A Toolkit for Designing and Implementing Effective Title I Schoolwide Programs

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Introduction

What Is the Purpose of This Schoolwide Improvement Toolkit?

This toolkit is designed to provide educational leaders with information, tools, resources, and practical examples to help schools to effectively implement Title I schoolwide programs. It is intended to serve as a useful resource for states, districts, and schools to use, along with other resources and technical support, to create or refine existing schoolwide programs.

Structurally, the toolkit is organized to provide an overview of schoolwide programs and then to address the four major stages—organizing, planning, implementation, evaluation—that, taken together, form the continuous cycle of a schoolwide program. Within this basic structure, numerous issues are addressed; most concern the required components of schoolwide programs. Several examples and vignettes supplement the narrative to better highlight specific issues. Tools, instruments, and other resources related to each stage of the planning process are included.

Above all, this document should serve as a practical guide to reignite interest in and attention to schoolwide programs. It is designed to help schools reflect upon why the schoolwide program option exists within the Title I program and what schoolwide programs are intended to accomplish.

This document is not intended to promote the schoolwide approach over a targeted assistance approach, but rather to illustrate the opportunities that schoolwide programs provide. Additionally, the examples provided stem from a brief, but intensive, gathering of information from some states, districts, schools, and technical assistance providers and are not intended to be all-inclusive or reflective of the entire range of schoolwide programs throughout the country.

Why Should Schools Implement Schoolwide Improvement Programs?

Schoolwide programs are designed to improve the quality of education throughout the school in order to have a positive effect on the academic achievement of all students, particularly those who are low-achieving. Schoolwide programs provide significant flexibility. They provide schools with an opportunity to consolidate federal resources to support a redesigned educational program and schoolwide goals that focus on the improved academic performance of students.

Why Refocus on Schoolwide Programs?

- The number of schoolwide programs is at an all-time high. During the 1990s, Title I schoolwide projects/programs proliferated across the country. In 1991, only 10 percent of the eligible Title I schools operated schoolwide programs, but by 1996, approximately 50

percent of the eligible Title I schools had implemented them.[1] By the 2001–02 school year (the years for which the U.S. Department of Education has the most recent official tally), 26,396 schoolwide programs were operating, which accounted for 52 percent of all Title I schools.[2] Additional schoolwide programs were initiated between 2002 and 2005.

- More than half of Title I schools were using the schoolwide program option by 2001–02 and these programs were then serving 82 percent of the Title I population[3].

- Eighteen percent of schoolwide programs have been identified as being schools in need of improvement.[4]

- Both schools contemplating becoming schoolwide programs and those that are established can benefit from a clear understanding of the purpose and requirements of the program, including the schoolwide plan.

- Since the inception of schoolwide programs, other reform movements such as the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) Program have been created. Initial outcomes and reviews of these programs can inform schoolwide program planning, design, and operation.

- A high-functioning schoolwide program can serve as an efficient and effective tool to help schools meet ever-increasing demands for accountability.

What Does the Research Say?

The Title I schoolwide program option was initiated in response to a body of research that identified the characteristics of effective schools as including strong instructional leadership, a clear academic focus and high student expectations, a dedicated and highly motivated administrative and teaching staff, an orderly and disciplined school environment, and a positive school climate, particularly one that emphasizes a community spirit. [5] Subsequent studies corroborate these early findings and suggest that effective schools are places in which administrators and staff members are actively engaged as a learning community continuously seeking ways to raise student achievement.[6] Similarly, research on the attributes of successful high-poverty schools indicates that these schools share an unwavering focus on the mission of improving academic achievement that forms the basis for every decision, a "no excuses" attitude

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[1] Wong, K. K., & Meyer, S. J. (1998). Title I schoolwide programs: A synthesis of findings from recent evaluation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 20*, 115).
[2] U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, *State ESEA Title I Participation Information for 2001–02: Final Summary Report*, Washington, DC, 2004.
[3] U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, *State ESEA Title I Participation Information for 2001–02: Final Summary Report*, Washington, DC, 2004.
[4] U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, *State ESEA Title I Participation Information for 2001–02: Final Summary Report*, Washington, DC, 2004.
[5] Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982; and Puma et al., 1997.
[6] Drury, 1999; Shields, Anderson, Bamburg, Hawkins, Knapp, Ruskus, Wechsler, & Wilson, 1995.

and an eagerness to experiment with new approaches; and a strong "sense of ownership" throughout the school community.[7]

What Are the Requirements of Schoolwide Programs?

