement process into a locally meaningful improvement effort, the essence of the field representative's duty becomes the adjustment --adjudication, perhaps -- of PDE rules and procedures and the intent and direction of local school district efforts. The adjustment process must be accomplished in such a manner that the best interests of both parties are preserved and promoted.

- To be able to effectively carry out the field representative assignment, three important general understandings must emerge. It is crucial that the field representative:

  1. Develop a thorough understanding of the LRPSI process, especially the spirit and intent behind the process.

  2. Develop a thorough knowledge of the district with special attention to its problems and resources, and

  3. Develop a thorough knowledge of state and local non-district resources available to support LRPSI activities.

Chart 1. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ROLE DEFINITION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 1 (Continued)

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT FORM, TYPE AND STYLE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

- More specifically the field representative must:

  a. Establish and maintain a productive dialog with the district superintendent, LRPSI coordinator, and key administrators and teachers within the district.

  b. Establish and develop a positive working relationship with the intermediate unit, school improvement advisor and other key intermediate unit staff.

  c. Identify and establish a positive working relationship with higher education institution School Improvement coordinators and key IHE staff serving the local area; and

  d. Using PDE convenor powers, promote continued, positive communication among IU, IHE and school district representatives throughout the School Improvement process.

- It is assumed that the field representative will promote the best use of all available resources throughout the School Improvement process. Working under the philosophy that the most desired service is the most local, the field representative should encourage the local district to use its own talents and resources whenever possible, use intermediate resources when appropriate and available, and call upon local colleges and universities when the situation warrants. Fundamental to the role of the field representative, however, is the understanding that the field representative -- as the Department representative -- will assure that all needed support assistance will be available from local service agencies, the field representative will either provide the service directly or secure the assistance from the Department or some other non-local source.

- The role of the field representative is varied and challenging. He/she is asked to serve as:

  1. Provider of direct process assistance with the tasks and routines of completing the Long Range Plan for School Improvement

(i.e., assignment of needs, program action planning, program implementation and program evaluation).

2. Broker for assistance in areas of need the school district encounters with the School Improvement processes of needs assessment, action planning, implementation and evaluation.

3. Promoter of communication among school improvement partners as well as providing a direct communication between the local school district and the PDE.

4. Monitor of the School Improvement process at the local district with special attention to noting when the local district encounters difficulty with meeting schedules and completing activities; and

5. Reviewer of the LRPSI.

- The monitoring and review elements of the field representative duties are distinctively different from the very similar process assistance roles shared by all members of the school improvement assistance partners. It is not intended that the monitoring and review responsibilities of the field representative place him/her in the position of being a police person. The reason for monitoring the program at the local district is primarily intended to allow the Department -- through the field representative -- to provide needed assistance to the district as soon as the need emerges. In the review process, the elements of value judgment have been purposefully removed. The field representative will simply certify that the LRPSI is complete -- not that it is good or not good. The fundamental premise behind the review process is that the local district understands best what its needs are and that an LRPSI which addresses those needs is best judged for quality by the local district.

Role of Intermediate Unit School Improvement Advisor

- Intermediate Units provide programs and services structured in such a way that certain outcomes have been identified as viable, potential support for the school improvement effort. These outcomes are perceived to not only augment the school improvement effort but also to extend the visibility and promote better utilization of the expertise and resources of each individual intermediate unit.

Chart 1. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ROLE DEFINITION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 1 (Continued)

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT FORM, TYPE AND STYLE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

- These outcomes are: (1) more extensive use of IU consultative services; (2) identification of an IU resource bank of school improvement procedures and materials through a brokerage mechanism with the PDE and R&D laboratories; (3) IU capacity to become a strong link in a chain of information dissemination; and (4) the IU involvement of interfacing with PDE and institutions of higher education for the purpose of helping to build a strong partnership of assistance to local districts for improving schools.

Role of College and University School Improvement Coordinator

- The new assistance role includes voluntary pairings of school districts, colleges and universities which will benefit all partners. Participating colleges and universities will appoint coordinators for college and university assistance services and will evaluate constantly the quality of these services. Finally, opportunities for school-site experiences will be created for continuing development of education faculties.

Chart 1. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ROLE DEFINITION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 2

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT INTENSITY AND SCOPE OF ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

General Intensity and Scope Suggestions

- Do not overcommit personal resources such as energy and time
- Focus on a limited number of clients, at least 25 percent fewer than can be "comfortably" accommodated at any one time
- Provide repeated in-person transactions with the client staff (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- Follow through with frequent and regular meetings (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- Results from the RDU study concluded that the most effective field agents were those who spent a major portion of their time in their field agent roles...hence supporting the employment of technical assistors in full-time roles, when and where possible (Rosenblum, 1982)
- The amount of time RDU linkers devoted to their roles varied across RDU projects, but fell into three approximately equal clusters: 5 to 12 percent, 18 to 50 percent, and 80 to 100 percent. Differences also existed in the number of sites for which they were responsible, with project averages ranging from two to nine. Not surprisingly, there were great qualitative differences in the involvement of linkers with their client sites, depending on the extent of their responsibilities. For example, a linker who spent 50 percent of his/her time on RDU-related activities working with seven or eight school districts was in a very different situation from one who worked 95 percent of the time with only four schools. Such differences had considerable impact on job-related activities (Moore, et. al., 1977)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

Evaluative Criteria Used to Decide Between Full-Time (Alternative 1) or Part-Time (Alternative 2) PDE Field Representative TA Delivery Systems

Ten key evaluation criteria seem relevant. To be successful, the PDE system must provide for:

1. Strong Institutional Support - Will individual organizational units support school improvement as a process? Support the linker as a person? *(W=3, R1=15, R2-21)
2. Strong Personal Commitment - Will the linker make a strong personal commitment to the success of the school improvement process? (W=3, R1=15, R2=21)
3. Broad-Based Staff Ownership - Will staff from the Department at large willingly support school improvement? (W=2, R1=8, R2=16)
4. Simplicity of Operation - Will the system be simple or will it require elaborate operating procedures? (W=3, R1=18, R2=15)
5. Flexible Formal and Informal Communication - Will information flow easily through formal channels and through person-to-person channels? (W=2, R1=6, R2=14)
6. Consistence - Will the client be dealing with the same contact person throughout the school improvement process? (W=3, R1=21, R2=15)
7. Cost Effectiveness - Will the system promote the maximum service delivery at least cost? (W-1, R1=7, R2=5)

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

General Intensity and Scope Suggestions

In the RDU Consortium Project managed by the Network, linking agent activity was typified by:

- A long-term relationship with sites that continues through the implementation stage
- Intensive work with four sites per linker
- Participation in establishing a multi-constituent problem-solving group
- A generalist, rather than a content-specific, set of skills
- Use of a rational problem-solving process
- Access to material and human resources via a substantial linkage system
- Sharing with an agency supervisor, a home based "partner" in the enterprise
- Value on quality of linkage service, rather than quantity of program adoptions
- Extensive documentation of linkage work
- Experimentation with the linking agent role (Taylor, 1979)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

8. Ease of Management - Will the system promote management control without elaborate supervisory structures? (W=1, R1=7, R2=5)

9. Highest Possible Level of Effort - Will the system allow the Department to invest sufficient resources to insure success of the school improvement process? (W=3, R1=12, R2=24)

10. Potential for Effective Quality Control - Will the system promote the flow of accurate information about quality of service delivered to clients? (W=1, R1=5, R2=5)

Totals: R1 = 112, R2=141

*Key: W = Weighting
R1 = Alternative 1 rating
R2 = Alternative 2 rating

PDE Policy

- The fundamental concept behind the school improvement field activity program asserts that there is a desirable level of interaction between the field representative and the local district. A further assertion is that the desirable level of contact varies with the phase of the school improvement process the district is undertaking. It is expected that the field representative, after getting to know the district, its resources and its problems, is the best judge of how much interaction is necessary. Based upon past experience and upon findings reported in the literature on the linking process, the rule of thumb for interaction suggests that the field representative visit the district once each month and that he/she contact the district one each week by phone.

- Generally, field representatives are assigned to work with two or three school districts although a few field representatives have volunteered to work with as many as six districts. On the average, field representatives are expected to spend 25 days a year (2-3) districts in the field.

Chart 1. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ROLE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 3

DESIGN QUESTION: SHOULD THE ROLE DEFINITION BE FORMAL AND STRUCTURED OR INFORMAL AND UNSTRUCTURED?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Job Descriptions and Formality

- The basic argument is that clarification of both what the job entails, through a written description, and of the organization status of the job and role occupant, should reduce personal anxiety and ambiguity for the role occupant. Our data suggest, however, that for field based boundary spanners, the potency of job formalization as a managerial strategy for reducing stress may be more limited. It is not significantly related to job satisfaction measures, nor to sense of efficacy. In addition, reported roles conflict tends to increase rather than decrease with formalization.
  (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)

- The technical assistance group (TAG) clarifies job responsibilities in writing and/or through clear shared understanding among TAG members (Moore, et. al., 1977)

- Ensure that all transactions between the intermediary and the client are coherent and coordinated with the general goals of the dissemination (school improvement) program (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)

- Provide opportunities for choice in the content and style of target group involvement (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)

- The types of formal training that were typically provided to educational linking agents and facilitators had little impact upon job satisfaction and performance. More important is the development of appropriate job descriptions and communication structures to reduce conflict between client and management expectations
  (Louis, et. al., 1980)

- Even a well explicated job definition does not remove all of the "fuzziness" surrounding a marginal role like that of a linking agent
  (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

Task Analysis of LRPSI Process

- PDE staff conducted a task analysis of the Long Range Planning for School Improvement (LRPSI) Process and outlined the specific activities LEAs might engage in regarding each step. PDE school improvement staff then outlined the specific services PDE field representatives might perform to assist LEAs with the major steps in the improvement process (see below).

SPECIFIC DUTIES IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

- In order to add an additional measure of description to the field representative's role, the following section has been designed to parallel the specific steps in the school improvement process as set forth in the LRPSI Process Guide. Each step from the Process Guide is stated and a list of suggested field representative activities is presented for each of the steps. The list of activities is to be considered as a suggestion and not as a complete and final statement.

STEP 1

PREPARE AND IMPLEMENT A DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN FOR LRPSI

-Clarify LRPSI process and requirements
-Clarify technical assistance services (PDE, IU, IHE)
-Negotiate technical assistance
-Obtain resources
-Provide examples of administrative plans
-Identify unique needs of the district
-Initiate and maintain frequent contact with the IU advisor and the college coordinator

STEP 2

ANALYZE BUILDING/DISTRICT PROGRAM AND SERVICES: STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

-Advise district on needs assessment models

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

The Consortium Linking Agent Role

The Consortium linking agent role was by no means predetermined or "set in concrete;" rather, it was viewed as an appropriate role for experimentation. No job description existed; and while the role for the first year was envisioned in terms of the problem-solving process steps, the second and third years were decidely open for individual interpretation. The 16 milestones, developed jointly by Consortium Central staff and the linkers, put some meat on the bones of the workscope by adding a few of the "whats," but none of the "hows." So how did linkers decide what to do? There were four major types of input to their role formulations:

- Consortium Central sketched the outline of the role by determining the goals, number of sites per linker, level of intensity, time period, resource pool, budget, and some tasks (such as documentation requirements)

- Each agency's mission, stance toward working with schools, agenda, staffing patterns, and so on provided the soil in which the Consortium linking agent role grew, affecting the direction in which it leaned

- Linkers themselves shaped the Consortium linking agent role to fit with their own skills, background experiences, styles of working, psychological needs and energy levels

- The sites to a great degree influenced the design of the role by their view of the linking agent role, their responses to the linker as a person and as a professional, their situational constraints, even their motivation for participating in the Consortium project. The role a single linker plays varies across sites, as can be seen in the studies

(Taylor, 1979)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

-Provide workshops on needs assessment techniques and strategies
-Assist in interpretation of EOA results
-Broker technical assistance in needs assessment
-Interpret LRPSI guidelines and requirements for needs assessment
-Solicit assistance, as needed, from PDE Resource Center
-Monitor district progress with needs assessment
-Assure district needs assessment procedures are consistent with LRPSI requirements
-Maintain frequent contact with IU advisor and IHE coordinator

STEP 2b

ANALYZE MANAGEMENT AREA STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

-Advise district on possible needs assessment strategies
-Provide workshops for district or group of districts with similar needs
-Broker technical assistance
-Interpret LRPSI guidelines and requirements
-Monitor district progress with Section II, LRPSI
-Assure district efforts are consistent with LRPSI requirements
-Maintain frequent contact with IU advisor and IHE coordinator

STEP 3

DEVELOP ACTION PLANS FOR PRIORITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, AND MANAGEMENT GOALS

-Broker technical assistance in priority goal area
-Assist district in developing evaluation design(s)
-Provide information regarding personnel development state-wide
-Provide information regarding availability of non-district support services
-Provide information regarding ongoing community involvement strategies
-Interpret LRPSI requirements in action planning
-Assist district with developing a locally meaningful action plan format
-Monitor district progress in preparing action plans
-Maintain frequent contact with IU advisor and IHE coordinator

Chart 1. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ROLE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 3 (continued)

DESIGN QUESTION: SHOULD THE ROLE DEFINITION BE FORMAL AND STRUCTURED OR INFORMAL AND UNSTRUCTURED?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

STEP 4

IMPLEMENT BUILDING AND DISTRICT ACTION PLANS

- Assist district with the implementation of action plans
- Assist district with securing financial and technical assistance resources needed to implement action plans
- Monitor district implementation efforts
- Maintain frequent contact with IU advisor and IHE coordinator

STEP 5

EVALUATE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES, REPORT AND RECYCLE

- Broker PDE technical assistance in designing evaluation program
- Secure assistance as needed in the conduct of district SI evaluation procedures
- Secure assistance as needed with interpretation of district SI evaluation data
- Interpret LRPSI evaluation requirements for district personnel
- Monitor district progress with SI evaluation
- Assist district with securing registration, if desired
- Maintain frequent contact with IU advisor and IHE coordinator

- The listing provided above is not intended to be a final listing. It is expected that as the field representative comes to know the district he/she serves, the importance of this or any such list will diminish and the true and accurate description of what needs to be done and what the field representative needs to do will emerge from the doing. With good professional judgment and an honest desire to help the local district resolve its problems, the field representative will find the school improvement process flowing naturally from step to step to a logical and worthwhile conclusion.

Chart 1. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ROLE DEFINITION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 4

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT STEPS OR STRATEGIES ARE INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTING A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, LINKER/FIELD AGENT ROLE?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Generic Linking Steps

- Engagement: initiation of a relationship between linker and client to build mutual understanding and trust
- Context Specification: conduct of dialogue with client system staff to build linker understanding of client system goals, operations, politics and needs
- Diagnosis: Linker-client identification of a priority client need and negotiation of linker assistance (information, products, direct or brokered services) to be rendered
- Collection/Translation: activities engaged in by linkers to access and prepare resources (information, products, expert assistance)for use by the client system
- Presentation: specific linker activities engaged in over-time to facilitate information usage by the client system... structured experiences, over-the-shoulder assistance, modeling, provision of materials or independent intervention
- Disengagement: linker termination of a particular cycle of assistance and/or renegotiation of new assistance tasks

(Patrick, McCann and Whitney, 1981)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

PDE Procedures Designed to Facilitate Linking Steps

- Engagement: a specific PDE field representative is assigned to each district. Opportunities for field representative interaction with LEA staff are systematically built into the initial orientation and planning sessions conducted by the state for LEAs
- Context Specification: field representatives are encouraged to review the previous long range plan(s) submitted by the district(s) to which they are assigned to obtain general background information on each district (All district long range plans are on file at PDE). Field representatives are also provided with current district profile data or information (census data, enrollments, attendance, withdrawals, graduates, vocational education, special education, professional personnel, support personnel, school buildings, finance, Title IVC, Title I, Executive Academies and EQA testing record) for familiarization purposes and for delivery to their respective districts for use in LRPSI planning
- Diagnosis: the LRPSI task analysis provided in Table 1.3 can be shared with district staff to facilitate diagnosis of district needs
- Collection/Translation: SIAD staff have prepared information and resourse guides regarding each major step in LRPSI, for use by TA partners, to (1) reduce the time technical assistance staff have to spend on collection and translation of information and resource materials, and (2) to introduce a measure of quality control in the process. TA staff have also received briefings on the various resource bases at their disposal.
- Presentation and Disengagement: Field Representatives and other TA partners are pretty much on their own in these two areas...