Schoolwide programs are authorized under Section 1114 of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

- **Eligibility:**
  - Local educational agencies (school districts) may use funds for schoolwide programs for Title I schools in which 40 percent of the students enrolled in the school, or who reside within the eligible school attendance area, are from low-income families.

- **Required components of schoolwide programs:**
  - Use of schoolwide reform strategies.
  - Instruction by highly qualified teachers.
  - High-quality, ongoing professional development.
  - Strategies to attract high-quality teachers to high-needs schools.
  - Strategies to increase parental involvement in student academic achievement.
  - Plans for easing transition from preschool to elementary school.
  - Measures to include teachers in the decisions regarding the use of academic assessments.
  - Assistance for struggling students.
  - Coordination and integration of federal, state, and local services and programs.

- **Basic requirements schools must fulfill:**
  - Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment.
  - Develop or amend a comprehensive plan that identifies goals and strategies to address the identified needs.
  - Annually evaluate the schoolwide program.

- **Schoolwide plans:**
  - School must develop or amend a schoolwide improvement plan. The plan must describe:
    - o   How the essential components of schoolwide program will be implemented.
    - o   How the school will use its consolidated resources to implement the components.

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[7] Ragland, Johnson, & Lien. 1997. *Exploring New Direction: Title I in the Year 2000*–Puma and Drury. nsba.org/bookreports/title1/t1report.doc.

- o Which programs will be consolidated

- o How student academic assessment results will be reported to parents.

  - The plan must be developed over a one-year period, unless a plan already exists or less time is needed.

  - The plan must be developed in collaboration with parents, educators, and community members and be made publicly available.

  - The plan may be developed in coordination with programs such as Reading First, Head Start, and Perkins.

  - The plan may include funding for prekindergarten programs.

- **Flexibility:**

  - Schoolwide program schools may combine all of their Title I, Part A, funds with resources from state, local, and federal education programs.

  - Federal resources that are related to violence prevention programs, nutrition programs, housing programs, Head Start, adult education, vocational and technical education, and job training may be consolidated to support schoolwide programs.

  - If schools consolidate funds, they are not to be required to maintain separate fiscal accounting records for each program as long as they demonstrates that the intent and purposes of each of the federal programs that were consolidated have been addressed.

  - Schools are not required to identify students, teachers, or materials as Title I; so all students and teachers in the school may benefit from the consolidated federal resources.

- **Additional information:** For additional information about federal policy related to the schoolwide program, please visit the following links:

  - Section 1114 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (www.ed.gov/policy/ elsec/leg/esea02/pg2.html#sec1114)

  - Section 200.25 of the Title I regulations (www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/ finrule/2002-4/120202a.html)

  - Federal Register Notices:

    - o July 2, 2004 (a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06jun20041800/ edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/pdf/04-15121.pdf)

    - o December 2, 2002 (a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/14mar20010800/ edocket.access.gpo.gov/2002/pdf/02-30294.pdf)

Organizing for Improvement

Schools that intend to implement a Title I schoolwide program typically commit a full year to completing a five-step process of organizing for reform and planning their program. The first two steps address preliminary organizational strategies and are discussed in this section. (The last three steps focus more specifically on planning, and are addressed in the following chapter.)

The five steps to organizing for reform and planning a schoolwide program are:

1. Establishing a schoolwide planning team.
2. Clarifying the vision for reform.
3. Creating the school profile.
4. Identifying data-collection methods.
5. Analyzing the data.

Step 1: Establishing a Schoolwide Planning Team

NCLB requires a schoolwide program to be *"developed with the involvement of parents and other members of the community to be served and individuals who will carry out such plan, including teachers, principals, and administrators..."* (NCLB, Section 1114[b][2][B], 2002).

A schoolwide planning team should be formed to lead the design process and guide the subsequent implementation of the schoolwide program. This team assumes the responsibility for providing leadership during the planning and implementation of the schoolwide program. It also ensures that school staff, parents, and other stakeholders have opportunities to provide input as the design is developed and implemented.

The schoolwide planning team will be involved in the comprehensive needs assessment of the school, the development of the schoolwide design, and the ongoing evaluation and continued refinement of the program. Therefore, it is exceedingly important that team members have the expertise, commitment, ingenuity, and passion necessary for the school to realize its potential. Planning team members must be willing, and have the capacity, to gather input and encourage participation from all stakeholders at various stages of the planning process.

The planning team should include the following:

- The principal or another school administrator
- Teachers from different grades and content areas
- Teachers who serve special education students and English language learners
- Other professional staff, such as pupil services personnel
- School support staff members
- Parents

- Community members

- Students (if the school is a secondary school)

Representatives of interested stakeholders from outside the school may also be brought in to support the planning team and to provide additional expertise as needed. These representatives might include:

- Staff that represents the school's central administration

- Consultants from local colleges or universities

- Independent consultants or technical assistance providers who have worked with the school on prior initiatives

- Members of schoolwide networks or consortia

The old adage "Too many cooks spoil the broth" applies to the size of the planning team. Every effort should be made to assemble a team that that is of a manageable size while still adequately representing the varied perspectives of the school community. Additional participation throughout the year-long process can be optimized through the use of focus-area subcommittees. The checklist that follows identifies some questions that should be considered as the membership and work of the planning team are being contemplated.

Questions to Consider[8]

- Is there an existing team or committee (e.g., a school improvement team or site council) that can also serve as a schoolwide planning team? Try to avoid duplicating ongoing planning activities; use the developed expertise of staff within the school.

- If a new team needs to be established, how will its members be recruited, selected, and replaced over time? Encourage volunteers or ask constituent groups—departments, teams, or classified staff—to elect representatives.

- How will the planning team organize its work and develop a collaborative working relationship among its members? What activities will it use to transform team members from a collection of individuals into a true team? In some cases, consultants can train teams in consensus building, fostering learning communities, or agenda planning as part of the preliminary planning activities.

- How will the planning team coordinate with other committees or teams in the school and district?

- What autonomy will the schoolwide planning team have to make decisions or recommendations?

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[8] U.S. Department of Education. 1998. *Implementing schoolwide programs: An idea book on planning, volume 1.* Washington, DC: Author.

- How will the planning team communicate with the groups it represents and with community members who have a stake in the success of the school and its schoolwide program?

- How will the planning team regularly communicate with the district's finance office so that clear understanding of the flexibilities associated with the uses of resources is understood and so that unnecessary obstacles do not inhibit or burden the planning process? A district Title I coordinator or the school principal might serve as a liaison, or the planning team might choose to include one of the finance office staff as a team member.

The schoolwide planning team should also consider the potential roles of team members. Not all of these will be applicable in every school, but the potential value of each should be carefully considered.

Potential Roles for Schoolwide Planning Team Members

- **Chair.** Coordinates all aspects of the school's planning and serves as the primary liaison between the committee and the principal (in cases where the principal is not a member of the team), the school as a whole, and the school district's central office. The chair is also responsible for ensuring that subcommittees are created and delegating responsibilities as necessary.

- **Assistant Chair.** If the planning team is large, the assistant chair can support the chairperson by attending to the logistics and other details of the planning committee's work. The assistant chair may be selected for a special skill, such as knowledge of federal programs, facility as a negotiator or an evaluator, or experience as a curriculum developer.

- **Data Coordinator.** Identifies data collection instruments, prepares data for analysis, and leads the analysis and interpretation process. The school-level data coordinator may also act as a liaison with data department staff at the school district's central office.

- **Facilitator.** Helps to identify resources for planning and for research-based instructional practices. This person may be a school insider or an outside consultant from the community, the district office, or a nearby university.

- **Teacher Representatives**. Teachers represent grade teams and specialists in the school. They should be well informed about instructional issues involved in meeting the educational needs of all students, especially those with special needs. They might also have expertise in grade-level or content-specific curriculum, or have specialized knowledge about federally funded programs that operate at the school level.

- **Special Education Liaison.** Can help provide perspective about coordinating regular and special education instructional activities. This specialized knowledge is especially useful as the school works to design a program that serves the needs of all students, including those with disabilities.

- **Paraprofessional Liaison.** Is informed about paraprofessional roles, needs, skills, interests, and ideas for improvement.

- **Staff Development Representative**. This staff member serves as a liaison with colleagues to identify staff needs and help plan the professional development component of the schoolwide program for teachers, paraprofessionals, other staff, and parents.

- **Representatives of Federally Funded Programs.** Can help the design team ensure that the schoolwide program meets the intent and purposes of each federal program, as required in the schoolwide legislation. These representatives are crucial team members because a major focus of the schoolwide program is the consolidation of federally funded programs at the school level.

- **Parent Representative(s).** Each parent representative should be a member of a school parent association. This individual can keep the organization, and the parent community as a whole, informed about the schoolwide planning team's activities. This individual also should be an active participant and contribute to the work of the group.