Chart 1. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ROLE DEFINITION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 5

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT GENERAL GUIDELINES EXIST REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ROLE?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

General Guidelines

- Identify and gain access to targets by means of the personal referral networks and informal communication channels existing within the client social system (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- Use in-person (preferably face-to-face) communications, with accompanying "hard copy" materials (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- Attend to and differentiate the organizational level most approximate to the intended locus of impact (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- Target the primary point of entry at the organizational level most proximate to the intended locus of impact (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- Provide for and secure prior informed concurrence of all administrative levels above the level of primary interface (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- Influential opinion leaders facilitate effective dissemination and utilization (Havelock and Havelock, 1973)
- To achieve utilization a "synergy" of combined, sequential and repeated messages pertaining to the innovation must be directed at the potential user (Havelock and Havelock, 1973)
- Resource persons must be able to simulate the user's problem-solving process (Havelock and Havelock, 1973)
- Effective utilization requires reciprocal feedback (Havelock and Havelock, 1973)
- Facilitators constantly clarify their role with members of the school community (Moore, et. al., 1977)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

PDE Practices

- In the first wave of the school improvement effort, close to half of the 78 districts involved asked that specific PDE staff members be assigned as their field representative. PDE complied in large part thus capitalizing on existing communication channels and social systems.
- The TA Network encourages face to face communications between TA partners and LEA staff. The designation of Intermediate Unit Advisors and Higher Education Coordinators as TA staff proximal to the LEAs further facilitates face to face interaction and capitalizes on existing communication channels and regional resources.
- Districts were asked to appoint coordinators for their school improvement efforts. In most cases these individuals were opinion leaders in the district (superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals and even a few teachers). TA Network staff establish and maintain primary communications, with district prior approval, with the designated district coordinators for school improvement.
- PDE has used a variety of approaches (interviews with all 78 Wave I superintendents, correspondence, newsletters, information guidelines and resource publications, summer workshops, teleconferences, presentations to administrators and teacher representatives, training sessions and news-releases) to repeatedly publicize the goals, procedures and timeline for the school improvement effort in Pennsylvania.
- Clarification of the role of TA Network partners (PDE field representatives, IU advisers and IHE coordinators) is part of the agenda of all PDE orientation and planning sessions conducted with LEAs.

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

- The technical assistance group (TAG) strongly emphasizes concrete assistance on immediate problems as a major aspect of its assistance efforts (Moore, et. al., 1977)
- Facilitators consciously control the formats for interaction with receivers of technical assistance (RTA's) (e.g., group meeting vs. individual interview) during the entry process (Moore, et. al., 1977)

Positively influential field agent features:

- As generalists they could respond to a wide range of interests
- As state employees, and therefore outsiders, they could be objective
- As previous teachers or administrators in the region, they were familiar with norms and customs which probably added to their credibility
- Their lack of power to mandate change minimized friction between themselves and practitioners (Sieber, Louis and Metzger, 1972)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

- The TA Network and support systems are geared toward providing concrete assistance with the immediate process problems facing LEAs with the school improvement process.
- Initial state and TA Network contacts with LEAs are state initiated and designed to facilitate the entry process.
- TA staff serve primarily in generalists roles.
- TA staff have no regulatory functions and operate in a client-centered capacity.

Chart 2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: STAFF SELECTION AND TRAINING

Part 1

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT SKILLS DO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE STAFF NEED?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Key Skills

- ...from a list of 16 ..the four which were picked by the majority of field agents as "most important" included: having the ability to communicate ideas in a clear, concise and persuasive manner; being sensitive to other people's moods and feelings; having the ability to get help when needed; and having the ability to work in different ways with different sites

  (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)

- Both linking agencies and linkers need to be sensitive to the fact that linking is a consultative process that relies heavily on a wide range of communication skills. Linking relies on five general sets of skills: (1) interpersonal communication and consulting skills to establish/maintain client relationships and to obtain information about client task environment, goals, and needs; (2) networking skills to span boundaries, develop information sources and obtain desired resources; (3) analytical information search, selection, management, analysis, and synthesis skills to access and process information quickly and efficiently; (4) creative information translation, bisociation and interpretation skills to translate varied sources of information and jargon into conceptual frameworks and language understandable and relevant to clients; (5) general educational skills to design the varied presentations needed to deliver information to clients in instructive, motivating and relevant ways

  (Patrick, McCann and Whitney, 1981)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

General Skills Required of Field Representatives

- Because of the wide differences in size and available administrative resources among school districts involved in the school improvement process, the school improvement field representative's role will vary with both the location and the stage of the school improvement process. School improvement field representatives will, however, generally require skills as:

  Resource Linkers
  1. conveying information,
  2. interacting among clients and resources (IU, IHE, PDE, etc.).

  Process Helpers
  1. providing leadership in the School Improvement Process.
  2. understanding the School Improvement Process and conveying this understanding to clients.
  3. acting as catalyst to facilitate client progress in the School Improvement Process.

  Solution Brokers
  1. acquiring knowledge of sources of R&D products available for school use.
  2. assisting clients in identifying and developing solutions to problems.
  3. providing technical assistance in adoption, implementation and evaluation of new programs or school improvements.

Key Assumptions

- Most PDE staff have had experience in stand-up field roles involving dissemination, clarification and/or technical support of specific PDE policies or mandate at one time or another. The assumption was made therefore, if one worked for the department in the first place, then one could assume with appropriate training the role of a school improvement field representative.
- PDE staff can act as brokers of the services and skills of others to facilitate LEA's school improvement efforts.

Chart 2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: STAFF SELECTION AND TRAINING

Part 2

DESIGN QUESTION: HOW ARE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE STAFF BEST SELECTED?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

General Information

- On the whole, it appears that many different types of individuals can move into a field agent position and survive -- even prosper -- and do some good for their clients (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)

- ...current data do not support a "science of selection" for the field agent role. The only personal characteristics of agents that emerge as significant are agent experience, and innovativeness. It is clear that managers of field agents should take care not to put individuals who are highly innovative -- i.e., creative, inquiring, independent, etc. -- into this type of role. These individuals find a role that is "behind the scenes" and low profile to be a burden, and they almost invariably annoy their clients (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)

- The recruitment, selection and training of staff is highly complex. Social action orientation (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

PDE Memo Eliciting Volunteers for Field Representative Role

January 30, 1981

Subject: School Improvement Field Representative Application

To: PDE Professional Staff not Currently Serving as School Improvement Field Representatives

From: Commissioners of Basic Education, Higher Education and Planning

- As the first year of the School Improvement Program comes to a close, plans for the second year, Wave II, become important. From our Wave I experience, we have learned that the one ingredient most important to the success of the program is the contribution of the PDE Field Representative. In almost every Wave I School, the sustained, sympathetic attention of the Field Representative has reduced uncertainty and confusion and has promoted effective and meaningful improvement efforts. Needless to say, we must provide PDE Field Representative assistance to Wave II school districts as they enter the program. To do so, we must select additional persons to serve as field representatives.

- PDE Field Representative will serve as the local school district's primary contact among three assisting partners in school improvement - the intermediate unit, the department, and participating colleges and universities. For purposes of planning, it is estimated that the Field Representative will visit the district approximately once per month and contact the district approximately once per week by phone. The actual levels of contact will, of course, vary with local need and conditions. In serving the district, the Field Representative will perform four basic tasks:

  a. Assist the school district in its four major school improvement activities (assessment of needs, program planning, program implementation, and program evaluation),

b. Serve as a broker to the local school district for PDE technical assistance resources,

c. Work closely with intermediate unit and college and university representatives to coordinate assistance to the school district, and

d. Monitor school district progress in school improvement for the PDE.

As other conditions of the assignment, the staff member will:

a. Remain at his/her physical location in the department,

b. Continue in his/her current job classification and pay grade,

c. Receive supervision by his/her current bureau director and/or division chief,

d. Negotiate, to the extent possible, his/her assignment to a particular cluster of school improvement districts,

e. Receive broad-based technical assistance and logistic support through the School Improvement Administrative Unit, the Director of the Bureau of School Improvement and the Commissioner of Basic Education,

f. Receive special training in school improvement processes,

g. Have confirmation in writing of the specifics of his/her school improvement assignment, and

h. Be relieved of regular assignments in an amount equal to school improvement duties,

i. Renew his/her school improvement assignment annually.

- The school improvement Field Representative role promises to be an exciting and highly rewarding experience. We hope you will find this to be an attractive opportunity. If you are interested in serving as a school improvement field representative, please complete and return the following statement of interest form to the Commissioner of Basic

Chart 2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: STAFF SELECTION AND TRAINING

Part 2 (Continued)

DESIGN QUESTION: HOW ARE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE STAFF BEST SELECTED?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

Education by February 14, 1981. Wave II assignments will be made by March 16, 1981.

To Commissioner of Basic Education

I am interested in serving as a Wave II School Improvement Field Representative. Please include my name among the list of candidates.

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____
(Bureau, Division, location)

PHONE_____

Chart 2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ROLE DEFINITION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 3

DESIGN QUESTION: WHERE SHOULD TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE STAFF COME FROM AND WHERE SHOULD THEY BE LOCATED?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Origin and Location of TA Staff

- Make use of change agents, interventionists, linkers, facilitators, intermediaries, assistance groups, advocates (or whatever their title!) who are most homophilous with the target subculture (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- Locating "linking agents" or facilitators in Intermediate Education Agencies proximate to the client schools facilitates effective service delivery and responsiveness. At the same time, it increases problems of project management (Louis, et al, 1977)
- The TAG develops strategies appropriate to its geographical relationship with respect to RTAs (Moore, et. al., 1977)
- Provide for choice among appropriate alternatives along dimensions such as process, style, and degree of involvement by the target group (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

Brief Description of TA Partnership and Partners

- Partnership: Refers to the effort initiated by the department of education to provide an effective working relationship among PDE/IU/SD/IHE, particularly in matters related to a district's long-range planning for school improvement. The partnership concept has been augmented in most cases by mini-meetings and contacts, among the partners working with given districts, prior to the conduct of PDE-sponsored Orientation or Planning Workshops for the districts.
- PDE SI Field Representative: A professional staff member of the Pennsylvania Department of Education who has been identified and trained to assist a school district with the general process of preparation, review, and implementation of its long range plan for school improvement, and who serves as primary department liaison for a school district regarding school improvement activities. Field representatives engage in direct process assistance, assistance brokerage, communication, progress monitoring and LRPSI review.
- IU SI Advisor: A person who has been identified by the intermediate unit's executive director to serve in consultant capacity to districts within that intermediate unit who request assistance in preparing and implementing their long range plans for school improvement, and who serves as liaison for the intermediate unit regarding school improvement activities. IU advisors engage in: direct process assistance, assistance brokerage and communication.
- IHE SI Coordinator: A person who has been identified to represent a particular college/university and to serve as liaison with school districts, intermediate units, and the department of education, for school improvement purposes. IHE coordinators engage in: direct process assistance, service brokerage, communication and pairing agreements.

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

College and University Assistance Role

- The college and university acceptance includes an obligation (a) to form pairing relationships, (b) to support a school improvement coordinator, (c) to evaluate services and (d) to promote college and university faculty development. The pairing relationship will be articulated in a letter of understanding between a district and a college/university and will include items such as contributed consultant days, the coordinator's role and related fiscal matters. The PDE committee planning technical assistance training sessions has been informed about the need for special topics which would help implement the college/university assistance role

- Colleges and universities involved in pairing relationships with school improvement districts will receive PDE funds to help support services requested by the district. IHE-District proposals will be solicited to distribute available funds.

Chart 2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: STAFF SELECTION AND TRAINING

Part 4

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT TRAINING IS SUGGESTED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE STAFF?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Training Considerations

- If conducting training activities, make use of concrete experiences, assignments, and materials (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- Perhaps the most useful training, however, was that which focused on more general aspects of the organizational change process, and on role clarification, and therefore opened up a variety of options for roles that agents could play on site (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)
- Provision of training is likely to be seen by role occupants as a sign of the organization's desire to attend to their needs -- a gesture that may be appreciated even when the content is not always "on target" (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)
- ...training usually emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge... However, the acquisition of skills -- especially interpersonal skills -- is equally important, is much more difficult, and occurs much less frequently than knowledge acquisition (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)
- ...training programs that were designed by the central projects had only modest impact upon the agent's job related attitudes...formal training tends to be selectively effective...the perceived usefulness of the training had no relationship to job attitudes (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)
- By the end of the project, the project director claimed that a major organizational lesson that he had learned was that linkers needed role clarification more than training (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)
- (Linkers) complained that they did not need counseling...but immediate assistance with content related questions (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)
- By the end of the second year of the project, other linkers out-stripped the central office as the most important source of assistance with the process aspects of their role (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

*Design of Orientation and Training Programs

- A staff development program in June of 1980 (internal training) for PDE, IU, IHE provided PDE field representatives, IU school improvement advisors, and IHE school improvement coordinators in-depth understanding of:

  -school improvement outcomes and process
  -research underpinning school improvement and the process of change
  -long-range planning requirements
  -the Educational Quality Assessment testing program
  -resources available to facilitate needs assessment, action planning, implementation planning, evaluation planning, and an opportunity to practice "consultant" skills
  -the Technical Assistance Network and clarification of the various partner roles.

- A staff development session for PDE field representatives in June, 1981, focused on the development of Technical Assistance Network staff skills regarding:

  -the LRPSI process
  -entry skills in working with districts
  -a simulation of the entry process in a school district -- highlighting TA partner roles, coordination and communication
  -a simulation of the provision of technical assistance to facilitate district administrative planning
  -discussion of the partnership process
  -regional problem-solving to coordinate and plan technical assistance.

- The Department designed and implemented: orientation and training programs for school districts and their school staffs involved in Waves I and II of school improvement (external training) and orientation and training programs for the Department, institutions of higher education, and intermediate unit staffs who assisted Wave I and II schools either by providing technical assistance or by "brokering" assistance.

- External training consisted of the design and delivery of one-day

orientation programs to provide school superintendents, school board members, and another member of the school district staff, with an overview of the Pennsylvania School Improvement Program, an in-depth presentation of the revised Long Range Planning Guidelines, and an opportunity to react to plans for summer planning workshops.

- Summer workshops (external training) for Wave I and II Districts brought together Wave I and II school principals and their staffs together with Department field representatives, intermediate unit advisors, and institutions of higher education coordinators to develop:

  -shared understanding of school improvement outcomes and process
  -shared understanding of long-range planning
  -specific action plans for implementing the school improvement process in specific districts
  -identify district training and technical assistance needs.

- As specific district training and technical assistance needs become known, the Department plans to design a series of Executive Academies which will be responsive to those needs.

- Other on-going inservice activities will be planned to meet the evolving needs of local districts and TA staff.

*See Appendix B for additional information on orientation and training.

Chart 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 1

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGNS OR STRUCTURES ARE RECOMMENDED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NETWORKS?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Organizational Structure

- Effective operations seem to depend on a balance between size and organizational complexity. Small is better. Staff size conducive to "family" operation. (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- "...what the agent brings to the jobs will have less impact on his/her job attitudes than the characteristics of the organizations in which they work...The findings of this report...suggest that, on the whole, the need to "retool" existing staff will not pose a problem to the expansion of boundary spanning roles in educational service agencies, so long as important features of organizational design and management are attended to. (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)
- ...there is some evidence to suggest that agent's perceptions of support and influence are a function of the organizational design and actual behaviors of those who managed the project. (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981).
- Avoid organizational complexity. (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)

Administrative Structures

- The founding leaders form a core staff that subscribes to the basic assumptions of the initial strategy formulation and who have had sufficient experience in the settings in which assistance is to be provided to develop creative but realistic notions of how the strategy can be refined. (Moore, et. al., 1977)
- The leadership establishes itself as the legitimate interpreter of the nature of the TAG strategy and of the limits it implies, while facilitating the adaptation of the strategy based on the analysis of TAG experience (Moore, et. al., 1977)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

Organization and Support

- PDE field representatives are organized into small 8 to 10 person regionally-based groups, led administratively by 10 regional directors and an interbureau liaison coordinator who comprise the staff of the school improvement administrative division (SIAD). The SIAD regional directors are responsible for interpreting LRPSI policy and guidelines, conducting two-way information and problem solving sessions, and clarifying the field representative and other technical assistance partner roles. SIAD staff have only informal organizational power over field representatives and must rely on their expertise and interpersonal skills to elicit the respect of the field representatives. The field representatives, in turn, have no regulatory powers over LEAs and must depend on their expertise and interpersonal skills to establish their entitlement with district staff.
- The long-range planning for school improvement (LRPSI) process has been PDE's top priority since late 1979. Support for the effort has been manifested in several ways. The LRPSI effort has impacted every bureau in the department. All levels of professional staff, from specialists, to bureau and division chiefs, to the Secretary of Education have become involved as field representatives. In addition, the Commissioner of Basic Education and the Director of the School Improvement Bureau, who have line authority for the LRPSI effort, participated actively in the majority of all school improvement and TA Network planning, orientation, training and implementation sessions conducted in 1980 and 1981.