Resources and Tools for Step 1: Establishing a Schoolwide Planning Team

- Organizing for Schoolwide Planning in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform*. Colorado Department of Education, pp. 35–42 (www.cde.state.co.us/action/ standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

- Schoolwide Program Planning in *Oregon Title I Schoolwide Program Planning Book*. Oregon Department of Education, pp. 85–89 (www.ode.state.or.us/opportunities/ grants/nclb/title_i/fiscal/swphandbook03_04.pdf)

- *Implementing Schoolwide Programs: An Idea Book on Planning–October 1998* (www.ed.gov/pubs/Idea_Planning/Step_1.html)

Step 2: Clarifying the Vision for Reform

After the planning team has been established, the team should develop a shared vision for reform that will guide the schoolwide planning process. Within the schoolwide process, a vision is a mental model of what the school would look like if it were serving the learning needs of all of its students, especially those most in need. Planning teams can build this vision with the school staff by answering the following questions:

- What is our purpose here?

- What are our expectations for students?

- What are the responsibilities of the adults who work here?

- How important are collaborations and partnerships?

- Are we committed to continuous improvement?

Answering these and other thought-provoking questions can help the school staff reach a collective understanding of what it means to be a schoolwide program and the potential benefits of both the process and the outcomes. By the time the vision has been established, all staff and stakeholders should have had the opportunity to contribute, and all should understand the purposes, expectations, and possibilities for changing the current programs in the school. Staff

must be willing to spend time looking at all aspects of the schools' operation, and must be willing to make changes as a result of the study of current needs and potential strategies designed to improve student achievement.

For additional resources and tools designed to guide a planning team through this step, see the following:

Resources and Tools for Step 2: Clarifying the Vision for Reform

- A Common Focus and Direction, in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform.* Colorado Department of Education, pp. 43–46 (www.cde.state.co.us/action/ standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

- Readiness in *State Board of Education Guidelines for a School Improvement Planning Process.* Washington State Board of Education, pp. 7–8 (www.sbe.wa.gov/reports/ SIPGuide.pdf)

- Understanding Change and the Role of Leadership in the Reform Process in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform.* Colorado Department of Education, pp. 14–34 (www.cde.state.co.us/action/standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

Developing a Shared Vision for Reform: Practical Examples

Boston

Two years ago, after reviewing its procedures for schoolwide planning and reviewing the many other program plans that its schools were developing, the Boston Public Schools changed direction. The district realized that its schools were getting mixed messages on what to address in the many plans they were required to create. It decided to require its schools to develop one whole-school improvement plan that incorporates the requirements for schoolwide programs. As almost all of the Title I schools in Boston are schoolwide programs, officials have seen a significant rise in the number of compliant schoolwide programs. "The whole school improvement plan provides schools with broad goals that help teachers align instruction for students in the transition from earlier grades to their current grade to future grades," states Monica Roberts, Title I Director of the Boston Public Schools.

Evansville, Indiana

The Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation has adopted a comprehensive approach to schoolwide planning with the goal of creating full service community schools. Planning goes beyond the scope of the traditional school day by incorporating afterschool and extended school-year activities and opportunities. The district encourages schools to coordinate resources, including local and state resources, Title I, Part A, Title II, the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) Program, Reading First, and 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants. Says Caithlyn Gray, assistant superintendent in Evansville, "Schoolwide program planning cannot be something that happens without district support."

Fayette County, Kentucky

In Fayette County, Kentucky, the Title I coordinator views the schoolwide program as a "professional development model"—the district works with teachers who, in turn, work with students. All activities, strategies, and programs are designed to best meet the student needs. Over the last five years, elementary schools have had "on-staff" developers who serve as curriculum coaches to assist teachers. Further, supplemental intervention coaches work with individuals and groups of students as well as teachers who need additional assistance. These interventions are expensive but have been accomplished through the combining of resources allowable in Title I schoolwide schools.

Planning for Improvement: Collecting and Analyzing Data

Once a school has organized for improvement by completing steps one and two, it is ready to begin planning its schoolwide program. At the heart of the planning phase is the comprehensive needs assessment, a determination of what constitutes the gap between the school's vision for its future and its current condition. Conducting the needs assessment involves three sequential steps: creating a school profile, identifying data collection methods, and analyzing the data.

Step 3: Creating a School Profile

The comprehensive collection and analysis of data and information drives the development or refinement of a schoolwide program plan. Taken together, these data provide the school with a profile of its current condition in a variety of important areas, including, but not limited to, student achievement, curriculum, instruction, school climate and culture, available resources, and family and community involvement.

The planning team should begin this step of the comprehensive needs assessment process by taking stock of what is known about the school in the following areas:

School Climate and Culture

What is the atmosphere of the school? Are students vibrantly engaged in learning? Is the school's atmosphere having a detrimental impact on student motivation and learning? Do staff work together in a collegial fashion? Are students, staff, or parents disenfranchised?