Network Administration/Structure

- PDE management created a core administrative unit, the school improvement administrative division (SIAD) for the management and continued development of both the LRPSI process and the concomitant technical assistance network. The initial six members of the SIAD were staff who had initiated and/or accepted leadership positions (subcommittee chairpersons) on the 25 member school improvement task force initiated in

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

- The TAG integrates a set of decision-making and problem-solving procedures it has found useful (e. g., brainstorming, active listening) into its ongoing operation. (Moore, et. al., 1977)

- The TAG increases administrative support roles or the responsibility of people in those roles to relieve overload on program staff as it expands. (Moore, et. al., 1977)

- Both linking agency and NETWORK staff members observed that linking agents needed and wanted supervision and feedback, yet they reacted negatively when this came from the central office. (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

September 1979 to develop a school improvement plan for the state. The original SIAD staff included the former director of the state's five-year competency-based education program which involved 12 pilot districts (Project 81), and the recent director of the state's Research and Development Utilization project. The remaining SIAD staff had extensive experience in educational planning, development, management and consulting. These staff, led by Ronald Lewis, the Commissioner of Basic Education (a former superintendent of schools with recent experience as an LEA in another state's school improvement effort) were the driving force behind the conceptualization of the state's school improvement effort, commonly referred to as LRPSI. These staff had the line authority, knowledge base and experience to establish their entitlement as the legitimate originators, implementers, interpreters, adapters and managers of the LRPSI process and the Technical Assistance Network.

- SIAD staff have met on almost a weekly basis since the late winter of 1979-80 to attend to the management and continued development of LRPSI and the Technical Assistance Network. A "Critical Incident" reporting procedure was instituted early in the project to identify and trouble-shoot issues and problems that field representatives encountered in the field (see Appendix C).

- PDE management added five people to the SIAD staff (N=11) early in 1981 to accommodate the "increased administrative support required" when 124 Wave II schools were added to the 78 Wave I schools already involved in the LRPSI process.

- The decentralized organization and management of the field representatives, on the basis of regional groups of schools involved in LRPSI, tended to defuse the potential problem of "supervision and feedback coming from the central office." Regional field representative meetings are devoted to problem solving, experience and resource sharing, coordination, and social support among the field representatives and their region director. In addition, most SIAD staff have had direct experience as a "field representative" for at least one district. Hence, supervisory or feedback issues do not tend to be viewed as coming from the (distant) central office.

Chart 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 1 (continued)

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGNS OR STRUCTURES ARE RECOMMENDED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NETWORKS?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Administrative Structure

- The conflict between "paper work" and "people work" was one that arose again and again in interviews and discussions with agents. This problem is...a perennial one for organizations that rely extensively on field based staff...the need for developing mechanisms of agent accountability (largely affected through paperwork) and the development of local loyalties and support systems do not always complement one another. (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)

- Overt conflict over the documentation expectations was one of the few areas where there was actually substantial disagreement over how the linking agents should use their time. (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)

- The NETWORK...reduced the burden to monthly reporting forms by the middle of the project. (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)

- The TAG establishes regular procedures for supervision and monitoring of work. (Moore, et. al., 1977)

- The TAG develops effective means for documenting and communicating TAG and RTA accomplishments for both internal and external audiences (Moore, et al, 1977)

- ...devoted 100% of her time to the field agent position...about 20 days per year at each of her four sites during the first two years, less during the third. The first year...documentation...required approximately 15-20% of her time... The second and third year... the amount of time required for documentation was judged to have decreased to about 10-15% (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

Network Administration/Structure

- SIAD staff developed a management information system to document, supervise and monitor field representatives, technical assistance partners and LEAs' interactions in the course of LRPSI. The SI Field Representative School Contact Log, the Field Representative Critical Incident Report and the Monthly Regional District Progress Statements submitted by SIAD staff constitute the primary reporting and documentation components regarding the field implementation activities of the project (see Appendix C). As a result of field representative input, the Field Representative School Contact Log was simplified and shortened between Waves I and II (see Appendix C...Field Representative SI Monthly Progress Report). Most of the above documentation is now rendered on a monthly basis--although the field representative forms were acted on, on a weekly basis in the first year of implementation of the technical assistance network.

Chart 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 2

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT CONCEPTUALIZATION, STARTUP AND MAINTENANCE FACTORS REQUIRE ATTENTION?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Conceptualization

- Linking agencies should establish clearly stated goals and services descriptions and illustrate to client systems how these goals and services are congruent with client's goals and work activities. (Patrick, McCann and Whitney, 1981)
- Place early emphasis on the philosophy and ideology of the information, products, or services being disseminated. (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- The Founding leaders developed an initial plan for a change strategy. This initial formulation generally includes an analysis of what is deficient in current education, how things could be better, what role groups should receive effective assistance to make these improvements, what subsystems of the school community are priorities for the change effort, and what the role of the facilitator should be. (Moore, et. al., 1977)
- Provide appropriate high quality materials or state ways in which materials can be obtained. (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- Avoid organizational complexity. (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- The TAG has built into its approach mechanisms that allow it to be responsive to local needs and conditions. (Moore, et. al., 1977)
- The TAG helps the RTA to internalize a cycle of analysis and action. (Moore, et. al., 1977)
- Effective TAGs (technical assistance groups) are proficient at mapping the social systems they are trying to change, using sophisticated analysis and predicition of interacting roles and actions

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

LRPSI and Technical Assistance Network Conceptualization

- The members of the School Improvement Task Force and subsequent SIAD staff developed "an initial plan for a school improvement/change strategy." The description of the problem solving approach to school improvement provided at the beginning of this paper outlines the essential goals, components and processes of the state's plan or strategy for school improvement. The plan includes "clearly stated goals and services descriptions" (see Chart 1, Parts 1 and 3). The original plan was called Shape III (i.e., third draft of the Task Force's conceptualization of a state plan) and was entitled, The School Improvement Program: An Overview of Its Developing Shape, (April 28, 1980). Within the first few months of the program, the terms "School Improvement Initiative or Effort; and "Long Range Planning for School Improvement" (LRPSI) began to be used synonymously.
- "Early emphasis" was placed on the development of widespread (PDE, IUs, IHEs, LEA) "understanding of the philopophy, components and process" of the School Improvement Program via a wide variety of printed, televised and face-to-face media.
- One of the major goals of the Program is to assist LEAs with the implementation and internalization of all phases of a cyclic problem solving process (administrative planning, needs assessment, action planning, implementation and evaluation) designed to facilitate the identification, prioritization and solution of locally (district and individual schools) identified needs and conditions. In essence, LRPSI or the School Improvement Initiative is a state manda d bottom-up process (---to coin an oxymoron).
- SIAD staff and the Technical Assistance partners have developed a "systematized entry process" to: establish the credibility of the school improvement and the technical assistance process with LEAs and develop realistic expectations regarding available technical assistance services and LEAs' needs.

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

- Following careful mapping of a potential change site, effective TAGs accomplish three tasks during the entry process: (1) establishment of TAG credibility with school system; (2) development of mutual obligations and limits, and (3) realistic assessment of whether or not TAG capabilities match the needs and characteristics of the school system

- In addition to face-to-face assistance, effective TAGs develop and use a variety of quality materials

- Adapt to the strengths and weaknesses of their position

- Adapt to local conditions, constraints, and crises

- Long term positive change is associated with: (1) accurate mapping of social systems, which leads to assimilation of the innovation by a critical mass of teachers and parents, and the active support of the school principal, (2) a focus on central social processes and structures, (3) efforts to develop commitment to the innovation by administrators, and to develop a permanent network of local facilitators, (4) attempts to develop internalization of positive attitudes among practitioners (Moore, et. al., 1977)

Communication Structures

- The TAG develops regular mechanisms for communicating with geographically dispersed sites, including the effective use of the telephone, written communications, and on-site visits (Moore, et. al., 1977)

- The TAG perfects a set of communication mechanisms appropriate to the group, capitalizing on the strengths and minimizing the weaknesses of the mechanism chosen. The TAG relies heavily on face-to-face effective communications (Moore, et. al., 1977)

- The TAG teams its facilitators and/or develops other effective mechanisms for information sharing and joint analysis that avoid the damper of facilitator isolation (Moore, et. al., 1977)

Funding

- The TAG "processes for long-term rather than short-term funding and obtains funding for an additional period of about three years in which to field test and modify an initial detailed formulation of the strategy (Moore, et. al., 1977)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

- By program design, the association of a Technical Assistance Partners team (3-5 individuals) with a district is understood to represent a "long-term" assistance commitment.

- Both the LRPSI process and the Technical Assistance Network are "adaptive to local conditions, constraints and crises."

Communications Structures

- Select forms of communication are employed by SIAD and Technical Assistance Partners staff:

  -regular face-to-face communications are employed between: (1) SIAD and field representative staff; (2) field representative and district staff; and (3) Technical Assistance Partners

  -regular phone communications are also employed especially regarding 2 and 3 above

  -a "Notes from the School Improvement Desk" publication is used regularly to keep all PDE school improvement staff abreast of future events, procedural items, and available resources and information

  -a "School Improvement Update" monthly publication is shared with both Technical Assistance Partners and LEAs involved in LRPSI to provide notification of future events, LRPSI progress reports and general LRPSI information.

Funding

- PDE plans to fund School Improvement and the Technical Assistance Network on a long term basis. Each participating district receives one dollar per student to support LRPSI startup efforts. Intermediate Units also receive some annual funding to defray the costs of supporting IU school improvement technical assistance advisors. The IUs receive these funds on a prorata basis related to the total number of students in the IU area that are in districts that are starting school improvement activities in a given year. Finally, Institutions of Higher Education are awarded $2,000 to $4,000 grants based on school improvement "pairing proposals" submitted jointly by LEAs and IHE school improvement coordinators. Appendix D presents information on the IHE-LEA proposal submission process and purpose in the context of the Technical Assistance Network.

Chart 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part 2 (continued)

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT CONCEPTUALIZATION, STARTUP AND MAINTENANCE FACTORS REQUIRE ATTENTION?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Startup and Maintenance

- Staff training focused on practical aspects of project operations operations
- High levels of support activities for participants (visits, feedback)
- Frequent meetings of project staff
- Staff involvement in decisions affecting project operations
  (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978)
- The facilitator effectively communicates in the entry process the nature of the TAG's strategy, the values it involves, and limits on the nature and amount of assistance available
  (Moore, et. al., 1977)
- The TAG seeks to develop a crifical mass of support so that its efforts lead to changes in norms, roles, and subsystems rather than in individuals
  (Moore, et. al., 1977)
- Considerably more time and resources are required to facilitate educational change than was previously anticipated
  (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- The requirement for more time and resources suggests a need for some central process by which the relevance of new knowledge can be established, use priorities can be set and support for dissemination can be determined
  (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)
- Anticipate that utilizations involving some form of implementation process will be gradual and cumulative
  (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

PDE Startup and Maintenance Practices and Procedures

- TA staff training has focused on the development of skills associated with the major LEA implementation steps involved in the LRPSI process.
- Meetings of the SIAD staff with the field representatives occur on a weekly or bi-weekly basis dependent on field representative or school improvement initiative needs.
- Staff representing literally all of the bureaus and divisions of the PDE were involved in the initial task force conceptualization of the statewide school improvement effort -- thereby fostering involvement and group ownership.
- SIAD staff have generally employed a majority rule approach to propose recommendations for the Director of School Improvement regarding decisions about LRPSI and technical assistance network policy, development or implementation concerns -- thus fostering staff involvement.
- The LRPSI planning process suggested and outlined by PDE for use by LEAs strongly recommends: (1) the inclusion of representatives of all major interest groups in the school district and community in all phases of LRPSI, thereby promoting the development of a critical mass of support for identified improvement priorities; (2) attention to the critical role played by principals in supporting change; and (3) the desirability of utilizing sustained technical assistance with all phases of the process.
- The LRPSI process was designed to permit districts and schools to work through their own locally identified improvement priorities at their own pace,-- thus allowing for individual differences among districts.

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

- TAC and facilitators establish credibility with RTA's by building on the RTA's personal identification with the facilitators; the TAC's legitimacy through recommendations of persons respected by the RTA; the TAC's ability to demonstrate that the facilitators can be of concrete practical help; the TAC's ability to demonstrate that their approach is a comprehensive one; the TAC's ability to establish that a major priority for them is to help the RTA, as opposed to some hidden agenda; and additional tactics appropriate to the individual RTA approaches

(Moore, et. al., 1977)

Non-Standard Role of Technical Assistor

- The non-standard nature of the technical assistor (linker) job has [illegible] problems. Mainly, the consequences are negative [illegible] of emotional stress and strain

- Further, because a linker's job is non-standard, the work must be learned while it is being done. While a linker is learning by doing in a job that has a largely unanalyzable technology, nagging questions arise in his/her mind about what is best done next

- Additionally, the linker cannot control the pace of the work. While linkers can exert some influence, the ultimate determination of the pace of the work is determined by the school personnel with whom they work (Louis, Bell and Young, 1981)

- Given linkers' tasks to work across a range of clients with varied information needs, to provide specific services in consideration of a range of external client, intrapersonal, and time related forces, to work in a situation which demands role variety and a high tolerance for uncertainty, and to move in and out of various client groups -- linking agencies need to institute organizational support mechanisms which foster openness, sharing, autonomy and a sense of identity among linking agents (Patrick, McCann and Whitney, 1981)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

- The Technical Assistance Network in the context of the LRPSI mandate represents a sustained high priority effort by the state to establish credibility with districts in a helping technical assistance role in this era of declining resources.

Perspectives on PDE Field Representative Non-Standard Role

- PDE has recognized the stress and uncertainties associated with the provisional nature of the field representatives' role in the Department. PDE has portrayed the job as an opportunity for staff development and recognizes that there will be variability among field representatives in the implementation of the role. PDE furthe. recognizes that another factor influencing role implementation is variability in district receptivity to working with field representatives. Therefore, given the somewhat provisional status of the role and the uncertainties regarding its implementation that are beyond field representatives' control, PDE chose for the present not to include in their annual job accountability review of staff, that part of the staff's work devoted to the role of PDE field representative

- PDE fully subscribes to the notion that the field representatives learn the work best by doing it and by sharing their on-the-job experiences with their peers. Accordingly, an important part of the field representatives' ongoing training consists of the regular small group meetings conducted with the field representatives assigned to a region and their regional director for the purposes of sharing field experiences, and engaging in group problem solving and peer socialization. Furthermore, PDE has promoted the importance and status of the field representative's role systematically from the inception of the program. In sum, the above activities constitute organizational support mechanisms designed to foster openness, sharing, autonomy and a sense of identify among the field representatives.