Student Population

What is the ethnic and demographic makeup of the student body?

Attendance

Are students regularly attending school? Are there specific students who are not regularly attending school? Are there specific times of the year that students are regularly absent? Are students habitually tardy? Overall, are teachers regularly attending school? Are teachers consistently in their classrooms when they are scheduled to be?

Student Achievement

How well are students in the school achieving? In terms of state standards? In terms of school and district goals? For each disaggregated group of students?

School Programs, Curriculum, Assessments, and Instructional Strategies

What programs and strategies have been implemented in the school? When were these selected? Are they appropriate to current needs? Do the various programs complement each other or have some conflicts arisen? How were these programs selected? Who was involved in their selection?

What assessments are used and how do they inform instruction? Are there support systems to provide assistance for struggling students?

Professional Development

Is there a schoolwide professional development plan in place? Do professional development opportunities offer teachers on-going activities? Does professional development increase instructional skills or understanding of the curriculum? How are professional development activities evaluated for effectiveness? Are teachers using the skills they learn?

Parent and Community Involvement

Is there a plan to assist parents with home learning activities? Is information provided to parents on how to assist students with schoolwork? Is there a communication plan with all parents in all languages? Are there opportunities for parents to provide input and be involved in decision making? How does the school engage the community and businesses?

Transitions

Are there programs designed to ease the transition for students from preschool to elementary school? Are there transition programs for new students?

Staff Turnover

What is the rate of staff mobility? How does that mobility impact school operations? What, if any, is the impact on student achievement?

Staff Qualifications

Are the school's teachers and paraprofessionals highly qualified as defined by NCLB? Are teacher qualifications aligned with the needs of the students? If the school has a high poverty rate, are a disproportionate number of teachers inexperienced or teaching out of their field?

Use of Resources

What fiscal and human resources are available in the school? Are fiscal resources combined or coordinated in any way? Are there district resources that could be allocated to the school instead of being held at the district level? Is there duplication of effort?

Step 4: Identifying Data Collection Methods

The schoolwide planning team will use a variety of data collection procedures when conducting a comprehensive needs assessment. It should plan to review existing information and records as well as collect new information.

Examples of existing information include student achievement reports, local assessment data, attendance records, and climate surveys. In most schools and districts, a great deal of data that can be helpful to the schoolwide planning team is already collected at either the school or district level.

The planning team should also identify any gaps in information and determine how to best gather new data. Surveys, interviews, and focus groups are examples of strategies that may be used to collect information regarding the current status of instruction, curriculum, professional development, and/or parent involvement. Schools can adapt published surveys for their own use, or may wish to create surveys that are specific to their school. However, school planning teams should be cautioned that creating a useful survey is more difficult than it appears to be. Skill and precision are required in formulating questions that will yield useful and unbiased information. This is an area where outside expertise can be especially helpful.

Step 5: Analyzing the Data

When all data is collected, tabulated, and summarized, the planning team must analyze it to create the school profile. The team should look for patterns in the data that reveal trends or insights about the school and students. When the school profile is developed, the analysis of data will provide solid evidence to staff and other stakeholders to support statements of strength and weaknesses of the current program and the gaps that need to be addressed. A review and discussion of these findings will help all stakeholders envision the proposed solutions to areas needing improvement as the schoolwide improvement plan is created.

Resources and Tools for Data Collection and Analysis

- Baseline Data Summary in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform*. Colorado Department of Education, pp. 159–164 (www.cde.state.co.us/action/ standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

- Data Collection: Creating a School Profile in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform*. Colorado Department of Education, pp. 47–74 (www.cde.state.co.us/ action/standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

- Data Collection and Analysis in *State Board of Education Guidelines for a School Improvement Planning Process*. Washington State Board of Education, pp. 9–12 (www.sbe.wa.gov/reports/SIPGuide.pdf)

- Data Collection and Analysis Tools in *Oregon Title I Schoolwide Program Planning Book*. Oregon Department of Education, pp. 24–49 (www.ode.state.or.us/opportunities/ grants/nclb/title_i/fiscal/swphandbook03_04.pdf

- WestEd Data Tools (www.wested.org/csrd/guidebook/pdf/tools08.pdf and www.wested.org/csrd/guidebook/pdf/get1.pdf)

Planning for Improvement: Creating the Comprehensive Plan

After conducting the comprehensive needs assessment and analyzing the results, the planning team will develop the comprehensive plan based on the needs identified. The schoolwide plan should address the following five elements:

- **Identified priorities.** These are based on the needs assessment and are related to the following nine required components of schoolwide programs:

  - Schoolwide reform strategies

  - Instruction by highly qualified teachers

  - High-quality, ongoing professional development

  - Strategies to attract highly qualified teachers

  - Strategies to increase parental involvement

  - Plans for easing transition from preschool

  - Measures to include teachers in the decisions regarding the use of academic assessments

  - Assistance for struggling students

  - Coordination and integration of federal, state, and local services and programs

- **Measurable program goals.** These are related both to student achievement and school operation. Goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, and focused on improving student achievement. Each goal should be connected to objectives, strategies, and action steps.