Chart 4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Part 1

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT PRODUCTS, INFORMATION AND MATERIALS SUPPORT DOES A TA NETWORK REQUIRE?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

- The TAG develops flexible systems of materials to aid the direct assistance process that are consistent in format, but made up of separate items dealing with specific topics of concern to RTAs at various points in the assistance process (Moore, et al., 1977)
- The TAG develops a clear language and method of communication for key terms and concepts that is understood by RTAs (Moore, et al., 1977)
- The TAG develops and refines sophisticated formats for structured experiences that train RTAs in the most central aspects of the TAG's approath (Moore, et al., 1977)
- Materials development and provision represent a complex and crucial component of an effective linker operation. Materials translation/ development may be critical (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)

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Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

LRPSI Process: Assistance Information and Resource Materials

- Information Guides*
  - LRPSI Guidelines and Instructions

    (1980-used by Wave One districts. 1981-revision based on Wave One experience) Itemizes information required to be documented by school districts in preparing Long-Range Plans for School Improvement.
  - LRPSI Overview

    Provides general information on the background, suggested planning process, and assistance available to districts during Long-Range Planning for School Improvement.
  - LRPSI Process Guide

    Subtitled "A Step-by-Step Approach to LRPSI". Provides general guidance to districts in organizing the planning process.
- Resource Guides
  - LRPSI Resource Guide, Part One: Administrative Planning

    Provides more specific background information to technical assistance partners on Step 1 of the LRPSI suggested process.
  - LRPSI Resource Guide, Part Two: Planning for Community/Staff Involvement

    Provides more specific suggestions to technical assistance partners in planning and implementation related to Section 4 of the Guidelines.

*Material contained in all of these documents; and particularly in the Resource Guides, can be viewed as developmental, and is an outgrowth of the "shaping" process of the school improvement program.

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- LRPSI Resource Guide, Part Three: Programs/Services Needs Assessment

  Provides greater detail to technical assistance partners in assisting districts with Section 1 of the Guidelines (LRPSI process step 2a).

- LRPSI Resource Guides, Parts Four-Seven (intended for preparation during 1981-82)

- Part Four: District Management Needs Assessment (Process step 2b, Guidelines Section 2)

- Part Five: Action Planning (Process step 3, Guidelines Sections 1-5)

- Part Six: Implementation (Process step 4).

- Part Seven: Evaluation (Process step 5)

• Other Related Guides and Materials

- Technical assistance supplements
- Staff training materials
- Relation of Middle States to LRPSI (prepared in cooperation with the associations of elementary and secondary school principals and the Middle States Association)
- K-12 Needs Assessment guides (prepared by a task force of PDE and field staff)
- Planned course guidelines (Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction)

• School Improvement Newsletter

- A newsletter, School Improvement Update, keeps district staff and Network partners informed. A contact phone number at the Bureau of School Improvement is in operation to handle calls for general assistance or information. The following listing presents the type of information that is regularly addressed in the UPDATE which is distributed to all districts participating in LRPSI and all technical assistance partners.

  - SI contact lists and phone numbers
  - map of school improvement districts

Chart 4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Part 1 (continued)

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT PRODUCTS, INFORMATION AND MATERIALS SUPPORT DOES A TA NETWORK REQUIRE?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

- announcement of available SI publications/materials
- dates/locations/agenda for SI meetings and workshops
- teleconference information
- items on SI funds
- items on evaluation
- items on community involvement
- items on programs such as Title IV-B
- items on EQA and needs assessment
- items on registration procedures
- items on District Profiles
- PDE Resource Center updates
- Executive Academy information
- information on the IHE Partnership Program
- updates on professional education/certification activities
- brief updates on aspects of SI as they occur at PDE
- brief updates on specific SI-related events and activities
- "Review of Recent School Improvement Activities" article
- "Message from the Commissioner" article
- "Report on School Improvement Initiatives, 1979-80" article

Chart 4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: SUPPORT SYSTEMS.

Part 2

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT RESOURCE SYSTEM SUPPORT IS ADVISABLE FOR A TA NETWORK?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

- Make use of all relevant and available human and material resources internal and external to the system as necessary and feasible
  (Emrick and Peterson, 1978)

- ...support structures at the project level may have greater impacts upon the agents than training procedures
  (Louis, Kell and Young, 1981)

- The TAG develops strong organizational leadership that initially organizes resources around the stated strategy
  (Moore, et. al., 1977)

- The TAG develops a contact/resource network to provide legitimacy, ideas, mutual support, potential staff members, and funding leads
  (Moore, et. al., 1977)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

Role and Function of PDE Resource Center

- A resource center was developed to coordinate dissemination activities within the Department and to respond to school requests for information about technical assistance, programs that work, and instructional materials that are available for individual school improvement efforts. A centralized system for the dissemination of such information should result in an economy of scale since this function now exists in many different areas. Currently there is neither a central location for school personnel to seek technical assistance in school improvement efforts, nor a systematic way for one school system to discover what other similar school systems have done to overcome weaknesses similar to their own. The resource center will help assure that the best technical assistance available for a particular problem is made known to school district personnel. It will also make known programs that have worked in other districts so that a school district and its school(s) may adapt (adopt) the program for its own use. Thus, a district or school building may more readily create needed change without extensive and costly program development efforts.

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

- A key component of the resource center is the Pennsylvania Educational Resource File (PERF). The PERF resource file was developed by the PDE Resource Center and Research Information Services for Education (RISE). It contains information useful to school districts looking for resources outside their districts but within the Commonwealth. Access to PERF is via PDE field representatives or RISE. School improvement partners readily cooperated with the Resource Center in all phases of the development of PERF. The computerized PERF file will be comprised initially of three simultaneously accessible categories of information resources: (1) documents, (2) human resources, and (3) promising educational practices. The file will be accessible initially via 38 subject categories in four major areas: Goals of Quality Education, General Needs Assessment, Variables Related to Student Achievement, and Management Goals. This Pennsylvania-specific database currently is being expanded by resource center staff and the school improvement administrative unit.

- Access to other computerized research and technical information is also coordinated through PDE Resource Center, located at the Department of Education. Computer terminals which access to over 100 bibliographic databases were installed for use through Resource Center staff. This information is available to school districts with the assistance of PDE school improvement field representatives. When fully operational, the Resource Center will help assure that knowledge of the range of technical assistance available in a specific area of need is at the disposal of school district personnel.

- Services by networks such as RISE, PRISE, and VEIN are still being provided through intermediate units.

Chart 5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: EVALUATION

Part 1

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT EVALUATION QUESTIONS ARE OF FOREMOST CONCERN?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

General Concerns

- If the TAG collects research data, it is focused on providing useful information about program process as well as results (Moore, et al, 1977)
- The TAG develops regularized mechanisms for analysis of their direct assistance activities (Moore, et al, 1977)
- Evaluation studies can be conducted to: (1) describe ongoing linking activities (program documentation or program processes); (2) appraise the degree to which focused linking activities meet their goals and objectives (specific goal achievement or objectives-based); (3) provide information for the improvement of linking activities (formative); and (4) provide information about the overall effectiveness of linking activities (outcomes-based or summative) (Patrick, McCann and Whitney, 1981)

Given the proposed framework, a formative evaluation of the client-centered linking process might be focused around the following questions:

- What are the key goals and objectives of the technical assistance/linker effort?
- What are the most improtant activities and characteristics of the technical assistance effort? (Linking steps, decisions, forces)
- Are these important activities being implemented? (e.g., engagement, context specification, collection -- agency goals, agency support for linkers, interagency relationships, etc.)
- Are the activities contributing to the achievement of the objectives? (i.e., Are key state priorities being served, is effective technical assistance being rendered, and is R&D-based information being translated from research into practice?)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

*Outline of PDE's School Improvement Evaluation Design

PROCESS EVALUATION

Guidelines (PDE Level)

- Are the Guidelines established by PDE for long-range planning effective in encouraging schools and communities to incorporate a systematic plan for assessing the effectiveness of current practices; identifying goal areas and practices in need of improvement; and making changes in practice?

Evaluation Questions	Acceptable Evidence and Data Source
1.1 How do the guidelines insure the quality of the LRPSI process?	1.1.1 Design and conduct Wave I user survey (for district superintendents and LRPSI coordinator).
	1.1.2 Same for Waves II, III, IV, and V at appropriate times.
1.2 How have the guidelines changed over time?	1.2.1 Content analysis of all published guidelines.
1.3 What support documents were prepared and provided for LRPSI?	1.3.1 List publications with ration ale for development, timeline, annotation of purpose and use.
1.4 Are relevant audiencea aware of and have they used these documents? Have they been effective?	1.4.1 LEA user survey.
	1.4.2 Field rep survey.

*PDE staff primarily responsible for the development of the evaluation design include Grace Laverty, Frank Reardon and Peg Stank. An evaluation advisory group consisting of Dave Barrett, Joe Yarworth, Russ Dusewicz and Keith Kirshner also contributed to the design.

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

General Concerns

- What adjustments in the implementation of the linking or assistance steps -- e.g. linkers' decisions regarding scheduling, coordination, style and role; linker training and preparation; and/or linker agency organizational activities -- might lead to the attainment of the objectives?
- Which approaches to diagnosing and serving client system needs work best?
- Which linking style or role works best -- in what situations?
- What problems are involved in implementing the technical assistance/linking steps; in reaching linker decisions; in providing organizational support for linkers; in managing a client-centered linking operation? How can these problems be solved?
- What measures can be suggested to operationally define: (1) the degree to which client system priorities are being met and (2) the degree to which information is being transformed from research to practice? (Patrick, McCann and Whitney, 1981)

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

1.5 What changes were instituted in the PDE long-range planning group to facilitate LRPSI?	1.5.1 Historical review of PDE organization and rationale for changes. 1.5.2 Interview members of original LRP group and LRPSI management group.
1.6 What kind of administrative unit was initiated for compliance, monitoring, and facilitation of LRPSI? How has it changed?	1.6.1 Description of SIAD and its functions. Historical review of development of the SIAD.
1.7 How do the LRPSI guidelines compare with the previous LRP in terms of usefulness and ease of compliance?	1.7.1 User survey.

Field Representatives (PDE Level)

- Is an effective level of assistance established for providing field representatives and coordinators/advisors to assist LEAs in following LRPSI guidelines?

Evaluation Questions	Acceptable Evidence and Data Source
2.1 What is the level of effort expended by the PDE field representatives?	2.1.1 Summary of field rep contact logs for frequency, type, and purpose of school contact. 2.1.2 Information from field rep survey.
2.2 What is the extent and usefulness of materials and resources provided to LEAs?	2.2.1 Record and summarize information from contact logs. 2.2.2 Questions on user survey.

Chart 5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: EVALUATION

Part 1

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT EVALUATION QUESTIONS ARE OF FOREMOST CONCERN?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

Outline of PDE's School Improvement Evaluation Design

Evaluation Questions	Acceptable Evidence and Data Source
3.1 What is the level of technical assistance being provided by the PDE?	3.1.1 Expenditure report. 3.1.2 User survey
3.2 What is the level of technical assistance being provided by IUs?	3.2.1 Expenditure report. 3.2.2 User survey.

Technical Assistance Network (PDE Level)

- Is a systematic network in place to provide for the organization and delivery of human and material resources to support LEA needs in connection with their LRPSI responsibilities?

Evaluation Questions	Acceptable Evidence and Data Source
3.3 What is the level of technical assistance being provided by other IHEs?	3.3.1 User survey.
3.4 What is the level of technical assistance being provided LEAs?	3.4.1 User survey.
3.5 What is the nature and extent of the system established for coordination among the TA agents?	3.5.1 User survey. 3.5.2 Interview SI chief on planned coordination efforts. 3.5.3 Interview the technical assistance agents.

Resource Center (PDE Level)

- Is a center in place to coordinate dissemination activities within PDE for dissemination of the best available technical information in response to LEA needs?

Evaluation Questions	Acceptable Evidence and Data Source
4.1 What is the level of use of the resource center by technical assistance agents and LEAs?	4.1.1 Summarization of resource center logs and records of use.
4.2 What is the level of pro-active dissemination activities undertaken by the resource center in response to LRPSI needs?	4.2.1 Interview resource center staff. 4.2.2 Collect copies of available documents.

Orientation and Training Session (PDE Level)

- Is an effective program in place for providing skills training and information sessions to facilitate awareness, roles and relationships, needs assessment and action planning on the part of LEAs and their technical assistance agents?

Evaluation Questions	Acceptable Evidence and Data Source
5.1 What orientation and training sessions were provided by PDE, how often, and who participated?	5.1.1 List the activities with descriptions of programs, purpose, agencies represented, and attendance (by category).
5.2 How effective are the orientation and training activities in meeting their objectives?	5.2.1 Participant evaluations of effectiveness (where available).

Chart 5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: EVALUATION

Part 1

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT EVALUATION QUESTIONS ARE OF FOREMOST CONCERN?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

Outline of PDE's School Improvement Evaluation Design

Evaluation Questions	Acceptable Evidence and Data Source
5.3 What is the dynamic nature of orientation and training activities across the LRPSI waves?	5.3.1 Interviews of organizers, presenters, and participants who have attended sessions at multiple time periods.
	5.3.2 Comparison of agendas of all meetings.

Registration (PDE Level)

- Is an effective formal procedure in place for acceptance of a school district's LRPSI and for validation of action taken by the district to implement and evaluate its plan?

Evaluation Questions	Acceptable Evidence and Data Source
6.1 What is the progress of LEAs under the LRPSI guidelines?	6.1.1 Use data from the "School Improvement Monthly Progress Report" as completed by field reps.
6.2 What is the number and proportion of districts pre-registered at specific times?	6.2.1 Documentation of preregistration dates within each Wave Look at extensions and reasons.
6.3 What is the number and proportion of districts registered at specific times	6.3.1 Documentation of registration dates. Again look at extensions and reasons.

Educational Quality Assessment (PDE Level)

- Is a system in place to effectively utilize EQA information in identifying needed activities and areas for improvement of educational practices in connection with LRPSI?

Evaluation Questions	Acceptable Evidence and Data Source
7.1 How are EQA results tied into district information in their long-range plans for school improvement?	7.1.1 User survey. 7.1.2 Examine a sample of LRPs and construct a scale of use.
7.2 What is the extent of synchronization of the EQA testing cycle with LRPSI?	7.2.1 Compare lists of schools in EQA each year with district assignment to the LRPSI waves.

Fiscal Support (PDE Level)

- Is an effective fiscal resource pool available within PDE to facilitate school district involvement and activities with respect to LRPSI?

Evaluation Questions	Acceptable Evidence and Data Source
8.1 What is the amount of non-state funding used to support the the school improvement initiative?	8.1.1 Interview appropriate PDE persons (e.g., Akers, Edwards, Weinberger, Clark and Lewis). Ask for budget breakdowns.
8.2 What is the amount of state funding used to support school improvement?	8.2.1 See 8.1.1.
8.3 What is the amount of funds in program areas which have been redefined to become available for LRPSI?	8.3.1 Interview managers of categorical funds (e.g., Makuch, Campbell, Dallam and Blair).

Chart 5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: EVALUATION

Part 1

DESIGN QUESTION: WHAT EVALUATION QUESTIONS ARE OF FOREMOST CONCERN?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

Outline of PDE's School Improvement Evaluation Design

Evaluation Questions	Acceptable Evidence and Data Source
8.4 What is the extent of direct and indirect PDE expenditures in support of the school improvement process?	8.4.1 Actual calculation of direct costs and close examination of indirect costs.
8.5 How is school improvement money being spent by LEAs? IUs? IHEs?	8.5.1 Summarize LEA, IU and IHE expenditure reports.

IMPACT EVALUATION
(Preliminary Working Outline)

Technical Assistance (PDE Level)

- Are all components of the PDE technical assistance effort operating effectively to provide adequate assistance to school districts in meeting their LRPSI needs?

  1.1 To what extent has a satisfactory constellation of technical assistance efforts been institutionalized which provide improved help to school districts in meeting LRPSI needs?

  -Aggregate school district satisfaction of needs based upon documentation and interview data.

Systematic School Improvement (PDE Level)

- Is an institutionalized set of guidelines and procedures in place which have been demonstrated to effect systematic school improvement as evidenced by local outcomes?

Prescriptive Information from Related Literature and Research

Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Network Design Features

1.1 To what extent have an individualized set of guidelines and procedures been established which have been demonstrated to effect systematic school improvement?

-Analysis and synthesis of aggregate process data and aggregate local evaluations.

Student Growth

- Is student growth and development improving on a statewide basis as a result of the LRPSI process?

1.1 To what extent has aggregate statewide improvement in student growth been evidenced?

-EQA data
-Standardized test results
-Local evaluations.

APPENDIX A

SELECT REVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND CHANGE

The design of Pennsylvania's School Improvement initiative was influenced, in part, by several recent studies of school improvement, dissemination and change. Some of the important findings which were of influence are cited as follows:

Berman and McLaughlin's RAND change agent study, Volume 8, (1978) reported the following conclusions and recommendations:

- federal policy has been based on misconceptions about the reality of school districts and the factors that produce change in their organization and educational practice. School districts are not "black boxes." Change (or control) cannot be brought about simply by developing new technologies, providing incentives for their adoption and introducing these technologies into districts in the form of targeted, accountable projects.

- federal "seed money" stimulated LEAs to undertake projects but did not insure successful implementation or long-run continuation (i.e., many adoptions, a few successful implementations, and the long-run continuation of still fewer)

- The differences between success and failure were not based on differences in "project guidelines" or "more money." Success or failure depended primarily on how the districts implemented their projects and on whether they planned for long-term continuation.

- LEA implementation strategies spell the difference between success or failure almost independently of type of innovation or educational method involved and also contribute to continued use. The following strategies were found to be effective:

  -Concrete, teacher-specific, and extended training
  -Classroom assistance from project or district staff
  -Teacher observation of similar projects in other classrooms, schools or districts

-Regular project meetings that focused on practical problems
-Teacher participation in project decisions
-Local materials development
-Principal participation in training.

- It would be best to start with the perspective that schools are responsible for improving their own performance but require short and long-term assistance. Within this perspective, it is expected that:

  -Educational performance could be improved if more attention were paid to all stages of the local change process.
  -Educational performance could be improved with adaptive implementation assistance
  -Educational performance could be improved if the capacity of school districts to manage change were enhanced.

Emrick and Peterson's synthesis of the PSDP, RAND, PIP, NDN and TAG dissemination and change studies (1978) reported that:

- Information alone will not likely affect much "change-oriented" utilization of school improvement related knowledge.
  -Personal intervention is required.

- The quality and availability of materials play a central role in supporting and maintaining dissemination efforts.
  -A materials/in-person interaction model is supported.

- Improvement oriented change in schools seem to require more than easy access to information and recources.
  -A rational model of behavior is not supported.

- Interpersonal or social influences appear to be the prime determinants of utilization.
  -Schools are reactive, loosely coupled bureaucracies.
  -The successful change process is driven by mutual self interest.

- Qualitative more than tactical aspects will determine the effects of a dissemination (school change) strategy. What and when seem less important than who and how with respect to things that are done. Four aspects predominate successful change/utilization efforts:

  -Interpersonal style
  -Local commitment
  -Training
  -Gradual and cumulative change.

- Some form of personal intermediary or linkage is essential to the dissemination (change) process.

- A relatively comprehensive yet flexible external support system is needed to provide key materials and in-person utilization assistance.

- Considerably more time and resources are required to facilitate educational change than was previously anticipated.

- The requirement for more time and resources suggests a need for some central process by which the relevance of new knowledge can be established, use priorities can be set and support for dissemination can be determined.

- Some form of intermediaries or knowledge linkers should be established.

Karen Louis' preliminary findings, implications and recommendations regarding Abt's study of the R&D Utilization Program (AERA, 1980; AASA, 1980) indicated the following:

- All components of the planned RDU intervention strategy -- the use of high quality "products," the application of technical assistance from external field agents and trainers, and the guidance of the school through a rational, participatory problem-solving process -- have a strong impact upon knowledge utilization processes and outcomes.

- The effects of the variables measuring RDU strategies outweigh characteristics of the school such as readiness to engage in a change program.

- Based on data from preliminary analyses of the impact of the RDU program at the school level, several recommendations for how school administrators may facilitate the problem-solving process in schools are drawn. These include:

  -the need to emphasize using externally developed products where they are available and appropriate
  -attempting to maximize a change effort by encouraging the adoption of complex new practices
  -the importance of administrative support in the continuation and incorporation phase
  -the importance of promoting teacher-driven, participatory change teams
  -searching for external facilitators who can provide assistance and stimulation to a locally driven process.

Louis and Rosenblum's (1981) major conclusions from the Abt Associates study are:

- A well-designed dissemination strategy which emphasizes the provision of high quality information, technical assistance, and small amounts of funds to local schools can be effective in promoting improvements in schools, in educational practice, and in benefits to students.

- Local commitment, resources, and energy continue to be essential and critical elements in improving schools.

- Local development or adaptation of innovative products is not as essential as previous research has indicated; both R&D-based products and validated practitioner-developed products can produce significant benefits in schools if: (a) they are carefully selected by practitioners to match their local conditions and needs, and (b) the schools can readily obtain the technical assistance and inservice training required to master the use of the new product.

- The array of existing R&D-based and validated products is not as extensive as expected and frequently is insufficient to match the full range of educational problems identified as priorities by local practitioners.

- The goal of building an ongoing capacity in schools to repeat complex problem-solving and improvement activities with high levels of faculty participation can be at least partially achieved while carrying out a specific local improvement activity. However, systematic development of such capacities requires more detailed attention than was provided within the RDU demonstration program.

APPENDIX B

PENNSYLVANIA LONG-RANGE PLANNING FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: FIELD ORIENTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PARTNER TRAINING, 1980-1981[1]

Conceptual Overview

- The school improvement program was introduced to the education community on November 16, 1979, in the form of a document known as "Shape One." During the next five months, the long-range planning process was shaped into a final form and titled Long-Range Planning for School Improvement (LRPSI)

- Overall, 501 school districts in Pennsylvania are scheduled to participate in LRPSI. Given a five-year cycle for the planning process, and with two major urban areas to consider, the districts have been scheduled in five "waves":

Wave I (first year)	-	78 districts
Wave II (second year)	-	124 districts plus 8 technical schools
Wave III (third year) - (approx.)	-	150 districts plus technical schools
Wave IV (fourth year) - (approx.)	-	147 districts plus technical schools
Wave V (fifth year)	-	2 urban districts

- To effectively and efficiently implement the Long-Range Planning for School Improvement (LRPSI) Program for local school districts and technical schools, a flexible yet fairly structured sequence of orientation and training has been required.

- The essential parameters of the orientation/training effort have been:

  - the process itself should remain flexible and developmental in nature,
  - all persons should be acquainted with a certain consistent base of information about the process and the planning requirements,
  - orientation and training should be provided at the least expense of individual and institutional time and money possible, and
  - continuous feedback and ease of coordination and communication among the persons involved should be maintained and encouraged.

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[1]This appendix cites materials prepared in large part by Ethelyn O. Brewster, Information Specialist for School Improvement, and Jeff Grotsky, Chairman of the School Improvement Training Committee.

- To date, the technical assistance training has involved 80 staff members of the Department of Education thus far, 39 intermediate unit staff, and 75 college/university faculty. Though the IU and IHE personnel remain fairly constant, the number of Department staff has increased from approximately 60 during Wave I, and additional 20 during Wave II, and anticipated increases during subsequent Waves. The process encourages, to the extent possible, a one-to-one relationship between the Department field representatives and the districts/technical schools.

- Considering the number of persons involved -- in terms of districts scheduled for planning for school improvement and in terms of the Technical Assistance Network team approach that has been adopted -- the awareness, orientation and training sessions provided, both internal and external, have been extensive.

Chronological Listing of Orientation and Training Conducted by PDE

- Superintendents/IU Directors Meeting (April 18, 1980)

  All superintendents from Wave I school districts were invited to Harrisburg to meet with Secretary Scanlon and the school improvement administrative staff to discuss the final shaping of the process for Wave I. In addition to a comprehensive presentation describing the components of the program as they had been developed at that point, discussion and comment was initiated regarding issues that were not firmly resolved (e.g., funding, evaluation, exact nature of training, etc.).

- Wave I Orientation Meetings (April 28, April 30, and May 2, 1980)

  The Bureau of School Improvement organized three one-day meetings, in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Harrisburg. District planning teams, school board members, and teacher organization representatives were invited to participate. Staff from the intermediate units and colleges/universities also were asked to attend. The Secretary of Education, the Commissioners of Basic and Higher Education, and the improvement staff used the day to familiarize district personnel with the school improvement process, requirements, and timelines for completing LRPSI.

- Statewide School Improvement Teleconference (May 21, 1980)

  The Department of Education, with the assistance of station WQED in Pittsburgh, conducted a statewide teleconference linking the seven instructional television stations in Pennsylvania. All school districts were notified of the program, and Wave I districts received specific information and were given directions on phoning in questions and concerns. Initial presentations by Department staff were followed by an open question/answer period, with the Secretary and Commissoners present.

- Technical Assistance Partner Training, Messiah College (June 4-5, 10-12, 1980)

A critical component of the school improvement program is the ready availability of a team of persons at the Department, intermediate units, and colleges/universities who will provide direct assistance to local schools or serve as brokers to obtain information or other skilled personnel as required. A six-day workshop was conducted to initiate the training and support of the state's technical assistance staff. Workshop sessions included: an overview of the school improvement program; LRPSI guidelines and instructions; a district scenario of the LRPSI process; general TA role clarification and coordination; information on needs assessment, action planning, implementation, evaluation and planning; resource retrieval; and questions and answers.

- Administrator Days (June 18-26, 1980)

To expand the awareness of the process among district personnel, afternoon workshops were prepared for a series of six annual meetings regularly planned for administrators. A general overview was also provided during the morning session.

- Summer Workshops for Wave I Planning Teams (July-August 1980)

The 78 Wave I school districts were invited to send teams to two-day workshops in their area in order to begin developing administrative (management) plans for the implementation of LRPSI in their individual districts. Eleven workshops were scheduled. Each site had approximately 8 districts participating, with each district sending approximately 5 team members. Total number of participants was around 1,100. The workshops were held at college campuses. PDE, IU, and IHE staff were present to offer assistance as necessary and to facilitate the sessions.

- Teacher Organization Representative Training Session (August 20, 1980)

The Department of Education sponsored a one-day inservice meeting for Pennsylvania State Educational Association and Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers representatives from Wave I districts. Information on school improvement and building staff participation was stressed.

- Second Statewide Teleconference (October 8, 1980)

The second teleconference was conducted similarly to the first. The topic, however, was geared more specifically to needs assessment, and Educational Quality Assessment in particular. Since the Wave I districts were at that time engaging in needs assessment analysis and using EQA data to develop their action plans, it was felt that these topics would be most helpful.

- EQA/SI Workshops (November 1980 - January 1981)

  Six regional workshops were conducted by the Department. Staff from EQA conducted the first day of the workshops. Participants were districts that completed EQA testing in the spring of 1980 and Wave I districts. The second day was devoted to school improvement topics. Each regional coordinator for school improvement organized the second day's discussion based on needs expressed by districts in their region.

- Education Congress (November 1980)

  Along with partial participation in the EQA/SI workshops, the 1980 Education Congress (one day) served as an initial orientation for Wave II districts. A general progress report on School Improvement's basic education initiative during the morning session was followed by afternoon workshops organized primarily around a question/answer format.

- PDE/IH/IHE Follow-Up Training (1980 - early 1981)

  During and subsequent to the six-day workshop conducted at Messiah College, PDE field representatives began to meet regularly at the Department of Education; here the effort was to: reinforce the information presented in the six-day workshop; provide new skills and information as needed; facilitate the regional coordination of field representatives; and provide for social and problem solving interaction among the field representatives. Meetings continued almost weekly up until the summer workshops, and began again in September 1980.

  In November 1980, the schedule shifted to an every-other-week pattern. The two hour meetings were scheduled in cycles of three: a general meeting, regional meeting, and then a skill-building meeting. This pattern continued into March of 1981. A topical list of the skill-building workshops conducted includes:

  - Developing the Long-Range Plan for School Improvement
  - How to Do Needs Assessment
  - How to Interpret EQA Data for LRPSI
  - How to Do Action Planning
  - How to Write Evaluation Plans
  - How to Chart School District Progress for Completing LRPSI
  - How to Find Resources for School Improvement Districts
  - How to Interpret School District Profiles
  - How to Use the EEO Workforce Utilization Forms
  - Middlestates and School Improvement
  - Title IV-C and School Improvement
  - Title I Needs Assessment and School Improvement
  - Theme 2 of School Improvement

During this time, the organizational pattern of technical assistance was evolving into a regional support base. Field representatives were also provided with regular issues of a single-sheet communication device called Notes from the School Improvement Desk, which provided a running calendar of future events, procedural items, and a cataloguing of printed materials for field representative use and information. A "School Improvement Update" newsletter was also published monthly and shared with all TA partners and Wave I and II districts.

In February, 1981, IU Advisors expressed a need for additional face-to-face participation, and a joint session of PDE field representatives was held to update them as a group with some of the materials and to receive their advice on plans for Wave II orientation/training. A second similar updating session for IU/PDE staff was conducted in Harrisburg on June 5, 1981.

- Wave II Orientation Meetings (April 2 - May 22, 1981)

  Instead of conducting three regional meetings as in Wave I, a series of 22 half-day workshops were conducted at intermediate units across the state. Invited participants were the same as for Wave I, but the number of participants from each district was less, and in most cases, the primary district staff attending were superintendents and the designated LRPSI coordinator. This change in procedure was made due to feedback and evaluation of the previous year and Wave I meetings by PDE, district and IU staff.

- PDE Follow-Up Training (April - June 1981)

  Concurrent with and subsequent to the Wave II orientations, PDE field representative meetings were again adjusted. The first few meetings accommodated a need to acquaint new field representatives with the process as well as to reinforce and update those who had been involved during Wave I.

- Technical Assistance Training, Toftrees (June 11-12, 1981)

  A one and one-half day training session was conducted in June at Toftrees Conference Center for PDE's Wave I and new Wave II field representatives. New staff were familiarized with the LRPSI guidelines. A simulation of the administrative planning phase of LRPSI was conducted, highlighting the assistance roles of the field representatives. The implementation of the partnership process was described and discussed. Finally, regional problem solving activities were scheduled with report-outs by region.

- Summer Workshops for Wave II Planning Teams (June, 1981)

  Three one-day regional workshops were conducted for 124 Wave II district planning coordinators and select administrative staff. The district workshops were designed to prepare the district administrators and planning coordinators to organize appropriate staff in their districts to develop and write management plans for completing LRPSI. The workshops provided techniques, examples and simulation activities which will help the representative work with their local teams. In addition, PDE field representatives, IU advisor and college and university coordinators participated in the workshops and provided follow-up on-site assistance as requested.

- Teacher Representative Orientation Session (June, 1981)

  The Department conducted a one-day inservice workshop for teacher representatives from Wave II districts. The agenda was similar to the 1980 program.

APPENDIX C

PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORTING SYSTEM:
FIELD REPRESENTATIVE CONTACT LOG, CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORT,
AND FIELD REPRESENTATIVE SI MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT
AND
SIAD MONTHLY DISTRICT PROGRESS STATEMENT

Reporting System

An important part of the school improvement initiative lies in the coordination of information and effort. There are currently 76 school improvement field representatives from various bureaus in the PDE, assisting over 200 Wave I and Wave II school districts with local school improvement efforts, and a partnership network involving IUs and IHEs. At the PDE, the Commissioner of Basic Education established a special unit, the School Improvement Administrative Division (SIAD) to provide ongoing support for school improvement activity. SIAD staff prepared three reporting formats for documentation of technical assistance efforts and progress reporting: the School Contact Log, the Critical Incident Report, and a Monthly District Progress Statement. The School Contact Log was subsequently modified, to lighten the reporting requirements of field representatives. Thus, the Field Representative SI Monthly Progress Report took the place of the School Contact Log in year two of the school improvement effort.