- **Strategies for activating program goals.** Strategies should be based on scientifically valid research.

- **Action steps.** These should identify the resources that will support implementation, the timeline, the performance indicator, and the person who will monitor their completion.

- **Evaluation plan** (discussed in the Sustaining Improvement section of this document).

Resources and Tools for Setting Priorities and Developing Goals and Strategies

- Planning for Results: Setting Our Sights in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform*. Colorado Department of Education, pp. 75–84 (www.cde.state.co.us/action/ standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

- Prioritize Needs and Set Goals in *State Board of Education Guidelines for a School Improvement Planning Process*. Washington State Board of Education, pp. 13–14 (www.sbe.wa.gov/reports/SIPGuide.pdf)

- Prioritization of Needs and Selecting Solutions in *Oregon Title I Schoolwide Program Planning Book*. Oregon Department of Education, pp. 50–66 (www.ode.state.or.us/ opportunities/grants/nclb/title_i/fiscal/swphandbook03_04.pdf)

- Putting it All Together: Writing the Schoolwide Plan in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform.* Colorado Department of Education, pp. 141–156 (www.cde.state.co.us/action/standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

- Reforming Programs and Structures to Improve Student Achievement in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform.* Colorado Department of Education, pp. 85–93 (www.cde.state.co.us/action/standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

- Planning for Results in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform***.** Colorado Department of Education, p. 168 (www.cde.state.co.us/action/standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

Resources and Tools for Developing an Action Plan

- Develop Action Plan and Continuous Monitoring in *State Board of Education Guidelines for a School Improvement Planning Process.* Washington State Board of Education, pp. 15–18 at (www.sbe.wa.gov/reports/SIPGuide.pdf)

- Implementation/Action Plans in *Oregon Title I Schoolwide Program Planning Book.* Oregon Department of Education, pp. 98–101 at (www.ode.state.or.us/ opportunities/grants/nclb/title_i/fiscal/swphandbook03_04.pdf)

- Reforming Programs and Structures to Improve Student Achievement in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform***.** Colorado Department of Education, pp. 85–93 (www.cde.state.co.us/action/standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

- Schoolwide Plan in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform***.** Colorado Department of Education, p. 169 (www.cde.state.co.us/action/standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

- WestEd Action Plan Template (www.wested.org/csrd/guidebook/pdf/tools15.pdf)

Writing the Comprehensive Plan

Because every school and planning team is unique, the actual writing of the drafts and final plan will vary. Some planning teams may split up writing tasks among the entire team. Others may establish a subgroup to write a draft and present it to the whole team for review. Still others may wish to have a designated writer draft the plan and present it to the team for comment. Regardless of the procedure, it is essential that all members of the planning team have an opportunity to comment upon and edit the draft to the point where the entire team is satisfied with the final document. Ideally, representatives from every program whose funds are being combined are involved in all aspects of planning. If that is not possible, it is desirable to have them participate in the draft review and finalization process to ensure smooth implementation.

Some states now require, and many strongly encourage, a single plan for the school that meets all of the schoolwide program requirements as well as requirements for other required plans.

Implementing Improvement:
Putting the Comprehensive Plan Into Action

After a school completes its intensive planning process, it is ready to put the plan into action. Implementation timing is not cut-and-dried. Though a schoolwide program officially starts on the date the plan has been reviewed and approved, the plan must be continuously reviewed and revised.

What Is Implementation, and When Does It Begin?

In truth, it is difficult to definitively identify a specific point in time of when implementation starts because planning, implementing, and evaluating schoolwide programs are inextricably linked. Implementation is a continuous cycle of planning, taking action, monitoring, and, if necessary, adjusting course.

This toolkit discusses implementation in practical terms. It focuses on the activities a school carries out once its plan has been developed and approved. It also addresses the role the school district and the state play in supporting plan implementation. The examples provided illustrate the process from planning to actual implementation and highlights some apparent benefits and lessons learned.

Gauging the Strength of the Schoolwide Plan

A clear and easy-to-follow schoolwide plan will prove invaluable in implementing an effective schoolwide program. The following questions provide a useful measure for assessing the potential strength and effectiveness of a schoolwide program plan:

- Are curriculum and instruction the primary targets for improvement?