SI FIELD REPRESENTATIVE SCHOOL CONTACT LOG Page ___ of ___ Pages

_____ School District Date _____

PDE Field Representative _____

1. Date	2. Type of Contact	3. Name LEA Persons Involved	4. Check Others Involved
	Phone ___ Visit ___ Other _____		IU ___ IHE ___ Other _____

6. Description of Activity	5. Type of Assistance Provided
	___ Direct SI Process Help ___ Intervene for LEA at PDE ___ Secure Resource for LEA ___ Conduct Workshop ___ Direct Small Group Planning Session ___ Help with Evaluation ___ Clarify PDE Policy or Procedure ___ Interpret Data ___ Assist with Community Involvement Other _____
7. Follow-up Provided	

1. Date	2. Type of Contact	3. Name LEA Persons Involved	4. Check Others Involved
	Phone ___ Visit ___ Other _____		IU ___ IHE ___ Other _____

6. Description of Activity	5. Type of Assistance Provided
	___ Direct SI Process Help ___ Intervene for LEA at PDE ___ Secure Resource for LEA ___ Conduct Workshop ___ Direct Small Group Planning Session ___ Help with Evaluation ___ Clarify PDE Policy or Procedure ___ Interpret Data ___ Assist with Community Involvement Other _____
7. Follow-up Provided	

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

The School Contact Log is intended to record all contacts between the school district and the PDE Field Representative. A separate log should be maintained for each school district assigned to the field representative. Thus, if the field representative serves two districts, two separate logs should be maintained. When it seems important/informative to do so, please report contacts with IUs or IHEs as a separate entry in the log for the appropriate school district.

One copy of each log should be forwarded to the appropriate SI Contact Person on the last day of each month. Summaries of contacts will be included in the monthly report prepared for the Commissioner of Basic Education by the School Improvement Administrative Unit. The field representative should retain one copy of his/her records.

Every effort should be made to make responses to items as brief as possible. If additional comments are warranted for any item, continue the comments on an additional page(s) of plain bond paper.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

Complete the top portion of the form, providing the name of the school district, the name of the field representative, the date of the report and the page number. On second and subsequent pages, only the school district name, page numbers and date need to be included.

Item 1. - Indicate the date of the contact.

Item 2. - Check whether phone contact or visit or specify the type of contact on the line marked "Other."

Item 3. - List the names of LEA person(s) directly involved.

Item 4. - Check appropriate alternative and/or specify other persons under "Other." An example of "Other" could be a community leader, private contractor, press representative or other person who plays an important part in contact being reported.

Item 5. - To provide a quick summary of the type of service provided, check one or more of the listed alternatives. When the field representative feels it is important to do so, specify other types of assistance in the space provided.

Item 6. - Briefly describe the substance of the contact. If additional space is required, continue comments on plain bond paper.

Item 7. - Briefly describe follow-up activities. If additional space is required, continue comments on separate plain bond paper.

CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORT

School District _____ Date _____

From: _____ To: _____
(PDE Field Representative) *(SI Contact Person)

In Section I. below, please describe any incident that, in your best judgement, DEMANDS immediate attention and/or action from some management level agent or agency at the Department. After completing Section I, please forward this report immediately to the appropriate School Improvement Contact Person. The SI Contact Person will initiate and follow up on actions to resolve the problem. A statement of the action taken will be returned to you. In describing the incident, be brief; however, if additional comments are necessary, continue the comments on plain bond paper.

SECTION I: Briefly describe the incident and attach pertinent support documents. (To be completed by PDE Field Representative.)

SECTION II: Follow-up Action Taken. (To be completed by SI Contact Person.)

Date Initiated _____ Date Completed _____

SI Contact Person _____

*SIAD Regional Directors=Contact Persons

(Short Form) Month_____ 19___

FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

S. I. MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT

DISTRICT-_____ WAVE___ ADM. UNIT#_____

TO:_____ REGION#____ FROM:_____
(Regional Director) (Field Representative)

DISTRICT CONTACT PERSON_____ PHONE ( )_____

I.U. ADVISOR_____ I.U.#_____ PHONE ( )_____

I.H.E. CONTACT PERSON_____ PHONE ( )_____

A. FIELD REPRESENTATIVE ACTIVITY LOG

Number of:
___ District Visits
___ District Phone Contacts
___ District Contacts at PDE, IU, or other location
___ IU Contacts
___ IHE Contacts

___ Letters Sent

B. LRPSI PROGRESS CHECKLIST

(Check most recently completed milestone)

___ Administrative Plan Completed
___ Needs Assessment Completed for Programs and Services
___ Needs Assessment Completed for Management Goals
___ Priorities Identified for Programs and Services
___ Priorities Identified for District Management
___ Action Planning Completed
___ LRPSI Submitted to PDE
___ Pre-Registration Issued
___ Implementation Initiated
___ Mid-Point Progress Report Submitted
___ Final Evaluation Report Submitted
___ Registration Issued

C. TYPES OF SERVICE PROVIDED (Check)

___ 1. School Improvement Information
___ 2. School Improvement Materials
___ 3. Participated in School Improvement Activities at District
___ 4. Formal S.I. Presentations given
___ 5. Consultants obtained
___ 6. District S.I. Materials Reviewed
___ 7. Other_____
_____

D. COMMENTS AND/OR CONCERNS: If you checked any of the seven items above please comment below. Code comments to respective number.

(Use reverse side if necessary)

Please submit by the 7th of each month for the previous month.

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

OA-501 12-67

Date _____

SUBJECT: Monthly District Progress Statement

TO: _____
(Regional SI Coordinator)

FROM: _____
(PDE Field Representative)

Attached are my monthly logs for the _____ School District(s) for the month of _____. On the chart below, I have indicated the date of the most recently completed school improvement milestone in each district.

	Date of Most Recently Completed Activity											
SCHOOL DISTRICT	District Goals Adopted	District Needs Data Analyzed	Dist. Priorities Established	Building Data Analyzed	Bldg. Priorities Established	New Practices Screened	Change Strategy Selected	Implementation Plan Completed	Evaluation Plan Completed	Building Action Plans Completed	Staff Development Plan Completed	LRSI Prepared	LRPSI Submitted to PDE

Additional Comments:

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WAVE I DISTRICT PROGRESS SUMMARY FOR THE MONTH OF _____

	Activity Summary					Date of Most Recently Completed Activity												
	No. Field Rep. Visits	No. Field Rep. Phone Contacts	Type(s) of Service Provided (See code on reverse side.)	Critical Incidents Reported		District Goals Adopted	District Needs Data Analyzed	Dist. Priorities Established	Building Data Analyzed	Bldg. Priorities Established	New Practices Screened	Change Strategy Selected	Implementation Plan Completed	Evaluation Plan Completed	Building Action Plans Summarized	Staff Development Plan Completed	LRPSI Prepared	LRPSI Submitted to PDE
Bentworth																		
Laurel Highlands																		
Ringgold																		
Trinity Area																		
Uniontown Area																		
Avonworth																		
Churchill Area																		
Elizabeth Forward																		
Riverview																		
Butler Area																		
Mercer Area																		
General McLane																		
Girard																		
Cranberry Area																		
Union																		
Norwin																		
Penn-Trafford																		

APPENDIX D

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NETWORK:
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, INTERMEDIATE UNIT
AND COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERS --
AND IHE/DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS

(August, 1981)

PDE PARTNERS

- School Improvement Administrative Division

The SIAD consists of 11 staff:

- Interbureau Liaison: Kennard Bowman

- School Improvement Regional Directors:

Region	IU#	Directors*
I	4, 5, 6	Robert A. Bowser
II	9, 10, 17	Joseph Skok
III	16, 18, 19, 29	Harry J. Benedetto
IV	14, 20, 21	Jeffrey Grotsky
V	22, 23, 24, 25	Richard Dumaresq
VI	12, 13, 15	James Blair
VII	8, 11, 28	Irvin Edgar
VIII	1, 7, 27	William Good
IX	3	Randall Bauer
X	2	Barbara Saunders

(*Note: Staff no longer with SIAD who contributed to the school improvement initiative are: Helen Hall, Jay Smink and Judy Zaenglein.)

- Field Representatives (Waves I and II)

There are currently 76 PDE field representatives providing assistance to approximately 202 districts:

PDE Field Rep	PDE Field Rep
Kenneth Adams	Clyde McGeary
Loretta Adderson	John Meehan
Randall Bauer	Kenneth Miller
Carol Bellew	Leann Miller
John Billman	Tom Mullikin
James Bishop	William Murphy
James Blair	Biagio Musto

PDE Field Rep	PDE Field Rep
John Brandt	Wayne Neff
Joseph Carr	Marjorie Peck
Robert Carroll	John Peifer
Sam Craig	Mario Pirritano
Annamary Cunningham	James Porter
Joseph DeAngelis	Paul Raffensperger
Russell Demanczyk	Vernon Register
William Donny	John Resetar
James Dorwart	Neil Richvalsky
Jeff Douville	Jessie Sanders
Richard Dumaresq	Robert Schell
Clara Gaston	Robert Schwille
William Good	James Sheffer
Jeff Grotsky	Bruce Shellenberger
Frederica Haas	Ronald Simonovich
Lee Herron	Gene Skiffington
John Heycock	Joe Skok
James Holmes	Ruby Sollenberger
Karl Hope	Ron Stainbrook
Alan Husband	Jane Stockdale
William Isler	Janet Straw
William Kautz	Kenneth Swatt
Charles Lebo	Helen Swaincott
William Lentz	Eugene Urbanski
James Lewis	Robert Volciak
Edwin Lint	Roberta Waldman
Bernie Manning	Kenneth Wallick
Samuel Marcus	Wally Weaver
John Markish	Clyde Weidner
James Massey	James Wetzler
	Thomas Winter
	Jean Wright

INTERMEDIATE UNIT PARTNERS

- Intermediate Unit School Improvement Advisor(s)

There are currently 36 Intermediate Unit School improvement advisors providing assistance to select districts in their regions with the LRPSI provess.

IU#	Intermediate Unit	School Improvement Advisor(s)
1	Fayette/Green/Washington	Ida M. Procyk, Linda H. Weber
2	Pittsburgh-Mt. Oliver	Curtis Walker
3	Allegheny	Wayne Brandon, Therese Walter
4	Midwestern	Janice Hadgkiss
5	Northwest Tri-County	Jack Jarvie
6	Clarion Manor	Don Means

IU#	Intermediate Unit	School Improvement Advisor(s)
7	Westmoreland	Gene Malarbi, Harrie Caldwell
8	Appalachia	Clyde Klinger
9	Seneca Highlands	Charles Sarokon
10	Central	John DeFlaminis
11	Tuscarora	Anthony F. Labriola
12	Lincoln	Paul Ricker, Mike Clemens
13	Lancaster-Lebanon	Lee R. Rhodes
14	Berks County	Robert Hohl
15	Capital Area	Robert V. Flynn
16	Central Susquehanna	Joan Straub
17	BLAST	John E. Fiorini, Jr.
18	Luzerne	Thomas O'Donnell
19	Northeastern Educational	Vito A. Forlenza
20	Colonial Northampton	Vincent Yuskiewicz
21	Carbon-Lehigh	Floyd Keim
22	Bucks County	Metro Yurchak
23	Montgomery County	David Barrett
24	Chester County	Charles Garris, John Bush
25	Delaware County	James Shields, Nicholas Spennato
26	Philadelphia	Bernard Kelner
27	Beaver Valley	Thomas Zelesnik
28	Arin	Thomas P. Carey
29	Schuylkill	Joseph Yarworth, B. J. Steiner

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

- College and University (IHE) Resources for School Improvement

Column One — IHE - Alphabetical list of (1) Pennsylvania colleges and universities with approved certification programs and (2) community colleges expressing an interest in an assistance role. (IHE = Institution of Higher Education.)

Column Two — IU - For planning purposes, the geographical area (intermediate unit) in which the IHE is located is given. This is not to be considered as imposing limits on the IHE or the school district/IU.

Column Three — Code - The broad curriculum areas of potential assistance are coded as follows: E = elementary, S = secondary, A = administration.

Column Four — School Improvement Coordinator - Presidents of IHEs with an identified SI coordinator have expressed a desire to assume a partnership role in School Improvement and have appointed

the person listed to organize IHE resources to meet districts' needs.

Column Contact Person - Where no SI coordinator is given, the official contact person for teacher education matters may be able to provide information regarding the IHE's involvement in School Improvement.

IHE	IU	Code	School Improvement Coordinator	Contact Person
Albright College Reading, PA 19603 215-921-2381	14	S		Clifford A. Burket
Allegheny College Meadville, PA 16335 814--724-3100	5	ES	Robert P. Schall	Robert P. Schall
Allentown College of St. Francis de Sales Center Valley, PA 18034 215-282-1100	21	S	A. Robert McGilvray	A. Robert McGilvray
Alliance College Cambridge Springs, PA, 16403 814-398-4611	5	ES		Walter Smietana
Alvernia College Reading, PA 19607 215-777-5411	14	ES		Sr. M. Pacelli
Antioch Univ. Phila. Philadelphia, PA 19108 215-629-1370	26	ES	Frederick Jones	Frederick Jones
Beaver College Glenside, PA 19038 215-884-3500	23	ESA	A. Richard Polis/Joan Schmidt	A. Richard Polis
Bloomsburg State College Bloomsburg, PA 17815 717-389-3215	16	ES	Howard Macauley, Jr.	Howard Macauley, Jr.

IHE	IU	Code	School Improvement Coordinator	Contact Person
Bryn Mawr College Bryn Mawr, PA 19010 215-645-5000	25	S	Janet Hoopes	Janet Hoopes
Bucknell University Lewisburg, PA 17837 717-524-1324	16	ESA	William Moore/ Hugh McKeegan	William Moore
Cabrini College Radnor, PA 19087 215-687-2100	25	ES		Ruth E. Sower
California State College California, PA 15419 412-938-4126	1	ESA	William Benedetti	William Benedetti
Capitol Campus Penn State University Middletown, PA 17057 717-787-6205	15	ES	Donald Alexander	Stanley N. Miller
Carlow College Pittsburgh, PA 15213 412-578-6000	2	ES	Frances Sabo	Sr. Marie Immaculee Dana
Cedar Crest College Allentown, PA 18104 215-437-4471	21	ES		Howard L. Klopp
Chatham College Pittsburgh, PA 15232 412-441-8200	2	ES		Vivien C. Richman
Chestnut Hill College Philadelphia, PA 19118 215-248-7000	26	ES	Sr. Marie Cornelia	Sr. Margeret Mary Murphy
Cheyney State College Cheyney, PA 19319 215-758-2282	25	ESA	Herbert W. Womack	Herbert W. Womack
Clarion State College Clarion, PA 16214 814-226-2000	6	ES	Donald Morgan	Thomas Matczysnki

IHE	IU	Code	School Improvement Coordinator	Contact Person
College Misericordia Dallas, PA 18612 717-675-2181	18	ES	Joseph Rogan	James J. Pallante
Dickinson College Carlisle, PA 17013 717-243-5121	15	S		Gary D'Lamater
Drexel University Philadelphia, PA 19104 215-895-2000	26	S		Lois Pearson
Duquesne University Pittsburgh, PA 15282 412-434-6000	2	ESA	Mary Frances Grasinger	Dorothy A. Frayer
East Stroudsburg State College East Stroudsburg, PA 18301 717-424-3211	20	ES	Donald R. Bortz	Lester J. Bowers
Eastern College St. Davids, PA 19087 215-688-3300	25	ES	Helen W. Loeb	Helen W. Loeb
Edinboro State College Edinboro, PA 16444 814-732-2000	5	ESA	James R. Flynn	Martin Farabaugh
Elizabethtown College Elizabethtown, PA 17022 717-367-1151	13	ES	D. Paul Rice	D. Paul Rice
Franklin & Marshall College Lancaster, PA 17604 717-291-3911	13	S	Barbara Michel	Terry Blue
Gannon University Erie, PA 16541 814-871-7000	5	S	Robert Wehrer	Robert Wehrer
Geneva College Beaver Falls, PA 15010 412-846-5100	27	ES		George Van Horne

IHE	IU	Code	School Improvement Coordinator	Contact Person
Gettysburg College Gettysburg, PA 17325 717-334-3131	12	ES	Bruce L. Packard	Bruce L. Packard
Grove City College Grove City, PA 16127 412-458-6600	4	ES	Joseph Joy	Jean A.Wilson
Gwynedd-Mercy College Gwynedd Valley, PA 19437 215-646-7300	23	ES	Sr. Marie Madeleine Smith	Sr. Catherine Rawley
Holy Family College Philadelphia, PA 19114 215-637-7700	26	ES	Joseph M. Burak	Sr. M. Immaculata
Immaculata College Immaculata, PA 19345 215-647-4400	24	ES	Sr. M. Lalande	Sr. M. Lalande
Indiana Univ. of PA Indiana, PA 15705 412-357-2480	28	ES	Charles M. Kofoid	Charles M. Kofoid
Johnstown, Univ. of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, PA 15904 814-266-6119	8	ES	David L. Dunlap/ Gail S. Ditkoff	David L. Dunlap
Juniata College Huntingdon, PA 16652 814-643-4310	11	ES	Thomas Woodrow	Thomas Woodrow
Kings College Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711 717-824-9931	18	S	Denton B. May	Michael Beky
Kutztown State College Kutztown, PA 19530 215-683-4254	14	ES	Dorothy Moyer	Henry M. Ryan
Lafayette College Easton, PA 18042 215-253-6281	20	S	Clay Ketcham	Clay Ketcham

IHE	IU	Code	School Improvement Coordinator	Contact Person
LaSalle College Philadelphia, PA 19141 215-951-1000	26	ES	Preston Fedan	Marilyn Lambert
Lebanon Valley College Annville, PA 17003 717-867-4411	13	ES	Michael Grella	Richard A. Reed
Lehigh University Bethlehem, PA 18015 215-861-3001	20	ESA	Stinson Stroup/ Robert Leight	Perry A. Zirkel
Lincoln Univeristy Lincoln University, PA 19352 215-932-8300	24	S		Judith Thomas
Lock Haven State College Lock Haven, PA 17745 717-893-1381	10	ES	Ira Masemore	Ira Masemore
Lycoming College Williamsport, PA 17701 717-326-1951	17	ES		Forrest Keesbury
Mansfield State College Mansfield, PA 16933 717-662-4041	17	ES	Leslie Evans	John M. Higgins
Marywood College Scranton, PA 18509 717-348-6211	19	ES	Sr. Frances Russell	Sr. M. Espiritu Dempsey
Mercyhurst College Erie, PA 16501 814-825-4000	5	ES	Edward Gallagher	Brian J. McHugh
Messiah College Grantham, PA 17027 717-766-2511	15	ES	Terry Stoudnour	Terry Stoudnour
Millersville State College Millersville, PA 17551 717-872-3379	13	ES	Robert Labriola	James Maurey, Jr.