- Are the goals related directly to problem area(s) that have been identified?

- Do the goals include incremental benchmarks?

- Were the improvement goals determined by consensus of all relevant parties? Are they supported by the larger school community?

- Do strategies and activities reflect effective research-based practices and models?

- Are strategies and activities related directly to improvement goals? Are strategies and activities integrated into a comprehensive program design?

- Are family involvement and professional development strategies linked to improvement goals?

- Is there a plan for continually monitoring implementation for problems, feedback, and adjustments?

- Are there strategies for obtaining support and assistance from outside experts?[9]

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[9] *Research-Based Strategies to Achieve High Standards: A Guidebook on School-wide Achievement* (www.wested.org/csrd/guidebook/get2.htm#ImplementProgram)

The Importance of Tracking Implementation

The schoolwide program plan is meant to be the guiding document, or the map, for the overall operation of the building. Therefore, it is important that schools track both outcome data and benchmarks that mark progress. To assist in ensuring high-quality implementation, schools may wish to design or access a tool that helps to track and measure implementation. In addition to informal tools (checklists or state and/or district monitoring instruments), other more formal avenues also are available.

Reallocation of Resources During Schoolwide Implementation

Schoolwide programs have the opportunity to efficiently use all of their resources in a coordinated fashion to best meet student needs. In addition to coordinating and integrating services, schoolwide program schools may combine most federal, state, and local funds to provide those services. Exercising this option maximizes the impact of the resources available to the school as it implements the schoolwide plan. Some advantages to coordinating fiscal and human resources available to the schoolwide program include:

- Greater flexibility to meet the needs of all children and their families

- Greater site-based authority to determine needs and apply funding to those needs.

- Fewer separate plans and separate fund accounts for individual programs

NCLB permits schoolwide programs to combine most funding and resource streams to upgrade the whole school program. Schools that choose to combine resources are relieved of having to link particular activities, strategies, staff, or students to particular funds. Some safeguards are built into the law to ensure proper use of funds:

- Funds cannot be combined just for the sake of combining. The flexibility is designed for a specific purpose, which must be met in spirit as well as in fact: *to improve* academic achievement for all children and address the intents and purposes of each program combined.

- A school that chooses to use funds from other programs must, by law, continue to meet requirements related to:
  - Health
  - Safety
  - Civil rights
  - Student and parental participation and involvement
  - Services to children who attend private schools
  - Maintenance of effort
  - Comparability of services
  - Uses of federal funds to supplement—not supplant—nonfederal funds

- Distribution of funds to state education agencies (SEAs) or local education agencies (LEAs) that apply to the receipt of funds from such programs
  - If a school decides to combine resources, it need not maintain separate fiscal accounting records by program linking activities to specific program funds, *as long as* the school maintains records that demonstrate that the schoolwide program, considered as a whole, addresses the intent and purposes of the federal programs that were consolidated to support the schoolwide program.
  - In addition, some funds—such as those from Reading First, Head Start, or the National Free Lunch program—cannot be combined.

Resources and Tools for Resource Reallocation

- Schoolwide Budget Summary in *Oregon Title I Schoolwide Program Planning Book*. Oregon Department of Education, p. 110 (www.ode.state.or.us/opportunities/ grants/nclb/title_i/fiscal/swphandbook03_04.pdf)

- WestEd, Step 1–Take Stock of Your Resources (www.wested.org/csrd/guidebook/ pdf/tools14.pdf)

- For further clarification and information about combining funds in schoolwide program schools, see the July 2004 guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education (a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06jun20041800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/pdf/04-15121.pdf)

Practical Examples of Schoolwide Program Implementation

Lowell, Massachusetts

Schoolwide programs in the Lowell Public Schools have evolved since the first schoolwide program was implemented in the early 1990s. The district now uses a combination of strategies to support effective implementation:

- Building administrators and building teams now operate and programmatically design the school program within the broader context of some district initiatives. In addition to designing their schoolwide programs based on individual school needs, schoolwide plans now also address areas of need that are reflected in districtwide initiatives. This strategy helps to ensure that school initiatives are aligned with district priorities.

- Lowell now collects multiyear plans from schools. The first year, the entire plan is submitted, and in subsequent years, updates and revisions are sent to the district. Because these plans are continuously updated, and because needs and accomplishments change constantly, schools are likely to work just as diligently on plan updates as they did on the original plan. The district has continued to adjust the required format of the schoolwide plan as it has become more experienced at analyzing data, identifying root causes, and using the data to inform program design.