IHE	IU	Code	School Improvement Coordinator	Contact Person
Moore College of Art Philadelphia, PA 19103 215-568-4515	26	S	Hilda Schoenwetter	Janette Banks
Moravian College Bethlehem, PA 18018 215-865-0741	20	ES	John Dilendik	James J. Heller
Muhlenberg College Allentown, PA 18104 215-433-3191	21	ES		Harold L. Stenger
Neumann College Aston, PA 19014 215-459-0905	25	E	Sr. Mary Ruth Schutz	Sr. Mary Ruth Schutz
Pennsylvania State University University Park, PA 16802 814-865-4700	10	ESA	Robert F. Nicely, Jr.	Henry Hermanowicz
Phila. College of Art Philadelphia, PA 19102 215-893-3100	26	S		Arlene Gostin
Phila. College of the Performing Arts Philadelphia, PA 19102 215-875-2200	26	S		Douglas S. Medlin
Point Park College Pittsburgh, PA 15222 412-391-4100	2	ES	Lloyd C. Welling	Karen McIntyre
Robert Morris College Coraopolis, PA 15108 412-264-9300	3	S	Phyllis Morrison	Phyllis Morrison
Rosemont College Rosemont, PA 19010 215-527-0200	23	ES	Sr. Margaret Mary Bell	Anna-Maria Moggio
Saint Francis College Loretto, PA 15904 814-472-7000	8	ES	Frank T. Koe	Frank T. Koe

IHE	IU	Code	School Improvement Coordinator	Contact Person
St. Joseph's University Philadelphia, PA 19131 215-879-7300	26	ES	Irene Kenney	Irene Kenney
Saint Vincent College Latrobe, PA 15650 412-539-9761	7	S		John F. Bleyer
Seton Hill College Greensburg, PA 15601 412-834-2200	7	ES		Dwight Troutman
Shippensburg State College Shippensburg, PA 17257 717-532-9121	15	ESA	Dale B. Merkle	Wilbur O. Carthey
Slippery Rock State College Slippery Rock, PA 16057 412-794-7255	4	ES	John A. Hicks	B. Wayne Walker
Susquehanna University Selinsgrove, PA 17870 717-374-0101	16	S	Barbara Lewis	Charles J. Igoe
Swarthmore College Swarthmore, PA 19081 215-447-7000	25	S	Eva Travers	Harrison Wright
Temple University Philadelphia, PA 19122 215-787-7000	26	ESA	Elliott Seif	Peter J. Cistone
Thiel College Greenville, PA 16125 412-588-7700	4	ES	Albert A. Zimmer	Albert A. Zimmer
Univ. of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, PA 19104 215-243-7014	26	ESA		Dell H. Hymes
Univ. of Pittsburgh Pittsburgh, PA 15260 412-624-4141	2	ESA	Jean E. Winsand	James Kelly, Jr.

IHE	IU	Code	School Improvement Coordinator	Contact Person
University of Scranton Scranton, PA 18510 717-961-7400	19	ES	Joseph F. Fusaro	Raymond L. Kimble
Ursinus College Collegeville, PA 19426 215-489-4111	23	S	Robert V. Cogger	Robert V. Cogger
Villa Maria College Erie, PA 16505 814-838-1966	5	ES	Robert Buchmeier	Robert Buchmeier
Villanova University Villanova, PA 19085 215-645-4500	25	SA		Henry O. Nichols
Washington & Jefferson College Washington, PA 15301 412-222-4400	1	S		William W. Leake
Waynesburg College Waynesburg, PA 15370 412-627-8191	1	ES		Donald Christian
West Chester State College West Chester, PA 19380 215-436-2321	24	ES	Chalres W. Good	Richard Strayer
Westminister College New Wilmington, PA 16142 412-946-8761	4	ESA	Samuel Farmerie	Samuel Farmerie
Widener University Chester, PA 19013 215-499-4000	25	S	Robert J. Wri[illegible]	Robert J. Wright
Wilkes College Wilkes-Barre, PA 18703 717-824-4651	18	ES	Edwin L. Johnson	Eugene L. Hammer
Wilson College Chambersburg, PA 17201 717-264-4141	12	ES		Eugene Beecher

IHE	IU	Code	School Improvement Coordinator	Contact Person
York College York, PA 17405 717-846-7788	12	ES	Lynn S. Orlando	Dean Cheesebrough
COMMUNITY COLLEGES				
Bucks County Community College Newtown, PA 18940 215-968-5861	22		Charles Rollins	
Butler County Community College College Drive, Oask Hills Butler, PA 16001 412-287-8711	4		James O. Miller	
Lehigh County Community College 2370 Main Street Schnecksville, PA 18078 215-799-2121	21		Robert L. Barthlow	
Montgomery County Community College 340 DeKalb Pike Blue Bell, PA 19422 215-643-6000	23		Albert Rauer	
Northampton County Area Community College 3835 Green Pond Road Bethlehem, PA 18017 215-865-5351	20		William Connor	
Reading Area Community College 10 S. 2nd St., Box 1706 Reading, PA 19603 215-372-4721	14		Robert Gill	

1981-1982 College and University/District Partnerships

Sixty-four Wave II districts and 31 Wave I districts have joined with 25 colleges/universities in this year's IHE partnership program. Partnership activities as of February 10, 1982 included:

Partnership	Wave
Bloomsburg State College	
Midd-West S. D.	I
Bloomsburg Area S. D.	II
Shamokin Area S. D.	II
Cheyney State College	
West Chester Area S. D.	II
Clarion State College	
Cranberry Area S. D.	I
St. Mary's Area S. D.	I
Union S. D.	I
Fairview S. D.	II
Punxsutawney Area S. D.	II
Redbank Valley S. D.	II
Titusville S. D.	II
Warren Co. S. D.	II
Duquesne University	
Bentworth S. D.	I
West Allegheny S. D.	II
Mt. Lebanon S. D.	II
South Park S. D.	II
East Stroudsburg State College	
Delaware Valley S. D.	II
East Stroudsburg S. D.	II
Northampton Area S. D.	II
Eastern College	
Radnor Township S. D.	II
Gwynedd-Mercy College	
Abington S. D.	I
Souderton Area S. D.	I
Wissahickon S. D.	
Indiana University of Pennsylvania	
Indiana Area S. D.	I
Penns Manor S. D.	II
Apollo-Ridge S. D.	II
Blairsville/Saltsburg S.D.	II
Leechburg S. D.	II
United S. D.	II
King's College	
Pittson Area S. D.	II
Lehigh University	
Parkland S. D.	II
Pennridge S. D.	II
Upper Perkiomen S. D.	II
Lock Haven State College	
West Branch Area S. D.	II
Mansfield State College	
Towanda Area S. D.	II
Canton Area S. D.	II
Millersville State College	
Antietam S. D.	I
Daniel Boone Area S. D.	I
S. D. of Lancaster	I
Tulpenhocken S. D.	I
Conestoga Valley S. D.	II
Donegal S. D.	II
Lebanon S. D.	II
Palmyra S. D.	II
Exeter Township S. D.	II
Muhlenberg Township S.D.	II
Wilson S. D.	II
Pennsylvania State University	
Clearfield Area S. D.	II
West Branch Area S. D.	II
Saint Francis College	
Bellwood Antis S. D.	I
Tyrone Area S. D.	I
Blacklick Valley S. D.	II
Shippensburg State College	
Central York S. D.	I
Cumberland Valley S. D.	I
Shippensburg Area S. D.	I
Upper Adams S. D.	I
Conewago Valley S. D.	II
Greencastle-Antrim S.D.	II
Greenwood S. D.	II
Mifflin County S. D.	II
Big Spring S. D.	II
West Shore S. D.	II

Partnership	Wave
Temple University	
Wissahickon S. D.	I
Ridley S. D.	II
University of Pittsburgh	
Butler Area S. D.	I
Trinity Area S. D.	I
Frazier S. D.	II
Keystone Oaks S. D.	II
University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown	
Forest Hills S. D.	II
Somerset Area S. D.	I
Conemaugh Valley S. D.	II
University of Scranton	
Wallenpaupack Area S. D.	II
West Chester State College	
Wallingford Swarthmore S. D.	I
Downingtown Area S. D.	II
Upper Darby S. D.	II
Widener University	
Bristol Boro S. D.	I
Radnor Township S. D.	II
York College of Pennsylvania	
Central York S. D.	I
Upper Adams S. D.	I
West York Area S. D.	I
Southern York and So. Western S. D.	II
Lincoln University	
Oxford Area S. D.	II
Marywood College	
Western Wayne S. D.	II

APPENDIX E

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ROLES AND
PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ROLES

- Introduction

For a college or university to have an assistance role in school improvement, it must be invited by a school district and must be willing to accept the invitation. College or university willingness to participate means that it will (a) establish a pairing relationship with a school district, (b) appoint its own coordinator for assistance services, (c) evaluate the quality of services and (d) support professional development activities for its own education faculty. Because of resource and size limitations, some colleges and universities may wish to form a consortium to respond to a district's invitation.

- Pairing Relationships

Pairing relationships are intended to provide high visibility for many existing forms of cooperation and to stimulate new forms. A relationship involving a college, university or consortium and one or more school districts should be developed for the mutual benefit of all partners and should be described in a letter of understanding. The letter might include items such as:

a. a specific number of consultant days (e. g., 10 days) contributed by the college, university or consortium to the school district,

b. a rate of compensation for any consultant days beyond the number of contributed days,

c. school district requests for college, university or individual faculty member services through the college, university or consortium school improvement services coordinator,

d. opportunities for various short term professional experiences for education faculty members in the school district*,

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*General Standard III: "The appropriate faculty shall have the institution's support for continuing professional development including experiences in situ designed to keep the faculty informed of the perspectives of basic education." Policies, Procedures and Standards for the Certification of Professional School Personnel (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1978)

- Coordinator

The college, university or consortium will appoint a member of its staff to coordinate its services for School Improvement. This coordinator, along with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's field representative and the intermediate unit school improvement advisor, will assemble college or university assistance as requested by school district administrators and faculty. Because colleges and universities vary considerably in size and areas of expertise, the nature of the coordinator's role will vary from institution to institution. Generally, a coordinator might become involved in activities such as:

a. meeting with the intermediate unit advisor and department field representative for information sharing,

b. receiving all school district requests for assistance and assembling available services,

c. providing the advisor and field representative with information about faculty assistance capability,

d. ascertaining a school district's satisfaction with the college's or university's assistance,

e. participating in six days of training for field representatives, advisors and coordinators and in the two-day summer workshops for school districts with which partnerships have been established and

f. facilitating the college, university or consortium faculty's use of opportunities for professional experiences in the school district

For some colleges and universities, the coordinator's only role may be to provide a school district's initial contact with an institution. For others, the coordinator may become involved in extensive school district work along with the department's field representative and the intermediate unit's advisor.

- Evaluation of Services

The college, university or consortium will develop its own policies and procedures which should assure that the services of the institution or faculty members reflect well the institution's capabilities and respond to the needs expressed by school district faculty and administrators. According to the pairing letter of understanding, all school district requests for college, university, consortium or individual faculty assistance should be directed to the coordinator.

- Education Faculty Development

According to General Standard III--in effect since 1976--colleges and universities with approved certification programs support continuing professional development including experiences in situ to keep the faculty informed of the perspectives of basic education. The pairing relationships for school improvement open additional opportunities for a college or university to satisfy the program approval standard. The experience of professional development in situ is particularly important because the changing climate of the public schools requires changed procedures, content and expectations for educators and those who prepare educators.

PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL PROCESS FOR
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Request for Proposals
College and University Partnership Program for School Improvement
Pennsylvania Department of Education
Office of Higher Education
Harrisburg, PA 17126

- Introduction

School improvement is a commitment to growth toward Pennsylvania's goals of quality education. As such it is a commitment to improve strengths and to minimize weaknesses in schools and in professional preparation and certification. It is a cooperative partnership involving faculty--elementary, secondary, college and university--students, administrators, school board members, parents and other community members using the resources available through intermediate units, colleges, universities, research and development centers, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education and aimed toward making every school a good school.

- Program Goals

The college and university partnership program for school improvement is intended above all else to promote a mutually beneficial relationship between school districts and colleges and universities. The school districts should gain valuable technical assistance and colleges and universities should gain essential school district experiences for faculty. Pairing relationships between a school district and a college, university or consortium should be created which will be sustained long after the funding period for this request for proposals. School districts should receive college and university technical assistance at minimum cost to the districts. All colleges and universities with an interest in school improvement and a relationship with a Wave I district should have an opportunity to participate.

The statement of "College and University Roles" in school improvement (4/28/80)--written in consultation with the Higher Education Advisory Committee on School Improvement--presents the general expectations for this request for proposals. Pairing relationships, contributed assistance services and field training opportunities are forms of cooperation which have always existed among Pennsylvania's school districts, colleges and should (a) provide greater visibility to existing forms of cooperation, (b) stimulate new forms of cooperation and (c) concentrate resources in the school districts in the first wave of school improvement and in participating colleges and universities.

- Applicant Eligibility

A proposal may be submitted by a college, university or consortium of colleges and universities which has made mutually acceptable arrangements with (a) school district(s) to provide assistance.

Proposal Categories

The categories of proposals are:

A. Consultation and/or Technical Assistance (39 proposals at amounts up to $1,000)

B. Special Project: Twelve Goals of Quality Education* (6 proposals at amounts up to $2,000)

C. Exemplary Partnership (3 proposals at amounts up to $3,000)

Proposals in all categories shall reflect the attached statement of "College and University Roles." Category A supports general assistance to the district and Category B supports general assistance as well as a focused approach to improvement in one or more of the Twelve Goals of Quality Education. Category C supports general assistance as well as the steps which will lead to and implement an exemplary partnership--one which addresses issues such as governance and management of the partnership, research, and technical assistance and one which may be replicated in another location by partners with similar characteristics.

Examples of the kinds of general assistance a school district might need during the first year (Needs Assessment and Action Planning Stages) of school improvement include:

-- goal definition, clarification and analysis

-- curriculum analysis with respect to scope, sequence, testing and materials

-- instructional data collection, analysis and interpretation

-- improvement evaluation design

-- leadership training in project management and budget

-- identification and demonstration of teaching methodologies/strategies

-- team/group facilitation

-- data management

-- formative and summative evaluations

---

*Communication, Mathematics, Self Esteem, Analytical Thinking, Understanding Others, Citizenship, Art and the Humanities, Science and Technology, Work, Family Living, Health and Environment. A brief description of each goal appears at the end of this request for proposals.

-- identification of successful practices and current research

-- community involvement processes

-- organization (district) self-development

- Use of Grant Funds

Program grant funds may be used by the college, university or consortium for:

1. Reasonable transportation and meal expenses for the coordinator and faculty-consultant.*

2. Faculty-consultant honoraria for services above and beyond on-going faculty responsibilities and college or university services.

3. Reasonable meal expenses associated with a college/university training program in school improvement and joint planning meetings (Category C only) with school district staff.

4. Reasonable transportation meal expenses to district and IU buildings for in situ (General Standard III) experience programs.

Program grant funds may not be used for administrative or clerical staff services, coordination services or in place of regular salaries.

- Funding Period

Projects funded through this request for proposals must be completed by June 30, 1981.

- Proposed Format

A proposal may be very brief--two to five pages in length, including the cover page which presents the budget and essential personnel information. The proposal sections are:

A. Goal(s) and Objectives (For Category A proposal, the "Letter of Understanding" may be sufficient)

B. Project Evaluation Procedures

C. Action Steps and Timeline

D. Letter of Understanding (Appendix)

---

*The travel destinations include buildings within Wave I districts, intermediate unit offices, Harrisburg and other locations designated by the PDE.

A sample cover page is attached to this request for proposals. The final report will include documentation of grant expenditures and a project evaluation. Category C project final reports will include a description of the steps leading to the exemplary partnership as well as a partnership description sufficient to guide other institutions and districts in a replication of the partnership.

- Application Procedures

Proposals in five (5) copies shall be received by the department on or before September 1, 1980 with notice of funding by September 15, 1980. Proposals which are late because of the timing of a district's invitation or summer vacation schedules will be considered throughout September and October as funds are available. For late proposals, please indicate before September 1 your intent to respond. A copy of your "Letter of Understanding" with a school district must be appended to the proposal. Mail or deliver the proposal to:

Sam B. Craig, Jr.
Special Assistant to the Commissioner
for Higher Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education
16th Floor - 333 Market Street
Box 911
Harrisburg, PA 171267

Please direct questions which arise in the preparation of your proposal to Sam B. Craig, Jr., Harold C. Wisor, or Jane A. Stockdale.

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE LONG RANGE PLANNING FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Resource Guide:

(Sections 1-3 only)

Guide Three

Needs Assessment (Programs and Services)

Compiled and edited by;
James W. Blair
Ethelyn O. Brewster

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS

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Carl P. Beck	Solanco School District
Robert Flynn	Capital Area Intermediate Unit
Jan Hadgkiss	Midwestern Intermediate Unit
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Dale Merkle	Shippensburg State College
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Harrisburg
Indiana Area
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Solanco
Tuscarora Intermediate Unit
West York Area

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LRPSI RESOURCE GUIDE:
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Table of Contents

SECTION 1:
INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Programs and services needs assessment is the process by which a district determines primary areas of student strengths and needs on a building basis and districtwide. Figure 1 presents an excerpt from the LRPSI PROCESS GUIDE which describes the major outcomes, basic tasks, and reporting requirements associated with programs and services needs assessment.

Figure 1

Step 2a	Analyze Building/District Programs and Services Strengths and Needs
Major Outcomes	The major outcome of programs and services needs assessment is the determination of the primary areas of student strength and weakness on a building basis, and the assignment of priorities to the needs identified. To achieve the above outcome, districts confirm their programs and services goals; analyze the relationship among school courses, student achievement and the Twelve Goals of Quality Education; and analyze student growth on a variety of achievement and attitude measures.
Basic Tasks	1. Establish district goals for programs and services and analyze the relationship of the district's goals and planned courses to the Twelve Goals of Quality Education 2. Develop and implement a plan for assessing strengths and needs in the area of programs and services 3. Collect, analyze, and summarize data on current student performance (growth) on the district's goals and data regarding staff and community perceptions of goal importance and level of attainment 4. Determine priorities for action planning at both the school and district levels
Reporting Requirements	1. List the district's programs and services goals. Relate them to the Twelve Goals of Quality Education. 2. List the titles of the district's Planned Courses (K-12). Relate them to the Twelve Goals. a. Indicate which Planned Courses deal with intergroup relations and content regarding minority, racial, ethnic group, and/or womens' roles.

b. Describe the extent of coordination and articulation among Planned Courses across grades, goal areas and buildings (K-12).
c. Describe systematic procedures used to adapt curriculum sources (texts, etc.) to local needs.

3. List the data sources for each goal used to assess student growth.
4. List by building for each goal area, whether student growth is evident, not evident, or that no data are available.
5. List district and building goal priorities.

Time Involved: Approximately 4-6 months.

The following points about programs and services needs assessment should be emphasized:

1. Definition and Purpose:

. Needs assessment is most often defined as a systematic process for examining the relationship between ideal or intended conditions (goals/objectives -- WHAT SHOULD BE) and real conditions (program, test and/or opinion data -- WHAT IS).

. The purpose of programs and services needs assessment is to determine both strengths and needs. Areas of strength are goals which are being achieved; areas of need are goals which are not being achieved.

. The process assumes that the district and schools have a set of goals and a program which helps students achieve them (See LRPSI Process Guide).

. The outcome is a list of priorities by goal area which a school's staff and community want to address to maintain student performance.

. A distinction can be made between discrepancy and deficiency models (how one examines the relationship between WHAT SHOULD BE and WHAT IS). Deficiency models tend to focus on goals for which achievement or performance is low. Discrepancy models focus on the performance status of all goals: equal attention is given to strengths and needs, and both are considered in setting priorities and allocating resources.

Types of Needs Assessment Studies and Data:

Several general types of studies and supporting data can be pursued in conducting a needs assessment to determine areas of school strength and need:

- Studies of staff and community opinions about goal importance--useful for focusing the subsequent collection of performance data to determine needs and useful for establishing priorities once needs are identified.

- Studies of staff and community opinions of student performance (discrepancy questionnaires, etc.) --- useful for the subjective measure of the degree to which goals are being achieved.

- Studies involving analyses of program data (e.g., planned course analyses; curriculum mappings) -- useful for determining which goals are not addressed systematically in the curriculum.

- Studies involving analyses of student performance data (e.g., test results, student products, ratings of student performance, systematic observations of student behavior) -- useful for the objective measure of the degree to which goals are being achieved.

- Combination studies (joint analyses of opinion, program and/or test data) to verify the overall picture --- useful for obtaining cross-validated information (objective and subjective) on the status of school or district needs.

3. Critical Decisions

The critical decisions which school staff make when planning needs assessments generally involve the following questions:

- What are the specific purposes of the study?

- At what level and in what form will district goals be stated?

- What procedure will be used to determine relative goal importance and who will be involved?

- Which goals can actually be assessed via achievement data analyses?

- What objective data and subjective information will be collected and used to assess goal achievement?

- What procedures (decision rules) will be used to combine data into a form that facilitates determination of strengths and needs at the school building level?

- What decision rules will be used to combine and evaluate data from the various school buildings in order to determine priorities for action planning at the district level?

4. Analysis Procedures and Decision Rules:

Each of the needs assessment studies and resultant data provide comparative information about goals. Objective data on relative goal achievement is usually summed across groups and categorized or reported in terms of percentile bands, stanines and/or absolute scores. Subjective opinion data on goal importance or achievement is also summed across groups and categorized. Once the various types of study data are summarized and categorized, decision rules are used to combine the data to determine which goals should be priorities for action planning. The three (3) general types of decision rules or procedures employed (tabular approach, decision matrix and formula approach) to combine data for final decision-making are illustrated in Section 5.

5. General Cautions:

- Needs assessment should focus not only on easy-to-measure cognitive goals or skills but also should examine more difficult-to-measure skills, attitudes and values.

- It is very important to involve school staff and community representatives in the planning and implementation of a needs assessment. The process is as important as the product. Staff and community who have been involved will "own" the data and will not have to be "sold" on the fact that work is needed on a specific goal. Where staff and community have not been involved, priorities tend to be viewed as coming from the top down and are less apt to be accepted and supported.

SECTION 2:
DISTRICT VARIATIONS IN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Technical assistance partners should expect to see variation in the way districts approach programs and services needs assessment. Some of the variations among districts will reflect:

1. Needs Assessment Expertise/History. District staffs vary in knowledge and skills. For example, some districts will have recently completed Middle-States, an IU sponsored Evaluation Review, or a more general needs assessment independent of LRPSI. These districts will likely desire to use these data as part of their LRPSI needs assessment. They should be encouraged to do so. Other districts may have last completed a needs assessment during their previous long-range planning effort and may be open to suggestion for the current LRPSI process.

2. District Goals. Districts' educational goals will vary in number, content and level of specificity. Districts also will vary in the degree to which their goals are systematically related to the schools' real curriculum, instruction and testing program.

3. Planned Courses. Districts will vary widely regarding the status of their planned courses. Districts that have, or are moving toward, planned courses across the board will be able to complete more readily the planned course analyses called for by LRPSI. (The Planned Course - Guidelines)

4. Information and Data Available. Districts will vary widely in the quantity and quality of information they maintain with regard to both instruction and management.

   At one extreme are districts that:

   - have criterion referenced instructional systems in place for one or several subject areas.
   - administer batteries of achievement tests at several grade levels.
   - systematically update goals, curriculum and testing.
   - maintain extensive student records.
   - follow-up graduates to adjust course offerings.

At the other extreme are districts that:

- have less precise instructional systems.
- have access only to EQA data and perhaps a single standardized test.
- are much less systematic about the relationship among goals, curricula and testing.
- are less systematic about student records and follow-up.

Districts that differ widely in their policies toward curriculum, instruction and testing will vary in their capacity to identify specific student needs. In general, a more detailed assessment of needs should be expected from districts that have more fully developed policies and practices in these areas.

5. Alternative Approaches. Districts will vary in the specific procedures and approaches they use for needs assessment, such as:

- the goals they establish to structure their needs assessment.
- the procedures they employ to determine the importance of the goals.
- the goals for which test data is actually collected.
- the kind and amount of opinion data they collect and the overall emphasis they place on opinion data.
- the nature and extent of the test data they examine to assess goal achievement.
- the level of specificity of assessment for each goal.
- the nature and extent of their planned course analyses.
- the decision rules they use to combine program, test and opinion data -- at building and at district levels -- in order to arrive at priority goals for action planning.
- the relative degree of involvement of various audiences -- teachers, parents, etc.

The above variations are to be expected. The intent of LRPSI is that each district implement programs and services needs assessment in a manner that is most fitting to the district's capabilities and operating procedures. Overall, LRPSI needs assessment is intended to encourage districts to engage in data-based analyses of student performance in all goal areas.

SECTION 3:
POSSIBLE ROLES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WITH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This section suggests ways in which technical assistance partners can assist districts and maintain partnership relations with district staff and other technical assistance partners. Technical assistance partners can provide a number of services:

Assisting with Programs and Services Needs Assessment

1. Provide a conceptual overview of the purpose and outcomes of programs and services needs assessment. Clarify and interpret the information in the Revised LRPSI Guidelines and the Process Guide.

2. Present examples showing how other districts approached each of the needs assessment tasks.

3. Help districts identify information or technical assistance needs regarding needs assessment; suggest alternative ways PDE, the IU's or IHE's might provide help to address those needs; negotiate what help districts would actually like to receive. For example:

   - facilitate delivery of district's EQA results.
   - assist with interpretation of "district profile data" or EQA report.
   - present and explain methods and procedures used by other districts.
   - deliver workshops to district and school staff.
   - make district staff aware of PDE workshops or Executive Academies on needs assessment.

Maintaining Partnerships

1. Initiate regular contact with technical assistance partner working with the district to coordinate provision of services, information sharing and problem-solving.

2. Examine past district needs assessments to develop an understanding of district experience and expertise.

3. Initiate conversations with key district staff about needs assessment and explore district attitudes, capabilities and needs. If possible, discuss past needs assessments in detail: purpose, information collected, use of information, consultants used, problems encountered, etc.

4. Maintain regular communication with key district staff.

APPENDIX G

LONG-RANGE PLANNING FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
MID-POINT LRPSI PROGRESS REPORT GUIDELINES

(May 1, 1982)

A Mid-point Progress Report should be submitted to the Department of Education after substantial progress has been made in the district's implementation of its Long Range Plan for School for Improvement. The report should be approximately five pages in length, and should contain the information outlined below. The completed report should be given to the district's PDE school improvement field representative, who will forward it to the appropriate regional director in the School Improvement Administrative Division (SIAD).

A. Major District-Wide Activities and Outcomes (LRPSI Sections 1-5)

Describe (list), by LRPSI section, each of the major activities which are completed or in progress. Provide a brief evaluation of the outcomes of the activity to date. Use appropriate supporting data where possible.

B. Individual Building-Level Activities and Outcomes

By building, list each priority goal and provide a brief impact statement for each goal's implementation progress.

C. District-Wide Needs, Constraints, Required Assistance

Describe any district-wide LRPSI-related needs revealed by your ongoing evaluation. Include constraints, technical assistance required and any additional related concerns.

OPTIONAL

Updating the Long Range Plan for School Improvement

Describe any substantial changes in the LRPSI that are anticipated by the school district as revealed by an analysis of the activities and evaluation included in this report.

NOTE: Substantial LRPSI changes (for example: addition or change in goal priorities; major educational program changes; school building closings, renovation or construction; major enrollment changes; grade reorganizations; staff reorganizations) should receive school board approval before submission to the Bureau of School Improvement via the

school improvement field representative.

An abbreviated example of an LRPSI Progress Report is attached and represents one reporting method. School districts may select their own format and reporting style. Questions concerning the report may be directed to the PDE School Improvement field representative or regional director.

(OPTIONAL EXAMPLE)
LRPSI PROGRESS REPORT

School District _____ Submitted by _____
(Typed Name)

Address _____ Signature _____
(Superintendent or LRPSI Coordinator)

_____ Date _____

Phone _____ SI Field Rep. _____

A. MAJOR DISTRICT-WIDE ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES (LRPSI, SECTIONS 1-5)

Activities Completed or in Progress:

Section 1: Programs and Services

Priority Goals	Outcomes
1. Communications	Mean scores of commercial tests (SAT, CAT) and EQA show a slight increase in the elementary program. Secondary scroes have increased within EQA predicted band. Faculty survey indicates overall improvement in student writing skills at all levels.
2. Mathematics	The intent to complete a K-12 mathematics continuum. . .

Section 2: School District Management

1. Direct supervisory and curriculum development efforts toward improving curriculum and instruction in each priority goal area.	Act 80 days were used for inservice of staff on district-wide priority goals. Our IHE partner (Everyone University) provided assistance according to the needs identified by staff. Meeting dates were ...

Section 3: Personnel Development

1. Examine staff inservice needs according to the priority goals and establish inservice courses.

The inservice needs assessment was completed. Inservice courses district-wide and on a credit basis have been provided for the goal areas of communication, mathematics, self-esteem, and instructional skills.

Section 4: Communication/Staff Involvement

1. Continue community involvement in the Long Range Plan for School Improvement process.

Parent advisory council meetings have been continued and directed toward continuing dialogue about priority goals and School Improvement. A policy committee has been established to review and advise on use of cable television instructional programs during the school day.

Curriculum committees of teachers parents and students have been formed as part of the work on the goal of self-esteem. They continue to serve in an advisory capacity.

Section 5: Nondistrict Support Services

Nondistrict resources required during the implementation phase of LRPSI have been concerned primarily with programs and services (curriculum and instruction). Additional resources were used for help with management activities regarding the energy plan and school inservice scheduling, and with the community involvement efforts.

IHE Consultant - Communications goals, four meeting Re: PCRP
IU SI Advisor - assisted with inservice needs survey
PDE Field Rep. - advised on committee composition
CB Energy Associates - advised on energy plan