- The district conducts progress monitoring during which it periodically checks in with schools regarding the status of their schoolwide plan.

- The district recently began phasing in an internal review process to ensure that schools are reviewing their planned outcomes and updating as needed. Using a checklist, the Title I director, the district-level reading and math directors, and the data and school improvement coordinators review plans and updates. They meet to discuss their review and compile comments, then provide their comments to the school planning team. The team is given the opportunity to revise the schoolwide plan update, as necessary, before it is submitted for approval.

- Other district technical assistance to schoolwide programs includes a Title I handbook and training on the fiscal flexibility that schoolwide programs are afforded. Although its schools are provided an allocation and are responsible for deciding how to spend it based on their schoolwide plan, the district ultimately accounts for the actual expenditures of the various funding sources.

Sustaining Improvement: Program Evaluation and Review

After the initial year-long planning has been completed and a school begins to implement its schoolwide plan, the challenge of sustaining implementation and improvement begins. Title I regulations require schoolwide programs to conduct an annual review to ensure that high-quality implementation takes place over time. The school must answer two questions related to implementation and outcomes. The first question asks, "Is the program being implemented as the school intended?" The second asks, "Has student achievement increased for the performance measures identified in the plan?"

Measures and Activities to Review Implementation and Student Achievement

Given the complexities and multi-faceted nature of schoolwide programs, schools should use a variety of measures and activities to assist in the continual improvement of their schoolwide programs. These include:

Surveys

Surveys can help schools determine whether or not their program is being implemented as designed. Stakeholders can be asked about a variety of issues, from their knowledge of the plan to their perception of activities designed to further their involvement with the school. Surveys in general can help to surface implementation issues that would not arise from the planning team working alone and can also help to highlight misperceptions about what the school is trying to accomplish.

Root Cause Analysis Activities

Root cause analysis, or root cause failure analysis, is an exercise undertaken to determine the underlying reason(s) something is not improving as anticipated. As a schoolwide program review measure, this exercise can help to confirm whether and where something in the schoolwide plan needs to be altered.

Benchmark Review

Promising schoolwide plans contain benchmarks that identify points in time where progress will be checked. One useful strategy for determining whether or not the program is being implemented as designed is to hold periodic forums for all stakeholders during which benchmarks are reviewed. Such forums give the school community an opportunity to acknowledge successes, and identify areas that need additional attention.

Assessments

In addition to examining the results of state-level standards-based assessments, schoolwide programs examine a variety of assessment data to determine student progress. Doing so provides a wonderful opportunity for school to reflect on schoolwide progress and individual learning accomplishments. A variety of formal and informal assessments, both formative and summative,

should be identified by the school as its benchmarks for assessing improved student achievement under the schoolwide program.

Practical Examples of Schoolwide Program Review Processes

McFerran Academy, Jefferson County, Kentucky

At McFerran Academy, the use of student-achievement data to review the schoolwide program takes place throughout the year. When the packet of standardized test scores arrives in August, an instructional coach assists the principal in a review of its data. They then work directly with the teachers to analyze the results. In October, the results of the state assessment arrive. Individual student scores are reviewed, as well as scores in content areas to determine whether there are any common errors or trends in performance. The principal works with small groups of teachers and then assembles vertical teams to review the continuum of data.

Other data also are reviewed. Student work is examined through a formalized process. Through schoolwide program planning, the principal helped the school arrange its schedule so that every Wednesday for a two-hour block, small groups of teachers assemble to review student work. The teachers share to learn and to receive suggestions on how to better teach their students, and the principal does follow-up with the individual teachers.

Resources and Tools for Evaluation and Review of Schoolwide Programs

- Establishing Assessments and Measures for Accountability in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform.* Colorado Department of Education, pp. 130–140 (www.cde.state.co.us/action/standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

- Schoolwide Self-Assessment Profile Description Data in *Schoolwide Programs: Preparing for School Reform.* Colorado Department of Education, pp. 173–174 (www.cde.state.co.us/action/standards/pdf/schoolwi.pdf)

- Washington's *School Improvement Planning Process Guide* contains a range of surveys that can assist in schoolwide improvement (www.k12.wa.us/ SchoolImprovement/pubdocs/SIPGuide.doc, pages C1-C45)

- The following link connects to a PowerPoint presentation developed by the New England Comprehensive Assistance Center with the assistance of Paul Preuss that focuses on root cause analysis for purposes of student achievement. This ranges from primary root cause analysis to changing objectives and action strategies to improving performance (www2.edc.org/NECAC/resources/rca/RCA5.ppt#270,2,Root Cause Analysis)